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Decreasing Teacher Burnout

Sara Wobig

Capstone Project: A School Improvement Plan

Northwestern College, Orange City, Iowa

Abstract

Teacher burnout is on an unprecedented rise. Many teachers are experiencing burnout early in their careers. Teachers in Campbell County School District, located in Gillette, Wyoming, are experiencing this at an alarming rate. Teachers at Conestoga Elementary School are experiencing stress and burnout related to student behaviors and increased duties placed upon them. The following school improvement plan is designed to help teachers reduce daily stress and set boundaries. This improvement plan is set to take place during the 2023-2024 school year. Mental health and well-being are an area that is focused on helping students. Teachers are often overlooked and are expected to rise to any challenge faced. Implementing an intervention focused on reducing stress and teaching how to set boundaries will positively impact these teachers' mental health and well-being. This would also reduce the rate of teacher burnout.

Keywords: teacher burnout, mental health, and well-being, COVID-19, teacher support, mental exhaustion, continuously changing education environment

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Decreasing Teacher Burnout

“Teaching requires staff to work long hours, keep up with changing government requirements, and manage often disruptive classrooms (Jerrim et al., 2020 p. 692). Teachers have felt this profession's effect on their shoulders for years. COVID-19 only exasperated teachers’ stress and burnout rate. Not only did teachers have to be responsible for teaching in the classroom and standardized tests, but the pandemic added contact tracing, teaching students in the classroom and through Zoom, and ensuring students were staying six feet apart at all times. When considering mental health education, professionals look at how to help and provide for students. However, teachers often forget about themselves until they are ready to leave the profession they once loved. “In the United States, 46% of teachers have reported high levels of daily stress, a rate that was only matched by nurses” (Padmanabhanunni & Pretorius, 2023 p.1). The problem is that teachers are experiencing high levels of daily stress and pressure with only minimal or non-existent mental health support systems.

When contacting the head of our Human Resources Department our director was very helpful in providing information about teachers leaving and the reasoning for the last five years. The information was very enlightening. It was astonishing that the number of teachers who left due to resignations or retirement increased exponentially after COVID-19. Unfortunately, the reasoning only states if the teacher left due to resignation, retirement, relocation, or non-renewal. In 2018, four teachers left due to resignation, 25 teachers left due to retirement, and seven teachers left due to relocation. 2019, those numbers were nine, 24, and 17, respectively. 2020 saw an increase in resignations, with 29 teachers leaving by choice. Two of those teachers left due to health reasons. Relocation dropped to 12, and retirement dropped to 11. In 2021,

resignations increased to 23, retirements increased to 20, and no relocations were listed. 2022 saw a significant increase to 35 teachers resigned, 24 teachers retired, and three teachers relocated. 2023, all of the reasons listed were resignations.

Determining whether retirements and relocations mixed in with teachers resigning is difficult. The people impacted by this are the students and parents. When teachers leave the profession, it affects the students and parents. Speaking from experience, when choosing to leave years ago, I ran into former students and their parents every time they asked if I was ready to return because I had made an impact on their child, and they wished I was still teaching. It would break my heart to hear they were sad that I was no longer teaching, but I had to step away for a while for my mental health. There is literature on how to help students and their mental health. Not as many articles and studies were found to support teachers and their mental health. My hope is this school improvement plan will help bridge the understanding gap and teach teachers how to manage their mental health.

This school improvement plan aims to reduce the number of teachers leaving the profession due to mental health awareness. The school improvement plan I would like to implement is providing once-a-month support for our teachers. We have an early release once a month, and using that time to focus on our teachers and what they need will help reduce burnout and provide the mental health support they need. One source I would use is [teach.com](https://www.teach.com); this website has applications, books, support groups, and websites designed to help teachers. Teachers often need to remember that having high-stress jobs. The number of teacher resignations in the last five years went from four to 57. The mental exhaustion teachers endure daily begins to wear them down. I plan to complete a plan that lays out different ways to help

teachers decrease their stress and burnout and increase positive mental health support.

Teach.com has 50 resources available for teachers to use. I would like to access that site and implement steps using these resources to help teachers. I would like to start this process by giving teachers the book “First Aid for Teachers: How You Can Have Peace and Success” (Rankin, 2022). Explore one chapter a month during our early release days and provide check-ins throughout the rest of the month.

Journal articles found for this research and literature review were chosen from the Dewitt Library from Northwestern College out of Orange City, Iowa. All journal articles that were used were written within the last ten years. The journal articles used for this school improvement plan were all peer reviewed articles. The focus of the journal articles was what are the main contributing factors to teacher burnout and turnover rate. The journal articles’ research participants were elementary through high school teachers worldwide. Having research done in different parts of the world allows for the teacher burnout/turnover rate to be thoroughly examined and ways to help reduce the teacher burnout/turnover rates to be explored.

Teaching is a stressful career. “Teachers have been found to experience a disproportionate level of stress which makes them susceptible to burnout” (Brasfield et al., 2019 p. 167). High-stress careers find turnover rates increase when no mental health support is provided. The themes that emerged from the research were COVID-19, constantly changing government protocols, lack of teacher support, and mental exhaustion. Working in the position that I do and with the students I work with is mentally exhausting. There is no real outlet for teachers to “decompress” or talk through their feelings or thoughts. We take on not only the stress of the job but the burdens and struggles of our students. We are here for the students, but

who is here for us? The belief is that when teachers can get mental health support and decompress, they will more likely stay in the profession.

The literature review will be organized using the themes most associated with teacher burnout/turnover rate. COVID-19 was one of the most significant contributors to teacher burnout. The next largest contributor I found in my research was how the school environment affected teachers' mental health. "An important aspect of a school leaders' role is cultivating a set of school-wide organizational and normative conditions that can support teachers' psychological needs" (Ford et al., 2019 p. 618). The third was not enough teacher support for new teachers. The fourth theme was that teachers are mentally exhausted. Next, the literature review will focus on suggestions to help support teachers and their mental health. Having more resources available for teachers, especially those in their first few years of teaching, is highly important. COVID-19 protocols are becoming less and less, which takes some extra pressure and stress off teachers. Finally, the literature review will focus on how we can continue to support teachers and how important it is to provide services for teachers. Teachers provide support for their students every day. People tend to forget that teachers need mental health support, too. "Teaching is considered a high-risk profession due to the high impact of occupational risk factors on educators' mental health. Research conducted in the last twenty years shows that the teaching profession is very stressful and that primary and secondary school teachers are at risk of getting burnout symptoms" (Safiye et al., 2023 p.1). This literature review will help others understand how important it is to provide mental health support for teachers through all stages of their careers.

Review of the Literature

Introduction

March 2020 the world changed as we knew it. Schools shut down immediately and teachers were scrambling to figure out how to teach the remainder of the school year online. No one was prepared for or knew what to expect for the next school year. Teaching through Zoom was a challenge in of itself as not every student had working internet and had other distractions at home. Not only did COVID-19 change the way we taught, but it exasperated many other stresses that led to more and more teachers leaving the profession.

COVID-19 Impact on Teacher Burnout

When COVID-19 hit the world, it changed not only the way teachers were teaching, but also impacted their mental health in an already stressful job. “Teachers, confronted with increased demands and limited resources since March 2020, have not been exempt from these effects” (Kim et al., 2021 p.1). Kim et al. (2021) conducted a longitudinal study on teachers’ mental health and their well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. There were 24 primary and secondary participants. There were 11 primary teachers and 13 secondary teachers. Six of those participants were male and 18 were female. The study took place in England. Researchers gathered data three times between April and November 2020. There were 71 interviews conducted among the 24 participants. The teachers were grouped by either primary or secondary, and if they were classroom teachers (CT) or Senior leadership teams (SLT). This resulted in four groups of teachers being interviewed. During the study each participant was interviewed by the same researcher over Zoom. The first interview occurred 6 weeks after the initial shutdown, the third interview happened at the end of the school year and the fourth interview occurred about

nine weeks into the new school year. The second interview was removed from the study because the researchers did not ask Mental Health Well-Being (MHWB) questions. The questions used to interview participants were open-ended questions that gave the participants a chance to elaborate on their own MHWB.

The findings showed that all participants reported that there was a negative impact on their MHWB during the 3rd and 4th interviews. Most teachers and senior leadership members were feeling the effect of the shutdown. Another interesting find was that all groups except Primary SLT reported positive changes in their MHWB between the 1st and 3rd interviews. The researchers noted that there was more social support at that time. CT for both primary and secondary reported feeling more stress in their workload because most schools had gone back to in-person teaching, but teachers not only had to teach students that were physically in the classroom but also teach students via online.

“The digitization of the educational process substantially increased teachers’ working hours as they needed to master the use of information communication technology, implement new pedagogical practices, and guide their students in navigating an online learning environment. Teachers also had to manage the shifts in educational policies and practices that occurred during the various stages of the pandemic, contend with their own fears related to COVID-19 and manage domestic responsibilities, including caring for their own children, homeschooling, and supporting elderly family members” (Padmanabhanunni & Pretorius, 2023 p.1). This added a lot more stress to teachers lives both in and outside of school.

Padmanabhanunni & Pretorius (2023) conducted a study focused on the antecedents and psychological consequences the COVID-19 pandemic had on teachers. The participants for this

study included 355 teachers across South Africa. The study took place between the months of April to June 2021. The research was a 20-minute online survey that once the information was gathered it was generated and analyzed by the researchers. The following are what the 355 teachers completed in order to be included in this study;

- 1) Perceived Vulnerability to Disease Questionnaire
- 2) The Fear of COVID-19 Scale
- 3) The Role Orientation Questionnaire
- 4) The Maslach Burnout Inventory
- 5) The Centre of Epidemiological Depression Scale
- 6) The Beck Hopelessness Scale
- 7) The Satisfactory with Life Scale
- 8) The Trait Scale of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory.

The findings had both positive and negative correlations to teacher burnout. Positive correlations were germ aversion, emotional exhaustion, and depersonalization, and personal accomplishment these were correlated to fear of COVID-19 and emotional exhaustion. The findings of this study correlate with the findings of the longitudinal study done with teachers in England in 2020. The designs are similar as there were no interventions done. The study done by Padmanabhanunni & Pretorius (2023) was a series of online surveys while the study done by Kim et al. (2021) were interview questions completed by the same interviewer three different times throughout the months of April to November 2020. Based on the different questionnaires

and scales used for this study, it was determined that the majority of teachers are feeling the emotional exhaustion, lack of self-accomplishment, depersonalization was among the main factors leading to teacher burnout. Teacher Burnout was increasing with the added duties COVID-19 placed on teachers compared to pre-pandemic duties. For example, teachers did not have to figure out how to teach online as well as simultaneously teaching in person or making sure that students stayed a minimum of six feet apart while in the classroom.

“Due to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, many countries implemented tight measures, such as social distancing, and city lockdowns, to decrease the imperious spread of contagion and mitigate the propagation of new infections” (Hesham Abdou Ahmed, 2023 p.1). The purpose of this study was to determine: The research topic was to *Explore special education teachers’ mental health after reopening schools during Covid-19* and to *Identify the psychological services that they needed to safeguard their mental health*. The participants were 10 teachers; 4 Elementary teachers, 3 Middle School teachers, and 3 High School teachers from Monroe County Community School Corporation. These teachers were interviewed one-on-one with the researcher. The design of the study was a Phenomenological research design. The following questions were used to collect data from the participants:

- 1) How can you describe your mental health after reopening schools? (p.3).
- 2) What are the factors that impacted your mental health after reopening schools? (p.3).
- 3) What kind of check-ins have you received from your schools? (p.3).
- 4) What psychological services or interventions, if any, have you received from your school? (p.3).
- 5) What psychological services do you prefer to receive from your school? (p.3).

There were many factors expressed during these interviews and the following are the major factors that Hesham Abdou Ahmed (2023) found. There were many different factors contributing to the stress of special education teachers:

- 1) Student's Behavior
- 2) Safety Measures
- 3) IEP Responsibilities
- 4) Uncertainty
- 5) Contact Tracing

Psychological Support:

- 1) Social Support
- 2) Schools' Support
- 3) Preferred Support

These factors are similar to the student behaviors and school support mentioned in both the Kim et al. (2021) and Padmanabhanunni & Pretorius (2023) articles. The main one that has been reoccurring is the unknown, and lack of teacher support for mental health and well-being. The focus of mental health and well-being is on how we support our students who are working through mental health and well-being struggles. We have seen a lot of students who have lost a parent due to COVID-19 and helping them cope with that unimaginable loss is mentally exhausting for teachers as well as the students.

Jakubowski & Sitko-Dominik (2021) completed a study on teachers' mental health during the first two waves of COVID-19. This study was conducted in Poland. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between distance learning and teachers' well-being, and their close relationships and other social relationships during the first two waves of COVID-19. "Stress has a negative impact on teachers' private lives, which can cause the decrease of life satisfaction, and on their professional career, which can result in lower work commitment and lower work satisfaction and can negatively affect students' achievements" (Jakubowski & Sitko-Dominik, 2021 p. 3). The participants were teachers. The study consisted of two different stages. The first stage was conducted during the first wave of COVID-19 and the second stage was conducted during the second wave of COVID-19. There were a different group of teachers participating in each stage of the study. There was a total of 258 primary and secondary teachers. The First stage had 130 female teachers and 15 male teachers. The second stage had 121 female teachers and 19 male teachers. Both stages the participants completed the following scales:

- 1) The Depression Anxiety and Stress Scales-21
- 2) Berlin Social Support Scales
- 3) The Relationship Satisfaction
- 4) The Injustice Experience Questionnaire

The findings showed mild levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. This was consistent throughout the first two waves of COVID-19. There were also findings that there was a negative correlation between the quality in relationships as well as the quality of social relationships. The first wave showed 6% and the second wave increased to 47%. Anxiety went from 21% to 31% respectively. Depression went from 12% to 46% respectively. The designs of the studies have all

been similar. Researchers are either conducting one on one in person interviews with the participants or they are having the participants respond to online questionnaires or online rating scales. Teachers are in great need of mental health support. As the findings are indicating in all the research teachers are struggling with student behaviors, increased responsibilities, their own fears of COVID-19, and emotional outlets.

Lücker et al. (2022) also completed a cross-sectional online survey on the stress, coping, and the thought of leaving teaching behind due to the pandemic. Lücker et al. (2022) focused on how the pandemic has affected teachers and principals two years after the pandemic started. “Although to varying degrees, both teachers and principals (who are always also teachers) showed effects of the pandemic regarding stress coping, and considerations of leaving the profession” (Lücker et al., 2022 p. 11). It was found that the participants included 471 teachers and 113 principals from Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Germany. The methodology was online surveys that teachers and principals responded their thoughts and feelings. The survey was sent out to 615 schools and 12,821 teachers were approached. The study included 417 teachers and 113 principals. PSS-10, Proactive Coping Inventory (PCI) were used to measure the responses.

The findings were 2/3 of the teachers and principals experienced moderate stress levels and female teachers perceived more stress than male teachers. Stressors included technical or internet problems, lack of communication, and feeling threatened by students or parents when reinforcing COVID-19 protocols. One difference noted between the Lücker et al. (2022) article and the Jakubowski & Sitko-Dominik (2021) is the Lücker et al. (2022) broke down the results by male and female teachers. The Jakubowski & Sitko-Dominik (2021) article mentioned how

many male and female teachers were involved but did not elaborate on who felt more or less in the different stressors. Since COVID-19 teachers and principals have a felt in increase in stress. There have been more and more teachers leaving the profession or considering leaving the profession. The findings of this study concluded that teachers felt more stress but did not have the opportunity or ability to cope with the stressor they were experiencing. COVID-19 has left a lasting impact on everyone and teaching through the pandemic as well as when schools went back to in-person classrooms it is important to make sure that our teachers are given the support they need to support their mental health.

“The COVID-19 pandemic of spring 2020 had an unprecedented impact on society and the economy in the United States, including shuttering schools and transitioning millions of educators and students into remote teaching and learning overnight” (Baker et al., 2021 p. 491). There was three hypothesis and two qualitative questions Baker et al. (2021) focused on. They were:

- 1) “Teachers who reported experiencing more stressors would demonstrate worse mental health, coping, and ability to teach” (p. 493).
- 2) “Teachers who reported experiencing more protective factors would demonstrate the opposite: better mental health, coping, and ability to teach” (p.493).
- 3) “An interaction between protective factors and stressors with regard to mental health, coping, teaching, specifically by protective factors attenuating the inverse relationship between stressors and teacher wellness” (p.493).

Baker et al. (2021) was focusing their study on how the COVID-19 pandemic affected teachers throughout their school days. They used the following questions to get an understanding of what teachers were experiencing during that time.

- 1) What has been the most difficult aspect of your job during the pandemic?
- 2) What has been the most helpful in facilitating/supporting your work during the pandemic?

The participants were teachers from New Orleans, United States. There were 454 teachers from 41 public schools in Orleans Parish. (81% female, 55% Black, 32% white). The research was conducted from April 30-May 15, 2020. Baker et al. (2021) sent an online survey that kept the identity of the participant hidden. “Early in the pandemic, a survey of over 5,000 U.S. teachers revealed that the five most commonly experienced feelings among teachers were anxiety, fear, worry, sadness, and feeling overwhelmed” (Baker et al., 2021 p.492).

The findings were the average teachers reported roughly the same number of stressors. There were 15 stressors listed throughout the survey. “Teachers were already at elevated risk of burnout before the pandemic, especially those who teach in low-resource, high-poverty schools” (Baker et al., 2021 p.492). There was not a significant difference between black and white teachers for the number of stressors they experienced. Black teachers reported they experienced an increase in workload, difficulty completing their job well due to the need to take care of the people in their household. It was also reported that Black teachers were more likely to receive medical treatment due to severe COVID-19 symptoms than white teachers. 1% of white teacher reported having severe symptoms compared to 6% of Black teachers reporting severe symptoms.

COVID-19 has had a profound effect on teacher mental health. This study was conducted at the beginning of the shutdown. Teachers had to scramble to find ways to teach students online. The feeling of taking on the teaching for not only your students but your own children as well is difficult. Trying to close the learning gap that ensued after students returned to the physical classroom has been a struggle. Districts are in need to find and implement mental health support for teachers while also uplifting teachers.

Sudibjo & Manihuruk (2022) focused their study on gap of happiness at work and perceived organizational support for teachers with mental health and job satisfaction. “The existence of the COVID-19 pandemic poses challenges and pressures for teachers in their work, and organizational support is required” (Sudibjo & Manihuruk, 2022 p.491). The participants were 490 Kindergarten through twelfth grade teachers from Special Capital Region of Jakarta Province, Indonesia. The study was conducted from June to November 2021. This study also used a cross-sectional design to collect data. The findings concluded that teachers’ job satisfaction had a direct correlation to a teacher’s mental health. The study that was performed was able to let researchers fill the gap that other researchers had inquired about. The researchers found that job satisfaction positively impacted a teacher’s mental health. When a teacher is satisfied with his or her job, they have a more positive state of mental health than they do if they are not satisfied with their job.

Lack of Teacher Support

Ford et al. (2019) studied how school leader support can positively or negatively affect teachers’ intent to leave or stay in the profession. They focused on three areas. The areas were

intrapersonal, interpersonal, and organizational. The participants were teachers working in an urban district in the midwestern United States. One thousand five hundred fifty-six teachers participated in this study. The study was conducted in the Spring of 2017. This study was done before COVID-19, which is beneficial to see how teacher burnout was affected before the pandemic. Ford et al. (2019) used the following questions to guide their study.

- 1) “What are the relationships between the three dimensions of leader support or teacher psychological needs and teacher burnout, organizational commitment, and teacher intent to leave the school and profession?” (p. 617).
- 2) “Are there specific pathways to improved teacher affective outcomes from meeting the psychological needs of teachers at the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and organizational levels?” (p.617).

“An important aspect of a school leader’s role is cultivating a set of school-wide organizational and normative conditions that can support teachers’ psychological needs” (Ford et al., 2019, p. 618). School leaders can make or break teachers based on the kind of support they provide. The methodology of this study was two online surveys being sent out to the participants. Each participant was randomly assigned the one study they were going to answer; this allowed the researchers to maximize the different characteristics that could be measured at the various schools. The findings showed a positive correlation between leadership support and teacher burnout or commitment. When teachers felt supported by their leadership, they were more likely to stay committed to their school, and when they did not feel supported, they were more likely to leave the profession altogether.

Redding Henry (2018) studied why novice teachers left within and at the end of the school year. Beginning a new career is stressful and nerve-wracking. Teachers tend to be people who want perfection in their classrooms. Perfection for teachers is knowing how to handle all situations, having every parent like you, having classroom management figured out, and helping all students progress in their academics. Teachers who have been in the profession a long time understand that this is not possible and are continually learning and trying new and improved ways to meet the needs of their students. “In a recent study of turnover across 16 urban districts, Papay and colleagues (2017) report remarkably high turnover rates among teachers in their first three years, with the percentage of early career teachers to turn ranging from 46% to 71% depending on the district” (Redding & Henry, 2018, p. 207). The study took place in North Carolina. Redding & Henry (2018) focused their research on teachers entering the profession from 2009-1002. The participants changed with each year. Three thousand seven hundred sixty-one teachers were monitored during the 2009-2010 school year, 4,767 teachers were observed during the 2010-2011 school year, and 5,137 teachers were monitored during the 2011-2012 school year. Redding Henry (2018) watched each set of participants monthly throughout their first three years of teaching.

The methodology for conducting the research, Redding & Henry 2018 built a longitudinal analysis file for the teachers. There are four questions that the researchers investigated:

- 1) “How does early career teacher turnover vary monthly for their first three years of teaching?” (p. 206).

- 2) “Are the associations between turnover and teacher entry pathway, teacher characteristics, school demographics, and working conditions different for end-of-year and monthly turnover measures?” (p. 206).
- 3) “To what extent do the associations between type of turnover (within-year moving, within-year leaving, end-of-year moving, end-of-year leaving, and temporary return and exit) and teacher entry pathway, teacher characteristics, and school demographics and working conditions vary?” (p. 206).
- 4) “What are the associations between type of turnover and teacher effectiveness?” (p. 206).

They would look at monthly payment stubs to determine if a teacher had drawn a paycheck that month. They would also look at which school the individual or individuals worked. The researchers looked at and analyzed the characteristics of the teachers and the school they were employed in. Using this information, researchers gathered data on teacher turnover during or after the year. They could also examine whether a teacher was leaving the profession or changing schools. The findings of their research After three years, 38% of teachers remained in the building when they began their teaching career. This rate is consistent with a study done by Papay et. al (2017) determined that beginning teachers stay in the same building between 29% and 54%. The researchers also found that 40% of the three-year teacher turnover rate moved schools while 33% left the profession. Data has also shown that schools that lack support and a positive working environment have a greater turnover rate than those whose leaders provide support and positive working environments.

Howes & Goodman-Delahunty (2015) wanted to present a view of career decision-making considerations for an intergenerational cross-section of Australian teachers. For the researchers to examine the career choices of an intergenerational cross-section of Australian teachers, Howes & Goodman-Delahunty (2015) examined current and former teachers. These teachers were just beginning their careers, and some participants were mid and later-career teachers. “We aimed to locate similarities and differences or were undecided about staying, and former teachers who had left the profession, to enhance understanding of attrition and retention, and to guide recommendations aimed to increased teacher retention” (Howes & Goodman-Delahunty, 2015, p. 19). The goal was to understand why teachers chose to stay or leave the profession. There were 133 participants for the study. The participants included current and former teachers and current and former police officers. The study did not mention how long Howes Goodman-Delahunty (2015) needed to complete and analyze the data. The study took place in Australia. The methodology of the study was an online survey consisting of the following open-ended questions:

- 1) “Why did you choose your career?” (p. 20-21). (All groups).
- 2) “What main factors contribute to your decision to stay in your career?” (p. 20-21). (All current teachers: staying and undecided).
- 3) a) “What things prompted your thinking about career change?” (p. 20-21). (Undecided teachers – considering subgroup).
- b) “What were your main reasons for leaving teaching?” (Howes & Goodman- p. 20-21). (Former teachers).

- 4) a) “Could your employer do anything to encourage you to stay longer in your career?”
(p. 20-21). (Undecided teachers – working towards subgroup).
- b) “Could your employer have done anything to make you want to stay longer?” (p. 20-21). (Former teachers).
- 5) “What have been the positive and negative aspects of leaving your teaching career?”
(p. 20-21). (Former teachers).

The findings of these surveys showed that about 1/5 of the teachers had never thought about changing careers. While the majority of teachers have thought about or changed jobs, the researchers concluded that these four areas could help retain teachers:

- 1) “To foster positive and supportive relationships within school communities” (p. 32).
- 2) “To provide support for teachers to alleviate the high workload” (p. 32).
- 3) “To provide greater job security or flexibility in response to teachers’ needs and preferences” (p. 32).
- 4) “To offer new and exciting opportunities to diversify within teaching” (p. 32).

The responses to why teachers chose to leave their careers were “...lack of enjoyment in their work, negative interactions with staff, poor workplace conditions, poor student behavior, workload, and stress” (Howes & Goodman-Delahunty, 2015, p. 25). Poor leadership and dissatisfaction with the administration were also mentioned as reasons teachers chose to leave. This is similar to the studies conducted by Redding & Henry (2018) and Ford et al. (2019). Lack of administration support affects teachers in ways most people do not understand.

Mérida-López et al. (2020) examined the relationship between social support, emotional intelligence (EI), and teachers' leaving their careers. Mérida-López et al. (2020) focused on two objectives and four hypotheses during this study. The objectives and hypothesis were:

Objectives:

- 1) "To assess whether work engagement mediates the relationship between workplace social support (i.e., support from colleagues and support from supervisors) and intention to quit" (p. 143).
- 2) "To evaluate the moderating role of EI on the indirect effect of workplace social support on intention to quit through work engagement" (p. 143).

Hypothesis:

- 1) "Teachers' work engagement mediates the relationship between support from colleagues and intention to quit (*H1a*)" (p. 143).
- 2) "Teachers' emotional intelligence moderates the indirect pathways from support from colleagues to intention to quit (*H1b*)" (p. 143).
- 3) "Teachers' work engagement mediates the relationship between support from supervisors and intention to quit (*H2a*)" (p. 143).
- 4) "Teachers' emotional intelligence moderates the indirect pathways from support from supervisors to intention to quit (*H2b*)" (p. 143).

There were 1,297 preschool, elementary, and secondary teachers. The study was conducted in school districts throughout Southern and Eastern Spain. The researchers should

have mentioned how long the study lasted. The Methodology was online questionnaires sent to teachers in Eastern and Southern Spain. The Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire II was sent out and answered by the preschool through secondary teachers. The researchers used the following scales to measure the data collected from the questionnaires: Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale, and Occupational Withdrawal Intentions Scale. “Recent findings show EI training may contribute to teachers’ occupational health and well-being. These results, together with current findings, underline the value of designing future psychosocial interventions focusing on teachers’ perceptions of their skills for dealing with their own and other peoples’ (e.g., colleagues, families, or students) emotions to improve their work engagement and to facilitate greater desires to remain in teaching” (Mérida-López et al., 2020 p. 148). The findings were that teachers with higher emotional intelligence and colleague support did not associate work engagement. Supervisor support still resonates with teachers and work engagement. The study indicates that qualitative and quantitative support or lack of support predicts teachers’ well-being.

Perrone et al. (2019) wanted to identify early career teacher (ECT) burnout and whether administrators affect burnout. There were two questions that Perrone et al. (2019) focused on for their study. The two questions were:

- 1) “Does administrative climate predict ECT burnout?” (p. 196).
- 2) “Does teacher burnout predict ECT retention?” (p. 196).

There were 185 ECT participants in this study. The participants came from 77 schools, 10 districts, and two states. There were five districts in Michigan and five districts in Indiana. The

study took three years to complete. Perrone et al. (2019) conducted two initial studies and one follow-up study. The initial studies were completed for the 2006-2007 and 2008-2009 school years. The follow-up study was completed during the 2009-2010 school year. The methodology the researchers used as a survey was the Michigan, Indiana ECT (MIECT). This study was designed to determine how mentoring and social networks affect ECT burnout, teaching practice, and retention. “A gap in domestic research on teacher burnout—indicative of teacher health, well-being, and sustainability—may be symptomatic of how teachers are viewed and treated in the United States in contrast with other nations. In particular this gap seems to align with U.S. education reform over the past 15 years, during which time teachers have been cast in a more negative light” (Perrone et al., 2019 p. 203).

The findings were broken down based on the two focus questions. *Results for question 1:* When the balance of family and social was negative, there was a higher burnout rate; when the ratio was there, the burnout rate was lower. The burnout rate was higher when ECT felt like the workload was too much. *Results for question 2:* The higher the burnout scores on the survey predicted a lower retention rate. The results of this study are similar to the results of Ford et al., (2019), Howes & Goodman-Delahunty (2015), Mérida-López et al. (2020) Redding & Henry (2018), that the workload and balance of professional life and personal life are not lined up with what is best for teachers' mental health and well-being.

Mental Exhaustion

Braeunig et al. (2018) conducted a study on psychological attitudes toward mental health. “To identify changes in work-related psychological attitudes that influence mental health

improvement in school teachers after participation in a psychological group program” (Braeunig et al., 2018, p.1). Teachers deal with a lot of stress throughout their day, and there are not many ways to work through those stresses to help teachers' mental well-being. The study by Braeuning et al. (2018) focused on investigating “...whether or not those who benefited from the intervention, as measured by the GHQ, showed significantly higher differences concerning changes in the AVEM features, compared to those who did not benefit” (Braeunig et al., 2018 p. 2). Five hundred forty-four teachers were participating in this study. Braeunig et al. (2018) did not mention if they were elementary, secondary, or a combination of both. The study took place in Baden-Wurttemberg by the state by the state Ministry of Culture in Germany. This was a two-year study. The participants had to attend and complete an intervention program. The five modules focused on the following:

- 1) “Basic knowledge of stress physiology and its effects on health parameters” (p. 2-3).
- 2) “Mental attitudes with a particular focus on authenticity and identification” (p. 2-3).
- 3) “Competence in handling relationships with students” (p. 2-3).
- 4) “Competence in managing relationships with parents” (p. 2-3).
- 5) “Strengthening collegiality and social support among the staff” (p. 2-3).

The methodology was an exploratory study. Braeunig et al. (2018) focused on how to help teachers find a balance between working and life balance. The findings indicated that “There was a decrease in the willingness to work until they reach the point of exhaustion, strive for perfection, and the tendency to resign in the face of failure, as well as an increase in

distancing ability and of inner calm and balance” (Braeunig et al., 2018, p. 1). The study also found that there was an increase in being able to distance themselves and being able to find inner calm and balance. Teachers feel more stress and restrictions placed on them during the school year. Providing mental health support for teachers is essential to helping them learn how to cope and find balance in their teaching and personal life.

Jerrim et al. (2020) conducted a study to determine if teachers’ mental health improved once they left the profession. The participants for this study were about 250,000 volunteers ages 40-60. The original study was completed from 2006-2010 in the United Kingdom. Teachers were identified by indicating their occupation on the questionnaires. Once they concluded that, they were asked if they were primary, secondary, early childhood, and special education teachers. Jerrim et al. (2020) did a follow-up questionnaire with a subset of 137,000 participants. The follow-up questionnaire was completed from August 19-September 26, 2016. Based on the questionnaire, the participants were placed in the following groups:

- 1) Current teachers
- 2) Former teachers who left within the last five years
- 3) Former teachers who left within the last 6 to 10 years ago
- 4) Former teachers who left more than ten years ago

The findings were that lower levels of depression and anxiety are mixed. Few outcomes indicated lower levels of depression and anxiety, while other results showed no impact on the levels of depression or anxiety. “Many teachers experience dissatisfaction due to feeling a lack

of control concerning their working conditions, accompanied by the absence of a platform from which to voice their concerns” (Jerrim et al., 2020 p. 1). The results also indicated that teachers who left the profession for a different occupation did not have a change in their mental health and well-being. This was the only article investigating whether leaving the profession improved teachers’ mental health, unlike Kim et al. (2021) and Ford et al. (2019), who focused on specific reasons teachers are leaving the profession. Kim et al. (2021) focused on how COVID-19 impacted teachers, and Ford et al. (2019) focused on how leadership could lead to teachers leaving or staying in the profession. Many studies have been done on “why” teachers are going, but not as many studies have been done on “how” school districts can help teachers stay.

Safiye et al. (2023) conducted a cross-sectional study on teachers’ capacity to mentalize due to the high risk to a teacher’s mental health. “This study aimed to examine whether the capacity for mentalizing in teachers explains the degree of their burnout syndrome” (Safiye et al., 2023, p. 1). There were two hypotheses that Safiye et al. (2023) focused on. The two hypotheses were:

- 1) “Significant positive correlations are expected between low capacity for mentalizing and emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a significant negative correlation between low capacity for mentalizing and the dimension of personal accomplishment” (p. 3).
- 2) “It was expected that a low capacity for mentalizing would be a positive predictor of the dimensions of burnout-emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and a negative predictor of personal accomplishment” (p. 3).

“Mentalizing is a form of imaginative mental activity that consists of interpreting perceived human behavior based on intentional mental states such as needs, desires, feelings, beliefs, goals, purposes, and reasons” (Safiye et al., 2023, p. 3). There were 823 participants in this study. The participants were teachers in Serbia. Safiye et al. (2023) conducted this study from October 2021 through December 2021.

The methodology was using online surveys and questionnaires. The online surveys and questionnaires used were the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey to analyze teacher burnout. The capacity was examined using the hypo-mentalizing and hyper-mentalizing scales from the Reflective Functioning Questionnaire. “Hypomentalizing refers to the lack or absence of consideration of the phenomena of mental life that determine behavior, which takes place through the set of assumptions and their verification in interpersonal interaction” (Safiye et al., 2023, p.3). “Hypermentalizing refers to making too many assumptions about intentional mental states, some of which are uncritically accepted as true, even though they are not true” (Safiye et al., 2023, p. 3). This study shed light on how internalizing feelings, thoughts, and beliefs can affect mental health and well-being. The findings of this study concluded that the participants who experienced an increase in hypermentalizing and Hypomentalizing were positive predictors of personal accomplishment. The study also concluded that socioeconomic status also affected a person's achievements.

“Burnout is comprised of emotional exhaustion, a sense of depersonalization, and experiencing a lack of accomplishment in the workplace” (Oberle et al., 2020 p. 1743). Oberle et al. (2020) conducted a study to find the correlation between elementary teacher burnout and how students perceive teachers' social-emotional competence (SEC). “Teachers are the engines that

drive students' social-emotional learning in schools and classrooms. Teachers' social-emotional competence (SEC) and well-being are central to the social-emotional support they can provide to students" (Oberle et al., 2020, p. 1742). Oberle et al. (2020) had three hypotheses and one exploratory research question they focused on for this study. The three hypotheses were:

- 1) "We expected to find significant classroom-level variance in student-rated teacher SEC because students with classrooms share experiences with the same classroom teacher" (p. 1744).
- 2) "Based on previous research and theory, we expected that higher levels of self-reported teacher burnout would be associated with lower levels of student-rated teacher SEC" (p. 1744).
- 3) "We also expected that a more positive school concept and higher levels of autonomy in the classroom would be significantly associated with higher ratings of teacher SEC." (p. 1744).
- 4) "Whether student, teacher, and school demographic variables are significantly linked to student-rated teacher SEC was an exploratory question" (p. 1744).

The participants were both students and teachers. There were 676 students, 35 teachers. There were 26- 4th-grade students, 95- 5th-grade students, 224- 6th grade students, and 331- 7th grade students. The study took place in an urban district in Canada. The study was completed from January 2019 to February 2019. The study's methodology was having university researchers survey a one-hour classroom visit. The researchers read the questions aloud to all students. Students were allowed to ask for clarification of any question on the survey. The

teachers completed a self-report survey online. The survey for the teachers was aimed at teaching experiences and occupational stress and burnout. This study found that “the significant association between burnout and teacher SEC was over and above the role that students’ perceptions of autonomy in the classroom and students’ school self-concept played for perceptions of teacher SEC” (Oberle et al., 2020 p. 1750).

The primary findings between teacher burnout and student perception were exciting. They found that the students believed younger teachers were more in tune with their social and emotional competency. They also found that the students noticed teacher burnout. Students’ perceptions of their teacher burnout differ from the teachers’ perceptions based on the stress and burnout teachers reported. There is a link between how students perceive teachers’ SEC and teacher burnout, yet more research is needed to understand better.

Constant Changing School Environment

Brasfield et al. (2019) were interested in finding if there was a correlation between teachers’ wellness and teacher burnout. There were three focus questions for this study. The questions were:

- 1) “The relationship between total wellness and the three dimensions of burnout” (p. 169).
- 2) “The relationship between the five factors of wellness” (p. 169).
- 3) “The relationship between future vocational plans” (p.169).

“The teaching profession has been ranked historically as one of the highest stress-related careers, with reports indicating that most teachers have low job satisfaction” (Brasfield et al., 2019 p. 166). In one of the most stress-related careers, finding ways to help teachers decompress their stress levels is essential. According to Brasfield et al. (2019) “Low job satisfaction in the teaching profession is related to occupational stress, which often results in low levels of physical health and psychological well-being” (Brasfield et al., 2019 p.166). Taking care of oneself is extremely important for one’s mental health and well-being. There were 107 Pre-K- 12th-grade teachers as participants. The study occurred in the Semirural district in the Mid-South region of the USA. Unfortunately, the researchers did not mention how long or when the study occurred as it was done as an online survey. Brasfield et al. (2019) used the following two questionnaires and rating scales to get their results. The questionnaire and rating scales were the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educator Survey and the Five-Factor Wellness Inventory.

The findings aligned with other research that emotional exhaustion among teachers was one of the main factors and contributors to teacher burnout. The primary findings were the surveys used to determine mitigating burnout factors and how to decrease teacher burnout. Three different models were used to analyze data from the surveys. The first model had four independent variables and focused on total wellness, age, year of experience, and grade level currently teaching. The second model focused on five variables: creative self, coping self, social self, essential self, and physical self. The third model focused on future vocational plans. Using these three models, the researchers determined what factors played a more prominent or lesser role in teacher burnout. Considering Brasfield et al. (2019), Braeunig et al. (2018), and Mérida-López et al. (2020) all conducted studies on teacher well-being and how they impact their

burnout rate, schools should be looking into providing accessible opportunities for teachers to work on their own well-being and mental health.

Shackleton et al. (2019) conducted a study on how the school environment plays a role in teacher burnout. “Teachers report higher levels of stress than most occupational groups. Burnout is a specific psychological condition that results from chronic job stress characterized by emotional exhaustion, low personal accomplishments, and depersonalization” (Shackleton et al., 2019 p. 977). There was not a specific question that Shackleton et al. (2019) focused on but instead used a randomized controlled trial. Two thousand two hundred seventy-eight teachers participated in the study. The study used 40 secondary schools to complete the study. The study took three years to complete. This study was done in England. The methodology for this study used baseline data collected using the INCLUSIVE trial. Teachers were asked to complete a questionnaire. The dependent variable, teachers, answered questions from the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), which measured emotional exhaustion, personal accomplishments, and depersonalization. The independent variables were scaled using department for education performance tables and free-school meals entitlement. The researchers used 6-year averages to get a good idea of the school.

The findings show that the school environment affects teacher burnout. Teacher burnout was consistent across the board in their sample group, which consisted of 39 schools and 2,278 teachers. The researchers found that teachers working in private, faith-based schools had lower teacher burnout rates than public schools. The primary findings of the baseline phase of the study are similar to other studies conducted throughout the United States, Canada, and Norway. There is a correlation between school environment and teacher burnout. The results also show a higher

rate of teacher burnout in teachers working in a public school compared to those working in a private, faith-based school. Shackleton et al. (2019) research correlates with Ford et al. (2019) and Redding & Henry's (2018) studies that show that leadership and working conditions impact teacher burnout.

Peyton et al. (2020) focused on the differences between high and low turnover rates for Special Education teachers. Peyton et al. (2020) focused on three questions that led to one central question for their research. The questions were

- 1) “How do high and low SET shortage states differ in demographics?” (p.8).
- 2) “How do high and low SET shortage states differ on variables that affect SET supply (i.e., number of new special education graduates)?” (p.8).
- 3) “How do high and low SET shortage states differ on variables that drive demand (i.e., student enrollments, teacher/student ratios, per-pupil expenditures, mobility, and commitment)?” (p.8).

The main question comprised of the three questions mentioned above:

- 1) “Is special education teaching a more attractive occupation in low than high-shortage states?” (p.8).

This study did not have participants. Peyton et al. (2020) used personnel data collected from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The researchers used data from 2006-2014. Seven states were identified as having low shortages, and seven were identified with consistently high shortage rates. This differs from all the other studies used for this literature

review. There were no interventions or questionnaires used. The methodology that was used The researchers used the OSEP and National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) to collect data. These databases keep track of special education teachers and their qualifications to separate “highly qualified” and “non-highly qualified” teachers. There were four demographic areas that researchers looked at, they were:

- 1) Population
- 2) Population density
- 3) Percentage of White school-age children
- 4) Per capita gross domestic product (GDP)

There was no significant difference between the areas and high and low teacher shortages. The primary findings for higher and lower teacher shortages looked at 14 states. Seven states had the lowest teacher shortage rates, and seven had the highest. Compensation, special education degree production, and investments in public education play a role in either high or low teacher shortages. Researchers suggest that more in-depth state-by-state studies must be conducted to understand why some states have higher rates than others. Peyton et al. (2020) took a different approach to conducting this study compared to all the other studies used for this research on teacher burnout. Using a national database that lists teachers leaving and gives an overview of the district they were working in and what state they lived in is something that the other researchers should have used. They used actual participants who could give a more in-depth description and reasoning as to why they chose to either stay or leave their careers.

Genoud Waroux (2021) conducted a study questioning how personal factors impact teacher burnout. This study took place in Switzerland. Four hundred seventy secondary teachers were participating in this study. Like most of the research already completed, this study was done using online surveys and questionnaires. Genoud Waroux (2021) should have mentioned how long this study took. One different area for this study was that Genoud & Waroux (2021) focused on personality traits as a cause leading toward teacher burnout. Most of the research for this specific school improvement plan focused on external rather than internal factors. Brasfield et al. (2019) looked at teachers' wellness and how that affected teacher burnout. Wellness can be both internal and external. "The link between stress and burnout has been thoroughly documented in scientific literature, particularly for teachers whose sources of stress include students, their parents, and sometimes their school's administration.

It is largely accepted that important and prolonged stress may cause burnout in individuals who do not have the resources to cope with these external pressures" (Genoud & Waroux, 2021 p. 4). The survey comprised 27 items focused on emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of personal accomplishment. The findings were "These initial results thus confirm the importance of teachers' personalities in their reactions to the many stressors present in their professional context" (Genoud & Waroux, 2021 p. 9). The study concluded that personalities can hurt burnout rates. This must be considered when determining what intervention and prevention practices to support teachers.

There is much research about what is causing teacher burnout. The significant points leading to teacher burnout are the effects COVID-19 had on teachers and mental health and well-being. There is another side to teacher burnout, and that is generational expectations. The

younger generation has different expectations of what teaching entails and how much time they want to put into their career. Many hours are put in that are not “contract hours” that include after school and weekends. Classroom management is also something that takes time, effort, and patience. Teachers are perceived as only working nine months out of the year. This is not true. Teachers may only have students for nine months out of the year, but there is a lot of preparation, classes, and work put into the summer to prepare for the next school year. New teachers are not prepared for the time and accountability required to prepare students for the future.

The consensus of the findings for teacher burnout is the effect COVID-19 had on the profession and the restrictions and extra duties placed on teachers to meet the needs of students during and after the pandemic. Another factor is the mental health and well-being of teachers. When teachers are responsible for many aspects of teaching, including students’ mental health and well-being, it begins to affect a teacher’s mental health. There are many staff development classes offered in districts. However, those classes are not geared toward helping teachers cope with their mental health and well-being. Implementing teacher mental health and well-being support is a small step in helping teachers stay in the profession and preventing teacher burnout. Starting small with one school and determining how a mental health and well-being intervention for teachers can reduce stress and increase positivity will only be a small step in supporting teachers and the beginning of changing how teachers are supported in their districts.

School Profile & Baseline

Community Characteristics

Gillette, Wyoming, is in Northeast Wyoming. Campbell County School District 1 is in Gillette. Campbell County School District comprises 17 elementary schools, six secondary

schools, and one virtual school. Gillette, Wyoming, has a population of 33,403 people, as reported by the 2020 census. According to the 2020 census, 88.8% of the population was white, 10.1% Hispanic, and 7.8 % other races. Campbell County had 8,633 students enrolled during the 2021-2022 school year. There were 4,232 or 49.02% female students attending school and 4,401 or 50.98% male students. According to Wyoming Department of Education (WDE), 11% of the students enrolled were identified with a disability. 30% of the families were in the low-income bracket, while 70% were not considered to be in the low-income bracket.

District Characteristics

There are 8,750 students currently enrolled. Campbell County is known for staying up to date with technology resources for students and staff. Campbell County uses Schoology to increase students' technology needs. This program was implemented when students and staff returned to in-person school after the COVID-19 shutdown. This program has helped students stay caught up with assignments when they are gone. It also allows teachers to post teaching videos when they must be away from the classroom. Schoology has helped students, teachers, and parents stay connected with daily assignments and grades.

School and District Mission and Vision

Campbell County School District's mission statement is "Empowering our Students for Success," and the vision is "United in Excellence." Campbell County has two district goals that are in place to increase student success. They are:

1) Goal 1: Improve Student Achievement

- A) Students will demonstrate proficiency or growth as measured by the district assessment system.**

- B) District grade levels will exceed the state average in content areas measured by the Wyoming state assessment.
 - C) The district graduation rate will exceed the state graduation rate.
- 2) Goal 2: Support Student and Employee Well-Being
- A) The district will provide evidence-based programs and services to support students' physical and mental well-being.
 - B) The district will provide programs to support physical and mental well-being.

Campbell County strives to help students succeed in all they do and have great opportunities for students to enhance their learning. Students can do this by taking college classes through the district. Another way students are supported is by having counseling services and access to different programs like virtual school, which is set up for students who struggle in the everyday classroom. Virtual school is designed through the district so students can work independently, go out for sports and still apart of the district and community.

Current Student Learning Goals

Students in Campbell County are assessed using FastBridge and WYTOPP (Wyoming Test of Proficiency and Progress). FastBridge is completed three times a year. Our students complete FastBridge in the Fall, Winter, and Spring. FastBridge monitors students reading fluency, reading comprehension, math fluency, and math problem-solving. WYTOPP is conducted in the Spring. Throughout the school year, students take WYTOPP Modules. This gives teachers data on the progress their students are making or not making. Each year, grade levels work on S.M.A.R.T (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely) goals. Based on the WYTOPP scores from 2021-2022, our focus was ELA for the 2022-2023

school year. We provide ELO (Extra Learning Opportunity) for students who are struggling. This is done twice a week after school. Our teachers also have time scheduled during the day for interventions that students are grouped based on their needs.

School Characteristics

The state standard tests the data is collected from is the Wyoming Test of Proficient Progress (WY-TOPP). According to the Wyoming Department of Education website for Wyoming public schools in English Language Arts, Conestoga Elementary School had a 51.25% proficiency score for grades 3rd through 6th. Campbell County School District had a 51.32% for 3rd through 6th grade. This was an improvement from the 2021-2022 percentages. Conestoga Elementary strives on improving each year and the teachers collaborate together to work toward the improvement goal set.

Campbell County provides new hires a three-day in-service aimed at helping new teachers learn what they can expect from their district. New teachers meet with smaller groups based on their job assignments. This is scheduled the week before teachers report for their week-long meetings and training. Once school is back in session, new hires are assigned a mentor teacher from the principal to help them learn the curriculum, planning, and classroom management and answer any questions that the new teachers might have. New teachers in Special Education are also sent to trainings on Sped Advantage and Behavior Advantage. The district uses these two online programs to write IEPs and BIPs. They also meet with mentors to help them when writing goals, progress notes, and data collection. Through the years, our district has worked hard to improve and support new teachers to get acclimated and comfortable with the many resources available. Teachers are also encouraged to attend conferences throughout the

United States. Teachers attend PLC conferences, CEC conferences (Council for Exceptional Children), and Innovative School Summit conferences. These are a few that teachers have attended and brought back ideas on how to help our students increase their success.

Students are provided many opportunities to enhance and improve their academics as well as extracurricular activities. In the area of academics each student is provided an iPad for their daily use in the classroom. This has provided many opportunities to expand their learning beyond the four walls of the classroom. The district also has a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (S.T.E.M.) lab that students attend once a week. Another way Campbell County provides education outside of the classroom is by taking 5th grade students to a 2 ½ day nature science camp. Students get to spend 2 ½ days learning and exploring nature around them. Campbell County School District also provides ways to get students involved in extracurricular activities. One way is each school has football teams for combined grade levels. For example, the 3rd and 4th grades comprise a team. Each school has chess club for 2nd through 6th grade and at the end of the year a chess tournament is held among the different schools. Each school also has a before and after school program for students whose parents are still at work until 6:00 p.m. This provides students a chance to work on homework and have a safe place to stay until parents can pick them up.

Student Performance

Based on WY-TOPP scores from 2021-2022, students' area for improvement was in ELA. Third through sixth grade scores were reported. There was 100% participation rate. WY-TOPP scores for the 2022-2023 school year showed improvement for students who attended Conestoga Elementary. According to WDE 37.70% were below basic in third grade, 16.95% in

4th grade, 24.07% in 5th grade, and 25% in 6th grade scored below basic. 27.87%, 28.81%, 31.48%, and 20% scored basic in grades 3-6th grade respectively. 3rd grade students had 34.36% proficient and 11.53% advanced. 34.69% students in 4th grade were proficient and 14.17% were advanced. 5th grade students scored 34.38% proficient and 12.61% advanced. 45.94% of 6th grade students scored proficient and 15.31% scored advanced.

The S.M.A.R.T. goal the staff created was to increase the ELA achievement score by 4% as measured by the WYTOPP state assessment. The steps to implement the strategies to achieve this goal were the implementation of Panorama, UFLI for Foundational Phonics Instruction of Skills, continuation of Heggerty of Foundational Phonemic Awareness of Instruction of Skills, Small Group Intervention Time and ELO, LETRS, Site-based Professional Development, PLC's and Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) to help students achieve these goals. Some of the MTSS that Conestoga has in place are Reading Recovery, Read Naturally, One Minute Reads, and Progress Monitoring. These strategies are currently in place, and data is currently being collected.

Parent Involvement

Parent involvement is something that our school is very fortunate to have. We see an excellent turnout for different events our students are involved in. Our parents stay actively involved in their children's education. We encourage parents to stop by anytime and communicate openly to ensure everyone is on the same page in the children's best interest. In recent years, we have built up our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), which provides fundraisers for the school, teacher appreciation, and student appreciation. Parents can stay up to date with their students' teachers and schools through REMIND. You can receive this application

through the app or text messages. This allows teachers and parents to communicate efficiently. Parent-teacher conferences occur once a year at the end of the first quarter. Parents are encouraged to volunteer for field trips and classroom celebrations. Parents play a vital role in their children's education, and it is important to us to keep them as involved as much as possible.

Teacher Work

Teachers spend countless hours preparing for their students. There are many days when teachers are at school early in the morning and late at night, working on different aspects of their classroom to meet the needs of students. Students come first in the teachers' world. Based on personal observation, personal experience, and conversations had with teachers throughout the district, our teachers work hard to provide for our students and have their best interest at heart. Conestoga Elementary has outstanding teachers who view their students as their children and are willing to do whatever it takes to guide, instruct, and encourage their success. The amount of time spent preparing for students can be a cause leading toward teacher burnout. Teachers are feeling the pressure for student success based on WY-TOPP scores.

Curriculum Design

Campbell County works diligently to find the best curriculum for its school district. Last year, when the ELA scores were not where the district had hoped, they began the search for ways to improve ELA. Campbell County School District chose to bring back a reading curriculum that is not only focused on reading and language arts but incorporates science into their daily reading. Panorama and UFLI for Foundational Phonics Instruction of Skill are two new curricula teachers use. Two years ago, Campbell County, researched different math curriculums and based on the research decided to go with Eureka Math. This program has been challenged not only our

students, but our teachers in a positive way. The way Eureka breaks down and explains the process behind the why and not just getting the correct answer has been beneficial for our students.

Instructional Strategies

Teachers in Campbell County use different instructional strategies to teach their students. Combining different strategies allows for maximum learning. Our teachers know and understand that all students learn differently and bringing the content to them in different ways has been highly beneficial for the students. Problem-solving, exploratory learning, drill and practice, concept-mapping, lecture, and project-based learning are some ways that teachers use to reach students and their learning needs. Our classroom teachers meet weekly during PLC to discuss data from FastBridge, WY-TOPP modules, assessments, and interventions being done. During PLC teachers discuss how interventions are going, what needs to be changed to help students who are still struggling and collaborating with each other to find the best intervention to meet the different needs of the students.

Assessment Practices

FastBridge, WYTOPP, and DIBELS are the district and state assessments used to measure student growth or lack thereof. Intervention groups are based and changed according to the results of FastBridge and DIBELS. WYTOPP is the state assessment that measures students' yearly growth or lack thereof. Teachers can determine where students are struggling because FastBridge breaks their results down, and teachers can use those results to focus on specific interventions. Teachers can use WY-TOPP modules to help determine where students are

struggling. Based on the information provided by the state and district assessments teachers are able to form, adjust, and implement interventions that meet the specific needs of our students.

Professional Development

Professional development is an area that needs improvement. There are a lot of training and classes designed to help new teachers, which is essential, but there are not many trainings or courses to help teachers with their own mental health and well-being. This is an area that needs improvement as we are seeing an increase in teachers leaving the profession. Professional Development is an area that teachers utilize to improve their teaching skills. Campbell County does a great job of providing training and classes that help new teachers learn content-specific areas, as well as helping veteran teachers improve their teaching skills. Teachers are struggling more and more with their own mental health and well-being. Providing classes designed to help teachers navigate their mental health and well-being would be very beneficial.

Needs Assessment

Campbell County School District does a tremendous job of providing a variety of professional development classes for teachers to enhance their teaching. There are two classes offered this semester that pertain to childhood trauma. These courses teach how to help and work with students who have experienced childhood trauma or are experiencing mental health struggles. There is no single class designed to help teachers struggling with their mental health. The district puts a lot of effort into helping students and families with mental health struggles. On the district website, under staff members, employees can find information for counseling services and a phone number for a 24/7 crisis hotline. However, if you are in crisis, this is not easily attainable information.

Each school year, the week before students return, teachers go to in-service meetings, collaborations, and building time spent working in classrooms preparing for the upcoming school year. There are many opportunities to provide information to staff about how the district is prepared to help them when they experience mental health issues. However, there have never been speakers or professional development devoted to supporting teachers. With the burnout rate increasing and more and more teachers leaving the profession behind, decreasing teacher burnout rate needs to be addressed. Teaching is a high-stress job and can quickly wear on a teacher's mental health. "The presence of multiple stressors without the existence of the necessary coping skills to alleviate the stress often leads to burnout" (Brasfield et al., 2019 p. 167).

For some, talking about their mental health is a struggle in and of itself. Most teachers do not want to admit that they are struggling. Teachers are often the constant in a student's life and feel guilty when they cannot provide stability for their students. There is a lot of pressure placed on teachers' shoulders. Teachers are responsible for classroom management, teaching the curriculum, state testing, managing behaviors, and providing support to their students in the many ways students need support.

"Stress is reportedly higher among teachers working with students in high-need, economically disadvantaged areas with diverse student bodies" (Brasfield et al., 2019 p. 167). Conestoga Elementary has a diverse clientele. 34% of the students are on free and reduced lunches. Conestoga also houses one of three Skills Programs in the district. The skills program works with students with emotional, social, and behavioral disabilities. Being on heightened alert due to the severity of the behaviors that can and are displayed at times is very hard on a teacher's mental health. "Student behavioral concerns such as discipline, disobedience, and negative affect

are also associated with teacher job dissatisfaction” (Brasfield et al., 2019 p. 167). Student behaviors that tend to be negative and explosive increase the stress a teacher has throughout each day.

When a person is on an airplane, the flight attendants tell people to put their masks on first in an emergency. Flight attendants say this because a person cannot help others if they can't help themselves first. This analogy describes how teachers need to take care of their mental health before they can help students with their mental health struggles. Providing professional development and check-ins with teachers will help decrease teacher burnout. Knowing that you are not alone in the struggle and that people are looking out for you goes a long way in preventing teachers from leaving the profession. Giving teachers ways to work through the stress they experience with someone who knows what they are going through will be extremely beneficial for incoming and veteran teachers experiencing mental health struggles associated with their jobs. Describing to others why a teacher is mentally exhausted and stressed because the job is not “physical” is hard for others outside the profession to understand. Providing support from teachers and administrators who work directly with a teacher and their students will be beneficial for teachers' mental health. It will provide the support teachers need to be able to continue to do their jobs to the best of their ability.

Data Analysis

Data Summary

When studying data and determining where the need for improvement is, it is essential to look at all data that has been collected and look for emerging or constant patterns. Campbell County School District currently has 844 certified staff among 17 elementary schools, two jr.

high schools, three high schools, and one virtual school. When collecting data to determine if there was a need to examine why teachers were leaving, records were requested for the last five years to determine if more teachers were leaving before COVID-19 or after. The Human Resource Department compiles the reasons teachers state when turning in their resignation letters, this data was collected from the head of our Human Resources Department. The school and grade level are also recorded. The data showed an increased number of teachers leaving the profession in the last five years. Teachers leaving the profession has increased each year for the last five years. The highest number of teachers who left the profession occurred during the 2022-2023 school year. The following two figures depict the number of teachers leaving due to the following reasons: retirement, relocation, and resignation. Figure 1 shows the data for 2018-2020 school years. Figure 2 shows data for 2021-2023 school years. 2018 the number of teachers retiring was significantly higher compared to teachers retiring in 2019 and 2020. The number of teachers leaving due to resignation jumped substantially higher at the end of the 2020 school year than 2018 and 2019 combined. COVID-19 was in the early stages of the shutdown during this time. The school district had gone to complete virtual learning from March until May. This was very frustrating and mentally exhausting because teachers and families were not prepared to complete the last quarter of the school year in this manner.

Figure 1

Reasons Teachers Leave (2018-2020)

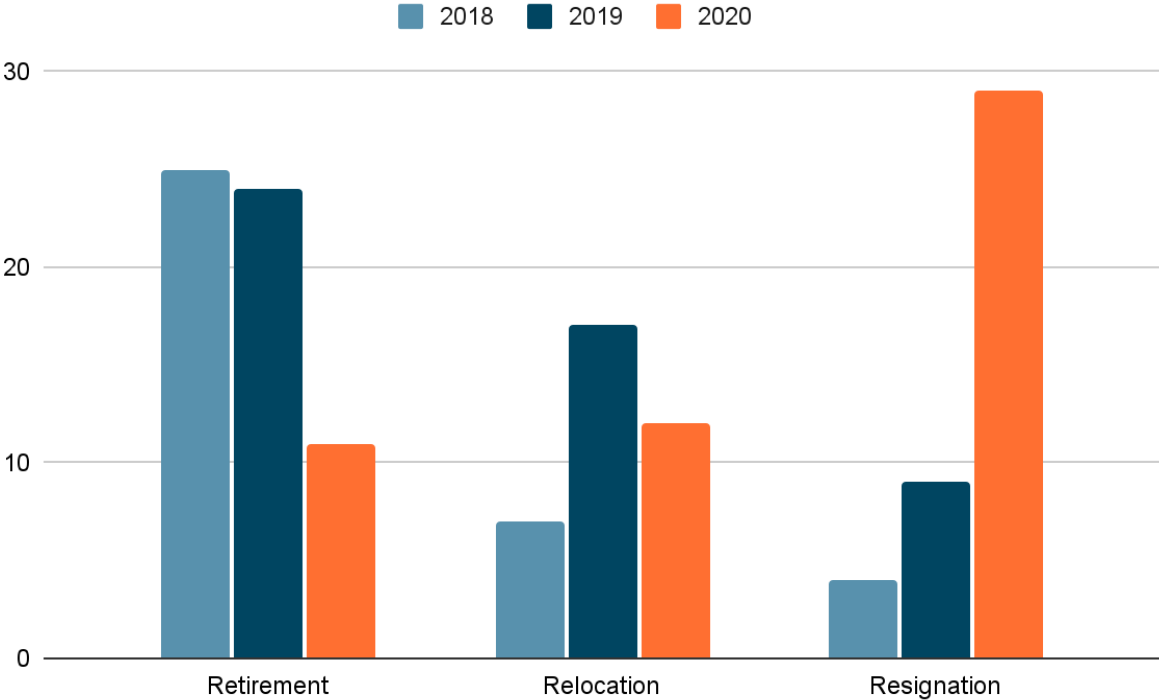
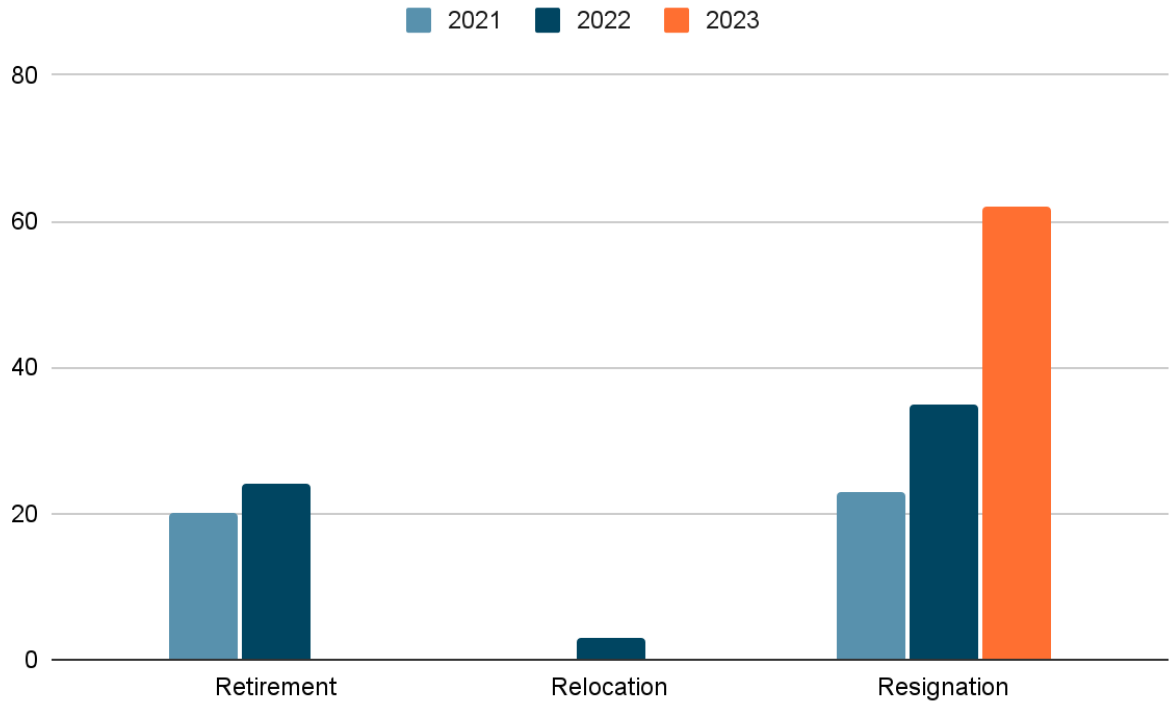


Figure 2*Reasons Teachers Leave (2021-2023)*

According to figure 1 and figure 2 above retirement was the main reason teachers left during the 2017-2018 school year and was the only reason listed for the 2022-2023 school year. This data could be skewed for the 2022-2023 school year because there were no other reasons listed in the information provided by the Human Resource Department. Relocation was the main reason for teachers leaving during the 2018-2019 school year, and Resignations increased substantially for the 2019-2020 school. This was also the beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Fears, stress, and increased responsibilities helped lead to teacher burnout. 2020-2021 saw a slight drop in resignations and an increase in retirements, and no relocations were listed as

reasons for leaving. A significant increase in resignations was reported for the 2021-2022 school year, along with a slight increase in teachers retiring. Sixty-two teachers were listed as resignations for the 2022-2023 school year. There were no other reasons given for last year's data.

The data tells us that more and more teachers are choosing to leave on their own accord. While there are teachers who left due to health reasons after COVID-19, most teachers decided to resign. There were multiple reasons for teachers leaving from 2018 to 2020; however, after 2020, few teachers left because of retirement or relocation. The data for 2023 could be skewed toward the true reason teachers left, as the only reason listed was resignation.

School Challenges

From the data retrieved for the last five years, the records were not kept the same from year to year. This made it difficult to get the complete picture of why teachers were leaving. 2018-2019 had reasons listed, but years of service were not listed for anyone leaving the district. 2019, again, had different reasons listed, but very few years of service were recorded. If there were teachers who were leaving after ten years or less, there was no data. Data for the 2019-2020 school year also had different reasons for why teachers were leaving, and again, very few years of service were recorded. The 2020-2021 school year resignation data stated that teachers were leaving because of resignation or retirement. There were no relocations listed. The years of service listed for the 2020-2021 school year were 20 years or more, but not everyone had a year listed. 2021-2022 had only three teachers listed as having served ten years or less. The most drastic number the data provided was for the 2022-2023 school year. There were 23 teachers out

of the 62 resignations submitted who had served ten years or less, and the only reason given was resignation. This makes it difficult to understand why the teachers were leaving.

School Strengths

A strength of the data was seeing that most teachers leaving had served more than ten years. This provides hope for teachers that Campbell County School District strives to provide for their teachers and students. Another strength of the data provided was seeing how many teachers retired, relocated, or resigned from each building and the occupied position. Taking that information, personnel can decipher if there is a problem in a particular building or if there is a reason as to why there are more elementary or secondary teachers leaving. Once that information is determined, a course of action to improve retention rates can be implemented.

Assessment Options

A necessary assessment that would be beneficial to gather more data would be to conduct the Maslach Burnout Inventory. This would provide a better understanding as to why teachers are leaving. The Maslach Burnout Inventory is also a way to understand where to begin and implement a mental health plan to help prevent teachers from burnout. The following open-ended questions would also be beneficial in understanding and guiding the administration in their quest to help teachers with their mental health; “How can you describe your mental health after reopening schools? What are the factors that impacted your mental health after reopening schools? What kind of check-ins have you received from your schools? What psychological services or interventions, if any, have you received from your school? What psychological services do you prefer to receive from your school?” (Hesham Abdou Ahmed, 2023 p.3). This information would be necessary to create a positive mental health intervention for teachers.

Action Plan

Strategies

There have been many studies to determine why there is a high teacher burnout rate. Some reasons discovered during the research were COVID-19, lack of teacher support, mental exhaustion, and the constantly changing school environment. Most studies determined these reasons by using surveys and questionnaires asking current teachers how they feel about their profession and if they have thought about leaving. Researchers have asked former teachers why they chose to leave the profession. There was only one study where the researchers used an intervention to help decrease the burnout rate. Braeunig et al. (2018), conducted research using a two-year study on teacher mental exhaustion. The participants had to attend six in-person sessions focusing on how to help teachers find a balance between work and personal life. Each session focused on how to gain the balance needed to obtain mental health wellness.

Alignment to Research

“The balanced use of professional resources is a critical ingredient in maintaining teachers’ health” (Braeunig et al., 2018, p. 1). There were six sessions held over two years, and the participants had to attend at least five sessions or attend a full-day seminar. Participants also had to answer pre- and post-questionnaires regarding how the interventions helped or did not help teachers gain better mental health wellness. The researchers used a Balint-type group work to complete the interventions. This type of group work is done to help facilitate open communication between the intervention leaders and the group members. This also allows teachers and intervention leaders to express their thoughts, concerns, and questions freely.

Allowing teachers to communicate freely with a group of other teachers feeling the same way lets them know they are not alone in what they are feeling and can begin to work together to help each other reach a better mental health state.

The results of this intervention showed how teachers' mental health can be improved by using programs designed to promote positive mental health strategies. "An important lesson to be learned from these results is that teachers' health can be improved or maintained by intervention programs that promote self-regulation by adjusting commitment and strengthening resistance, i.e., tuning the use of professional resources..." (Braeunig et al., 2018, p. 5). Working with students who display aggressive behaviors and refuse to complete tasks, working with their parents to help each student be successful, all the while managing 20-plus students every day, all day, wears on teachers' mental health. Designing an intervention where teachers feel safe and heard will go a long way toward decreasing the burnout rate that the education system is currently seeing.

Addressing teachers' concerns and letting them know they are not alone in what they are feeling and experiencing is the first step in providing the support needed to decrease the burnout teachers are experiencing daily. Conestoga Elementary School would benefit from an intervention program to help teachers find a balance. Conestoga is one of three schools that has a Tier 3 behavior program in their building. Teachers and students experience high levels of stress due to the severity of some of the behaviors displayed in the classrooms. This is in addition to the daily stress of teaching and managing 20-plus students. The school improvement plan is centered on the Book "First Aid for Teachers: How You Can Have Peace and Success" By Jenny Grant Rankin.

Proposed Improvement Plan

Table 1

School Improvement Action Plan

<p>Step 1 Present Pre-Intervention Survey: The Maslach Burnout Inventory</p>	<p>This is given to all teachers</p>
<p>Step 2 Discuss and present objectives for the intervention</p>	<p>Present all teachers with the book “First Aid for Teachers: How You Can Have Peace and Success” By Jenny Grant Rankin. Share The First Aid for Teacher Burnout Action Plan Graphic organizer with each teacher. This can be done online so teachers can add when they want.</p>
<p>Step 3 Teachers will Read Part 1: Introduction Chapter 1: Help is on the Way</p>	<p>Teachers will read individually, and then we will discuss as a group thoughts and feelings. These thoughts and feelings will be recorded on Google Docs and shared with the staff. Teachers will be able to add their takeaways. The inspiring soundtrack will also be added and shared with the staff. Staff will be encouraged to listen to songs from the list and speak to them. The definition of Burnout will be defined and discussed as a whole group.</p>

	<p>Teachers will complete the reflection exercise at the end of the chapter and share it with the group the next time we meet.</p>
<p>Step 4 Assign Chapters 2-3 Chapter 2: Mindset and Wellbeing Chapter 3: Environment</p>	<p>Teachers will read independently and write in the Reflection Exercises to share with others the following week. Create a table with Unconstructive Thoughts and Constructive Thoughts. Discuss and encourage teachers to find opportunities to laugh (laughter is good for the soul).</p> <p>Create healthy habit groups with teachers that are done daily—for example, 20 20-minute power walks after school or Zoom yoga classes either before or after school. Start healthy rituals, get enough sleep, replace emotional eating with healthy rewards (take a relaxing bath, buy something you have been wanting), and encourage teachers to play the music that they love.</p> <p>Make projects doable, enlist help when needed, and plan. This will help take the stress off your shoulders. Less is more in classrooms, and decluttering and “freshening up” your classroom will also help lessen the stress a teacher feels. Teachers will post positive and inspirational quotes throughout their rooms. Teachers will also establish systems in their rooms for functioning. If a</p>

	<p>teacher already does this, this is one less step they will need to help them decrease their burnout.</p> <p>Teachers will complete the reflection exercise at the end of the chapter and share it with the group the next time we meet.</p>
<p>Step 5 Assign Chapter 4</p> <p>Chapter 4: Overstimulation</p>	<p>Teachers will begin to set boundaries for themselves at school. Teachers are always “on” the moment they step into the building. One step is making sure teachers are taking their lunch. This is time for them to eat peacefully and take a mental break before getting ready for the afternoon. Teachers will document what breaks they took for themselves outside of school and be encouraged to stay off electronic devices as much as they can when not at school. Teachers will meet and share with others what they have done to set boundaries for themselves.</p> <p>Teachers will complete the reflection exercise at the end of the chapter and share it with the group the next time we meet.</p>
<p>Step 6 Assign Chapter 5</p> <p>Chapter 5: Grading</p>	<p>Teachers will begin to lessen what they are grading. Grades should be for the essential and most recent assignments.</p> <p>Encouraging teachers not to grade everything they do in class will reduce the pressure and time constraints teachers feel when grading</p>

	<p>assignments. This, in turn, will free up time for teachers to spend on themselves and their families</p> <p>Teachers will complete the reflection exercise at the end of the chapter and share it with the group the next time we meet.</p>
<p>Step 7 Assign Chapters 6 and 7 Chapter 6: Volume Chapter 7: Collaboration</p>	<p>Teachers will work on setting realistic goals to help reduce burnout. Setting unrealistic goals or perfection causes teachers to become overstimulated and increase burnout. On page 96, there is a series of questions teachers will ask themselves to decide what they can eliminate and what they need to focus on.</p> <p>Teachers will focus on planning together if they are not already doing this. Teachers will also get a mentor within the building. This person will be on to help and alleviate the stress a teacher might be feeling. Teachers will have a different person to check on them and help with any stress or concerns.</p> <p>Teachers will complete the reflection exercise at the end of the chapter and share it with the group the next time we meet.</p>
<p>Step 8 Assign Chapters 8 and 9</p>	<p>Teachers will work on not overcommitting themselves to extra activities and committees. Teachers will work on setting boundaries. It is hard to say “no” and teachers who find themselves</p>

<p>Chapter 8: Overcommitting</p> <p>Chapter 9: Curriculum</p>	<p>always saying yes will work on setting boundaries, so they are not overwhelmed.</p> <p>Teachers will develop a lesson-sharing system. This allows all teachers to add and share what they are doing in the classroom, and it also gives teachers a chance to use other teachers' incredible lessons. Teachers will also create a unit by dividing and conquering. Each teacher in their grade level team will be responsible for an entire lesson. Then, the lessons will be combined to form a unit they will use in their classrooms.</p> <p>It is difficult for teachers to express that they are not adequately trained in an area. This chapter will focus on teachers expressing their concerns when they feel they have not been adequately trained in a specific curriculum area. Teachers will be encouraged to let the administration know when they need more training to teach to the best of their ability.</p> <p>Teachers will complete the reflection exercise at the end of the chapter and share it with the group the next time we meet.</p>
<p>Step 9 Assign Chapter 10</p>	<p>Teachers will be encouraged to incorporate technology into their classrooms. Setting up Google Classroom provides great opportunities to share with your students' different resources for</p>

Chapter 10: Technology	<p>learning. Using an online planner like Planbook allows teachers to be able to plan lessons from anywhere. It also allows teachers to move lessons that they did not get to or finish to the next day with ease. Using online communications with parents and staff is an easy way for everyone involved with students to know what is happening. Remind is great source for teachers to use with parents and coworkers. Using online grading systems when creating quizzes gives the opportunity for quizzes to be grading instantly when submitted. This saves time for the teacher to continue working with students and allows for teachers to have more “me” time at home.</p> <p>Teachers will complete the reflection exercise at the end of the chapter and share it with the group the next time we meet.</p>
<p>Step 10 Assign Chapters 11 and 12 Chapter 11: Behavior Chapter 12: Administration</p>	<p>Teachers will watch www.teachingchannel.org and www.teachertube.com to watch other teachers for ideas when they are at a loss for how to reach student behaviors. Teachers who feel lost will also observe other teachers with smooth-running classrooms. Teachers attending will take notes to bring to the discussion to get help in implementing new management strategies in their classrooms.</p>

	<p>Teachers will also write down ways they interacted with their students positively. This helps keep the focus that teachers love their students at the forefront of their minds.</p> <p>Teachers and administrators will work on communicating effectively. Having an open mindset when it comes to district policies or changes that are made will help both sides lower the burnout rate.</p> <p>Teachers will complete the reflection exercise at the end of the chapter and share it with the group the next time we meet.</p>
<p>Step 11 Assign Chapter 13</p> <p>Chapter 13: Parents</p>	<p>Involving parents in different ways will help keep parents involved and reduce the stress when sending items home for them to help with. When having parents sign up for events, be specific about what you, as the teacher, want for your classroom.</p> <p>Technology has come a long and many parents are not familiar with their child’s different apps. Provide parent workshops at school that will allow the parents to come in and learn how to use the different applications their children are using. This will help them help their student at home. Offer parent workshops for other areas as well.</p> <p>Math instruction has changed significantly, and most parents are unsure how to help their children at home. Providing this time to</p>

	<p>teach them how the classroom is taught will help reduce the stress on everyone involved. Teachers can feel more at ease sending work home if the parents understand how to help their children.</p> <p>Teachers will also begin to keep records of parent communication. Teachers will write down who they talked to when they talked to them and any information on the reason for the phone call, text, or in-person correspondence.</p> <p>Teachers will complete the reflection exercise at the end of the chapter and share it with the group the next time we meet.</p>
<p>Step 12 Assign Chapter 14</p> <p>Chapter 14: Activism</p>	<p>Teachers will be encouraged to invite parents, administration, and other classrooms to observe projects, after-school clubs, etc. This helps promote positive school images to the community. Getting positive images about what is happening at schools promotes positive feedback. This will help offset the negative feedback schools are receiving.</p> <p>Teachers will complete the reflection exercise at the end of the chapter and share it with the group the next time we meet.</p>

<p>Step 13 Present Post-Intervention Survey: The Maslach Burnout Inventory.</p>	<p>This survey will be given to all teachers. We will compare the differences between the two surveys to determine if this intervention had a positive impact on teachers' outlook and determine if their feelings of burnout had lessened.</p>
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Summary

Teachers will be able to address their levels of concern and work with other teachers who are experiencing the same feelings. By using this action plan teachers will have a guide to help them make changes in their daily teaching lives. Working with each other to reduce the stress teachers experience everyday will help reduce the burnout rate. Intervention for both students and adults gives the opportunity to work and learn from their struggles. Having concrete ideas help alleviate stress in the classroom and reduces the pressure teachers feel when trying to accomplish the many different tasks they face every day.

Implementation of School Improvement Plan

Introduction

The “First Aid for Teachers: How You Can Have Peace and Success” By Jenny Grant Rankin improvement plan will be implemented during the 2024-2025 school year. This will be a nine-month school-wide intervention. The school will purchase the “First Aid for Teachers: How You Can Have Peace and Success” By Jenny Grant Rankin as well as the online Maslach Burnout Inventory survey. The books will be handed out during the first staff meeting of the school year. We will study and implement the strategies throughout the school year. Each month

we will meet as a staff and discuss the chapters assigned. The discussion will involve the different areas of each chapter. Teachers can share what they have begun to implement into their daily teacher lives and where they are struggling to find a balance. The improvement plan will begin in August 2024 and conclude in May 2025. The book “First Aid for Teachers: How You Can Have Peace and Success” By Jenny Grant Rankin will be purchased from the Routledge Taylor and Francis Group. Each teacher will receive a copy. Each teacher will be responsible for reading and completing the chapter reflection exercises at the end of each chapter.

Timeline

We will meet as a staff once a month on early release Wednesdays. Each month 1 or 2 chapters will be assigned to read, and teachers will make small changes to their daily teaching lives and classrooms. During our monthly meetings, we will discuss the changes teachers are making, and their chapter reflection exercises, address any questions or concerns teachers have, and discuss how their stress levels are changing or staying the same. If teachers are saying their stress levels are staying the same, we will work through how to provide them more support. At the first staff meeting the teachers will also be provided the Maslach Burnout Inventory. This will provide information to help determine how teachers are feeling and if they are close to burnout. The assigned chapters and implementation of ways to reduce teachers' stress will be self-paced. Each teacher is different and is struggling with different aspects. The chapters provide different ways teachers can make changes to reduce their stress and each teacher is able to choose the best fit for themselves. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) will spend the first 20 minutes checking in with teachers to see how their changes are helping or not helping and what ways we as a staff can help reduce the feeling of burnout. The table below shows a

timeline for implementation of this school improvement plan. The table depicts what will occur during each month.

Table 2

Timeline of Improvement Plan

<p>August 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce “First Aid for Teachers: How You Can Have Peace and Success” • Teachers will take the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Pre-Intervention) • Assign Chapter 1 • Discuss Norms for each meeting <p>September 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet on Early Release Wednesday and go through Chapter 1 • Discuss changes teachers are making • Track teachers’ reflection exercises in Google Docs. • Check-in during PLCs every Tuesday, • Assign Chapters 2 and 3 <p>October 2023</p>	<p>January 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet on Early Release Wednesday and go through Chapters 6 and 7 • Discuss changes teachers are making • Track teachers’ reflection exercises in Google Docs. • Check-in during PLCs every Tuesday • Assign Chapters 8 and 9 <p>February 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet on Early Release Wednesday and go through Chapters 8 and 9 • Discuss changes teachers are making • Track teachers’ reflection exercises in Google Docs. • Check-in during PLCs every Tuesday • Assign Chapter 10 <p>March 2024</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet on Early Release Wednesday and go through Chapters 2 and 3 • Discuss changes teachers are making • Track teachers' reflection exercises in Google Docs. • Check-in during PLCs every Tuesday • Assign Chapter 4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet on Early Release Wednesday and go through Chapter 10 • Discuss changes teachers are making • Track teachers' reflection exercises in Google Docs. • Check-in during PLCs every Tuesday • Assign Chapters 11 and 12
<p>November 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet on Early Release Wednesday and go through Chapter 4 • Discuss changes teachers are making • Track teachers' reflection exercises in Google Docs. • Check-in during PLCs every Tuesday • Assign Chapter 5 	<p>April 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet on Early Release Wednesday and go through Chapters 11 and 12 • Discuss changes teachers are making • Track teachers' reflection exercises in Google Docs. • Check-in during PLCs every Tuesday • Assign Chapters 13 and 14
<p>December 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet on Early Release Wednesday and go through Chapter 5 • Discuss changes teachers are making • Track teachers' reflection exercises in Google Docs. 	<p>May 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet on Early Release Wednesday and go through Chapters 13 and 14 • Discuss changes teachers are making • Track teachers' reflection exercises in Google Docs.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in during PLCs every Tuesday • Assign Chapters 6 and 7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in during PLCs every Tuesday • Teachers will take the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Post-Intervention)
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Resources

One resource that will be utilized throughout the book “First Aid for Teachers: How You Can Have Peace and Success” By Jenny Grant Rankin. This book is the focus of the improvement plan. Another resource that will be used is the pre and post intervention survey. This is the Maslach Burnout Inventory. We will look at the results before and after the intervention. The third resource that will be used to track data is Google Docs. This is a shared document that will allow for teachers to easily share their thoughts and feelings. Google Docs is also a way for data to be recorded and shared with our principal and instructional facilitator to help them know what to look for when doing check-ins with the staff. These resources will be beneficial for the success of this improvement plan.

Roles and Responsibilities

Once the school improvement plan has been approved by our district administration our Principal, Instructional Facilitator, and Leadership Team will guide teachers through each step of the improvement plan. This improvement plan will implement strategies for teachers to use in their daily lives both inside and outside of school. Making time for themselves and focusing on positive ways to decompress and reduce stress will reduce teacher burnout. Working together as

a team provides the support teachers need to continue making a difference in student lives. The way this improvement plan will monitor success or failure is by collecting data from teachers' responses in the chapter reflection exercises and the post-intervention survey of the Maslach Burnout Inventory.

Principal

Our principal will lead the monthly meetings and provide check-in with the staff. Having the principal lead and guide this improvement plan will give teachers the chance to express their stress and feelings of burnout in a way that our principal is able to provide guidance and support. The principal will take the data provided by the leadership team members and compile small group discussions during the monthly meetings to give all teachers a chance to share their thoughts and feelings about their current burnout rate. The principal is the person who leads and establishes a school environment. Having our principal work alongside our teachers will also establish a better rapport among teachers and bring awareness and support to our building. This will help teachers know they are not alone and work with other teachers in the building who may be struggling with the same concern.

Instructional Facilitator

Our Instructional Facilitator will provide weekly check-ins with teachers and provide support when implementing new ways to decrease the day-to-day stress. The Instructional Facilitator is the person who can go into classrooms more frequently than the principal and will be able to jump in and provide instant support for teachers. The Instructional Facilitator will record data that they gather when visiting the different classrooms. This data will be used to help guide the monthly meetings and gather information to be more specific in teachers' needs.

Leadership Team

The leadership team will be responsible for recording data during PLC weekly meetings. Our leadership team is comprised of one teacher from each grade level. The data they record will be added to the shared Google Document. This document will be utilized by the Principal and the Instructional Facilitator to meet the specific needs of the teachers. The Leadership Team will assist in planning out each monthly meeting. Working together to ease the burden felt by all teachers will begin to reduce the stress teachers experience.

Families

Families can also help teachers decrease their day-to-day stress. One-way families can help is by leaving grading and planning at school. When teachers are at home they should focus on their families and not school. School will be there on Monday and teachers need the mental break from the many different duties they endure every week. Families play a vital role in a teacher's life. With their support teachers can begin to focus on different aspects of their lives and not solely focus on school.

Challenges

Some challenges that could potentially impede the success of this intervention are not all teachers will take this improvement plan seriously, some teachers may not implement suggestions and ideas given in the book to help reduce stress and burnout, and teachers may not choose to express their concerns. When teachers feel that they do not have the time to read, implement, and document small changes it makes it difficult to understand how to help them when they are feeling stressed or burned out. Teachers who believe the way they are teaching, grading, and conducting their classrooms and find change difficult can also have negative effects

on this school improvement plan to help reduce teacher burnout. The third way this improvement plan would face challenges is by having teachers not share their thoughts, concerns, and small changes they have made to improve their mental health and stress levels. Asking for help can be difficult, especially when it concerns a person's mental health. If teachers are not honest on the Maslach Burnout Inventory the results of the intervention can become skewed.

Conclusion

There have been many studies done on the cause of teacher burnout. Most studies that were researched based their findings on responses to surveys. The most popular survey utilized was the Maslach Burnout Inventory. The themes that emerged from the research were the effects COVID-19 had on teachers, lack of support, mental exhaustion, and the continual changing of the educational environment. The different factors played a different role in why teachers are experiencing teacher burnout at an earlier rate. "Professional burnout concerns all types of activities, but in particular the 'caring' professions (e.g., nursing) and, overall, professions characterized by demanding interactions with service recipients such as teaching." (Genoud & Waroux, 2021 p. 1). Teachers were experiencing mental exhaustion and adverse mental health and well-being due to the many different stressors that teachers face every day. One stressor is the lack of administration support. When teachers felt they did not have the support of their administration, it put a strain on their mental health and well-being. Another factor that impacted teachers was the constant changing of the educational environment, especially after COVID-19. Not only were teachers responsible for teaching students in person, but the added stress of teaching students via Zoom. Putting in more and more hours to ensure that we are meeting the needs of the students in person or virtually also added stress that teachers had to combat.

According to Braeunig et al. (2018), an intervention focusing on reducing teacher stress is pertinent to reducing burnout. The problem is that teachers are experiencing high levels of daily stress and pressure with only minimal or non-existent mental health support systems. Without interventions focused on reducing the daily levels of stress teachers are experiencing, school districts will continue to increase the number of teachers experiencing burnout and leaving the profession. When teachers are experiencing burnout and mental exhaustion, they suffer, and their students suffer as well. Teachers' mental health and well-being are often overlooked because the main concern is the students.

The research findings showed that the increase in student behaviors, extra duties, and daily stress has weighed heavily on teachers, and the burnout rate is increasing, especially among new teachers. Studies also showed how the administration's support positively or negatively affected teachers. When teachers felt supported by their administration, they were more likely to stay; when they did not, they were more likely to leave. Braeunig et al. (2018), found that teachers' mental health improvements were linked positively to decreased working until exhaustion. When teachers took time for themselves and set boundaries, their mental health and well-being were positively impacted.

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