

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Research indicates that teacher quality directly affects student achievement and identifies the teacher as the single most important factor that impacts student learning. In fact, the cumulative percentile gain over three years for students with the most effective teachers has been shown to be as much as 54 points higher than that of students with the least effective teachers.¹ Thus, it is critical to retain and promote excellence among each new generation of teachers that is recruited.

Any County had a turnover rate of 16.23% in 2005-2006 which is significantly higher than the state average (12.58%) and higher than the national average (15.7%).² This turnover rate also is higher when compared to the 11% turnover that is typical in other professions, and the Any County's turnover rate is lower than the 17% average turnover reported in recent years for businesses with 1,000 or more employees.

While turnover reflects one dimension of new teacher induction, beginning teacher perception of success provides a more detailed explanation of why teachers stay and leave, and why they may be excelling. For example, the National Education Association cites teaching assignment, administrator and mentor support, and working conditions as reasons why teachers with one to three years of teaching experience change schools or leave teaching altogether. In light of the PSI-BT data, the following implications are offered.

IMPLICATION 1: Effective teachers are committed to students, their learning, and teaching as a career.³ Any County beginning teachers experience high levels of commitment to students and teaching as a career according to the PSI-BT. Further, they view ethical professional judgment as central to their effectiveness as a teacher. The teachers also identify that they feel empowered to take action when they see vulnerable students that need their attention. Staff, administration, and supporting faculty should sustain their current efforts to recruit exemplary teachers who are committed to students and to teaching as a career.

¹ National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996). *What matters most: Teaching for America's future*. New York: National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.

² North Carolina Public Schools (2006). *Teacher Turnover Report* accessed February 14, 2007 from <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/humansrcs/downloads/0506ttoreport.pdf>

³ Educational Research Service (2000). *Effective teaching: How do we know it when we see it? The Informed Educator Series*. Virginia: Educational Research Service.

IMPLICATION 2: Effective classroom management is correlated with higher student achievement.⁴ Any County beginning teachers feel efficacious in their ability to establish clear and effective routines and procedures. These perceptions suggest that beginning teachers have developed, with the help of support teachers and administration, comprehensive and well-articulated rules and procedures for classroom behavior, transitions and interruptions, use of materials and equipment, group work and independent work. Many new teachers struggle with classroom management. Thus, it is noteworthy that Any County's beginning teachers rate a majority of the items for this factor highly. Despite their high ratings of success in classroom management, 62.3% of the teachers cited improved student discipline as an area that would improve their satisfaction with their current job, and felt that the administration could be more responsive to their discipline decisions. Increasing student motivation was also cited as an area that would improve their overall job satisfaction.

IMPLICATION 3. According to research on the needs of beginning teachers, a reasonable assignment is critical for the success of the beginning teachers. The PSI-BT data indicates that the beginning teachers do not have a planning period per day they can devote to planning for their classes. Ensuring this planning period is available could improve their overall perception of their workload (mean = 3.65) and satisfaction with their job. In addition, the data indicates that the beginning teachers are dissatisfied with the extra duties they are asked to take on. A focus on these two areas may improve their overall satisfaction with their assignment and workload.

IMPLICATION 4. Interaction with colleagues is critical for the success of the beginning teachers. Based on the PSI-BT data, Any County's beginning teachers would feel more efficacious if they had opportunities to observe exemplary teachers. Thus, we recommend that the school system identify a collegial process for sharing promising instructional practices related to learners between new teachers and more experienced teachers at the same grade level. Such a strategy might mirror grade level planning as it has been implemented in middle schools, and release time for beginning teachers to observe exemplary teachers.

⁴ Marzano, R.J. (2003). *What works in schools: Translating research into action*. Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

IMPLICATION 5. Organizing instruction for diverse learning needs is a hallmark of effective teachers who know their subjects and know how to teach those subjects to students.⁵ Although Any County's beginning teachers have a strong sense of efficacy in meeting the needs of diverse learners, they are less confident in their ability to meet the needs of students with limited English proficiency. PSI-BT data indicate that beginning teachers would feel more efficacious if they had professional development opportunities to understand and implement selected instructional strategies related to teaching of students with limited English proficiency.

IMPLICATION 6. Evidence suggests that instruction needs to be aligned with school-, district-, state-, and national testing and policies.⁶ However, PSI-BT data indicate that Any County's beginning teachers are not satisfied with state and national testing policies. However, it is difficult to ascertain the reasons for their lower satisfaction. However, it is noteworthy that beginning teachers do not view state and national testing as highly essential to effective teaching. Steps should be taken to better understand these new teacher concerns. Action steps can follow.

IMPLICATION 7. Contacts with parents are an essential element of teaching. The PSI-BT data indicate that Any County's teachers are not satisfied with their current experiences in the support from parents of their child's progress in school. In addition, the beginning teachers would like more guidance in working with parents. The important thing to note is that the beginning teachers recognize the importance of communicating with parents and its part in being essential for effective teaching. Steps should be taken towards providing more guidance in working with parents. The beginning teachers (42.7%) also noted parental support as one area that would improve their overall job satisfaction.

⁵ Marzano, R.J. (2003). *What works in schools: Translating research into action*. Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

⁶ Schalock, H.D., Schalock, M.D. & Ayres, R. (2006). Scaling up research in teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 57(2), 102-119.