

Oliver, W. L. (2008). *The influence of principals on teacher retention: An examination of the relationship between principal behavior and teacher retention*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Abstract

This qualitative study investigated the connection between the behaviors of principals and teacher job satisfaction and motivation, and how this connection results in increased teacher retention. Particularly, the researcher looked at what strategies principals use to motivate and encourage teachers to remain at a school. The researcher also examined teachers' primary reasons for staying at a particular school. Two urban high schools were the sites for this study. The researcher conducted both focus groups and interviews. Individual interviews were held with two principals; one principal had two years of experience and the other had seven years of experience. In addition, the researcher conducted individual interviews with three teachers from each school. One focus group at each school, each composed of three to four participants, also yielded data. The research showed that college education programs do not adequately prepare teachers to work with students and face the various challenges that often accompany them. Teachers need support in order to succeed as educators. The data revealed that the principal sets the tone and is the driving force of a school, thereby having a huge impact on the school environment. Though teachers were more likely to stay at schools where they felt a connection to their students, this study found that the principal is instrumental in teacher retention. The researcher found that though teachers believe they directly have control of many aspects of the school reality, the principal continues to orchestrate and facilitate school operations in an indirect, inclusive manner. The effective, *invisible principal* creates an environment where teachers are empowered and moved to the forefront, while the principal navigates from the background. The ability of the teacher to focus on teaching and learning is directly correlated with the principal's ability to maintain a safe and orderly environment, complete with the supports and recognition teacher need. These supports satisfy teachers' intrinsic needs, in turn resulting in increased job satisfaction and then increased teacher retention. The behaviors of the principal as they relate to teacher support, interest in the staff, and the principal's ability to motivate the staff all affect teachers' desire to stay.