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A Workload Analysis Formula to Increase the Retention of Special Education Teachers in Minnesota

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**A Workload Analysis Formula to Increase the Retention of Special Education
Teachers in Minnesota**

by

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Chapter 1: Introduction

School districts across the nation struggle to keep highly qualified special education teachers. Donne and Lin (2013) found that approximately 50% of special education teachers left their position during the first 5 years. The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) reported that the number of teachers reported as leaving their positions has increased 34% since 2008-2009. According to MDE, in Minnesota during the 2012-13 school year 1,380 special education teachers vacated their position for various reasons that included retirement (371), personal reasons (311), not offered reemployment (159), staff reduction (59), or move to another district (270). During that same year the state administered a total of 2,094 new special education licenses. From the 2009-2010 school year until 2013-2014 school year, the percentage change of licensures granted has fallen 39.8%. The teacher shortage in special education has put pressure on school districts to hire employees that are not highly qualified through variances. In the 2013-14 school year, Minnesota school districts have granted variances to the following areas in special education: Developmental Disabilities—94, Learning Disabilities—143, and Emotional and/or Behavioral Disorders—157. In the fall of 2014, 44% of school districts reported that they were not able to fill positions with qualified candidates in the area of Emotional and/or Behavioral Disorders, 33% in the area of Autism Spectrum Disorders, 32% in the area of Developmental Disabilities, and 31% in the area of Specific Learning Disabilities. Going forward the next 5 years, 20% of school districts report that they will remain unable to fill positions, 50% claim it will prove difficult, 18% rated somewhat difficult, and approximately 3% believed it would be easy to fill Special Education positions.

In 2001, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) released a manual titled *Workload Considerations for Effective Special Education*. This manual outlines a workload analysis formula to help determine appropriate workloads for special education teachers. The formula takes into consideration caseloads, direct service minutes, indirect service minutes, number of evaluations/reevaluations, and the number of hours spent on evaluations/reevaluations.

I used MDE's workload formula (Table 1) and analyzed six special education teachers (two in each building) workloads in three rural elementary schools. The first elementary school (School-1) had a student population of 638 with 25 special education students. The second elementary school (School-2) had a student population of 651 with 27 special education students. The third elementary school (School-3) had a student population of 557 with 18 special education students. I only studied special education teachers that managed high incidence (learning disabilities, emotional and/or behavioral disorders, other health disabilities, and autism spectrum disorder) special education students on a federal setting level of I or II. I did not review specialized programs for low incidence (deaf and hard of hearing, physical impairment, or developmentally cognitively delayed) special education students nor speech-only students.

Research Question

What are the key factors in special education teacher attrition and retention? This question guides a review of journal articles and an analysis of the Minnesota Department of Education's workload analysis formula on a rural Minnesota school district.

Importance of Topic

As a special education teacher working primarily with students that meet Minnesota state criteria for Emotional and/or Behavioral Disorders, I understand the importance of having highly qualified teachers work with these students. The increasing rates of attrition by special education teachers and the lack of new licenses in special education are creating a huge problem for school districts across Minnesota. Many students that desperately need highly qualified teachers tend to work with inexperienced teachers. Special education teachers experience burnout due to high caseloads, paperwork, and unsupportive administration and/or general education teachers.

Focus of Paper

This starred paper consists of reviews of published and unpublished literature, a review of another district's workload analysis formula, and results of implementing that workload formula in three elementary schools' workload. The review completed of the three rural elementary schools consisted of six different teachers working with students that meet criteria of Specific Learning Disabilities, Emotional and/or Behavioral Disorders, Other Health Disabilities, and some Autism Spectrum Disorders. The review did not include students in special programs or speech only.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature:

In Chapter 2, I review factors influencing teacher attrition and retention. Factors include administrative support, working conditions, and the effectiveness in mentoring programs. Billingsley (2004) reviewed 20 studies relating to teacher retention and attrition. Billingsley reported that causes of teacher shortages are intricate and teacher attrition is a significant concern. Billingsley found that many reviewed studies do not focus on gender; however, age is clearly linked to attrition in special education literature. Billingsley learned that younger special educators are more likely to leave than older educators. Other influences on teacher attrition include personal factors and lack of certification. Billingsley concluded that “overall, the special education attrition and retention research shows that work environments are important to teachers’ job satisfaction” (p. 44). Some researchers found a relationship between teacher salary and teacher attrition, while other studies contributed school climate to teacher attrition, which included administration supportive, adequate materials, and cooperative staff members. Cancio, Albrecht, and Johns (2013) studied administrative support and its relationship to the attrition of teachers of students with Emotional and/or Behavioral Disorders. An email was sent to 1,831 members of the Council for Children with Behavior Disorders (CCBD). The members were asked to fill out a questionnaire if they worked with students that meet criteria for Emotional and/or Behavioral Disorders category. Of the 1,831 emails sent, 408 participants (teachers) responded. A questionnaire used consisted of 96 items with six clusters that included: extent of administrative support, satisfaction of various aspects of the job, feelings experienced concerning the job, views of the school, self-descriptive statements and demographic information. Characteristics of administrative support positively correlated with the intent to

stay in the field. This includes opportunities for growth, appreciation, and trust. Long-term teachers reported significantly higher administrative support, higher job satisfaction, and a higher opinion of the school. Teachers that did not intend to continue reported the opposite, lower ratings for opportunities to grow and lack of administrative support. Cancio et al. concluded:

this study provides important information for administrators who want to reduce teacher turnover [...] the results of this study may help administrators provide a supportive environment to nurture teachers [...] when teachers are successful, administrators spend less time troubleshooting problem behaviors [...] when teachers feel satisfied, a positive climate is enhanced within the school. (p. 92)

DeMik (2008) studied five participants that taught or had previously taught students in special education. DeMik obtained background information and educational experiences through an interview process. The information was examined and compared. The participants were interviewed twice. The participants were interviewed approximately 1 month later to reflect on the story they gave and to add clarification. The majority of the special education teachers agreed on the difficulties in special education and the working conditions (paperwork, planning time, meeting student needs, meeting with general education teachers, taking a break and lunch break). Special education teachers were reportedly overwhelmed with writing Individual Education Programs, behavior plans, transition plans, and providing other documentation. There was no pattern regarding if teachers would remain or leave the field of special education. DeMik concluded that teachers, administrators, and parents must work together for the success of all students. DeMik wrote that educators should strive for combined

ownership of all students. When working together special education teachers feel they are being important members of the team, instead of the enemy.

Donne and Lin (2013) reviewed Wiki, an online induction program for new special education teachers. Donne and Lin found one way to address high turnover among new teachers is to provide necessary support through induction programs. These mentoring programs include: supportive school culture, opportunities for interaction between new and experienced teachers, degrees of professional growth, minimized evaluation, explicit intentions, diversified content, mentoring, and fiscal and political support. Many induction programs are seat-based and students must be present; however, a way to increase participation in induction programs was to increase availability and accessibility through online programs. The Wiki Online Induction was reviewed and determined that it could be used as a tool to help aid the retention of new special education teachers. It was noted that a longer study would be needed to determine if the Wiki actually increases retention of new special education teachers.

Gersten, Keating, Yovanoff, and Harniss (2001) investigated three large urban school districts in the western part of the United States. A total of 887 special education teachers were sent a questionnaire and 81% responded. The questionnaire intended to measure teachers' perceptions of working conditions. Gersten et al. found that "building level support from principals and teachers has strong direct and indirect effects on virtually all critical aspects of teachers' working conditions" (p. 557). Districts need to address job design issues including giving special educators an active role in shaping professional development. Job design problems occur when "poor job design is found between what teachers believe about their jobs and the realities of their jobs" (p. 551). More opportunities are needed for colleagues to

collaborate. Clerical and technological support is needed to reduce the paperwork burden. As Gersten et al. wrote “seriously addressing the design of the special educator’s job is a critical national need, especially in light of the fact that male special educators continue to transfer to general education positions...phenomenon first documented by Billingsley and Cross (1991)” (p. 563).

Prather-Jones (2011) interviewed 13 special education teachers that had been teaching for 7 consecutive years. These teachers taught in schools across the Midwest metropolitan area including elementary, middle, and high schools. Schools varied in both size and socioeconomic status. Interviews and data were collected by face to face in-depth interviews. The interviews were informal and conversational. From the interviews, Prather-Jones found issues of support had determining influence on their decisions to remain the field of teaching students with emotional and/or behavioral disorders.” Administrative support was key to these teachers’ decisions regarding their careers. Several participants emphasized how having administrative support enabled them to remain in the field. Three themes emerged regarding the specific nature of the administrative support:

The first theme is that teachers looked to principals to enforce reasonable consequences for student misconduct, and to include them in the decision making behind these consequences. The second theme is teachers felt supported by principals who made them feel respected and appreciated. The third theme is teachers need support from the other teachers in their school and principals play an important role in developing these relationships. (p. 4)

Prather-Jones (2011) concluded that:

to retain special education teachers, school principals must proactively support them. Principals must be knowledgeable regarding both special education and the responsibilities of special educators... must provide these teachers with positive working conditions such as access to materials, reasonable caseloads, and time for meetings, as well as professional supports, such as mentoring and staff developments... foster a school climate that supports special education.

The problem is “many principals have limited knowledge and experience related to special education” (Crockett, 2002, p. 11, as cited by Prather-Jones, 2011).

Russ, Chiang, Rylance, and Bongers (2001) reviewed nine studies that focused on special education caseload, instructional group size, and teacher attrition. Evidence throughout the research supports the belief that lower instructional group sizes are important to group engagement and achievement, “because academic engaged time has corresponded directly with academic achievement for students with mild, moderate, or severe cognitive disabilities” (Kamps & Walker, 1990, p. 11; as cited by Russ et al., 2001; Logan & Keefe, 1997, p. 11, as cited by Russ et al., 2001). Providing one-on-one instruction is optimal for student engagement, however, there are some drawbacks. Russ et al. (2001) concluded that when group size decreased, regardless of age or type of disability, engagement time increased. Higher caseloads increase group size and make it more difficult for special education teachers to individualize instruction. Results of academic achievement increased with smaller classes according to Keith et al. (1993, as cited by Russ et al., 2001).

Thornton, Peltier, and Medina (2007) reviewed 24 articles to obtain information on how to reduce the special education teacher shortage. The shortage of special education teachers is a large problem effecting all 50 states. There is a lack of qualified applicants. Many students are not pursuing careers in special education, which lessens the candidate pool. High rates of attritions also contributes to the teacher shortage (Billingsley, 2004). Up to 9.3% of special education teachers leave the field at the end of their first year of teaching and 7.4% move to general education annually (Boyer & Gillespie, 2000, as cited by Thornton et al., 2007).

Another reason is the change in student demographics. The rate of students with disabilities has grown faster than the general school-age population, and the trend is expected to continue (McLeskey, Tyler, & Flippin, 2004, as cited by Thorton et al., 2007). Teacher turnover impacts the number of teacher vacancies. Administrators need to become expert headhunters to attract qualified special education teachers. They also need to incorporate effective mentoring and induction programs for beginning teachers. Thornton et al. found that teachers who are prepared and have appropriate support, are more likely to continue as special education instructors.

Working conditions also influence decisions to leave special education positions (Billingsley, Carlson, & Klein, 2004, as cited by Thornton et al., 2007). Kaff (2004, as cited by Thornton et al., 2007) found most often cited reasons for special educators leaving the profession involved time commitments and money. Last, principals must proactively support special education teachers. Thornton et al. concluded that administrators need to change the basic culture of schools to elevate the professional status of special education teachers. Leadership can address marketing, recruiting, teacher turnover, staff development, and salaries. Administrators can

support teachers. Community leaders can work toward improving teacher salaries and welcoming new teachers into the community.

Williams and Dikes (2013) studied 65 special education teachers and had them complete the third edition of the Maslach Burnout Inventory Educators Survey. The purpose of this study was to examine the association between demographic variables and burnout of special education teachers. Researchers found women were more likely to experience “emotional exhaustion” than men (49%-33%). Men, on the other hand experience higher levels of “depersonalization.”

Factors that also influenced burnout include:

The number years of teaching experience is positively correlated with burnout. Higher caseload numbers were found to be positively associated with burnout. Middle and high school teachers were found to be more prone to stress on the job. A positive correlation between the numbers of additional hours a special education teacher spends completing paperwork and burnout. (p. 344)

Williams and Dikes (2013) concluded that male special education teachers would benefit from creating supportive networks, while female special education teachers would benefit from wellness programs and learn to practice strategies to manage stress.

In 2015, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) sent out two surveys, one to 83% of Minnesota’s public school districts and charter schools, and the other to 94% of Minnesota’s teacher preparation institutions. According to MDE, in the 2013-14 school year 58,211 teachers were employed in Minnesota’s public schools. That is an average increase of 2.5% from 5 years earlier. These values vary by region and range from -15% to +5% difference from 5 years earlier. The supply of teachers has decreased based on new licenses awarded.

Supply and demand balance provide conflicting data. There are fewer special permissions than in the past; however, districts had to hire 3,504 teachers who did not have the required licenses for the subjects and the grade levels taught. Many districts are also indicating it impossible or very difficult to hire qualified teachers to fill vacancies in hard to fill areas. It is also important to mention, that on the other hand teacher surplus exists in selected areas. There are teacher surpluses in K-6 elementary, Physical Education, Social Studies, and Communication Arts and Literature. The MDE study reported a teacher attrition rate of 8% per year from the 2007-08 school year to the 2012-13 school year.

The Minnesota Department of Education (2017) released a report to the legislature titled, *The 2017 Report of Teacher Supply and Demand in Minnesota's Public Schools*. This report contains similar data to the 2015 legislative report. The 2017 report focuses on data from the 2015-16 school year. In 2015-16 school year, it was reported that 6,546 teachers left their positions. Of the 6,546 teachers that left their positions, 25% of them (1,625) left for personal reasons. Another 15% (967) left for unknown reasons. Since the 2009-10 school year, on average, 15.1% of teachers were not teaching in Minnesota after their first year, 21.07% left teaching within 2 years of entering the profession, 25.9% left the profession after 3 years, 28.7% left within 4 years and 31.9% left within 5 years of entering the profession. School districts in Minnesota indicate that the largest issues for retaining qualified teachers is: competitive job market, teacher salary, licensing standards, testing requirements, and teacher support. The following is a written comment from an unknown school district when asked to provide insights regarding teacher supply and demand.

Special Education—attracting and maintaining teachers is challenging because of the caseloads and extreme paperwork issues. Streamlining the paperwork would require complex legislation, but worth examination. In addition to looking at that streamlining, why not support additional teachers with smaller caseloads so a SPED teacher can manage the work and help the students. Then, you would have less burnout and wouldn't lose the teachers who are already scarce. Instead of trying to constantly replace the burned-out SPED teachers, support the ones we have, while we grow more who will enter a career that is manageable. (p. 41)

In the past 3 years (2014, 2015, 2016) the Board of Teaching (BOT) in Minnesota issued the following number of licenses: Emotional and/or Behavioral Disorders 364, 275, and 251. Learning Disabilities 448, 408, and 311. Autism Spectrum Disorders 374, 721, and 286. The spike in ASD licenses was due to the BOT review process that allowed for licensed special education teachers to add ASD endorsement. During the 2015-16 school year the BOT allowed many special permissions to fill special education positions that included variances, temporary/limited licenses, and non-licensed community experts. The BOT issued the following special permissions to fill positions: in Emotional and/or Behavioral Disorders 438, in Learning Disabilities 260, and Autism Spectrum Disorders 262.

In 2014, the Minnesota Department of Education developed a 16 member task force to develop recommendations for appropriate caseloads and to develop strategies to improve student outcomes. The task force reviewed current special education funding, the history of case load rule, other states' case load approaches, current case load ratios, and state special education funding changes, IEP paperwork reduction project, workload analysis, and Office of the

Legislative Auditor's *Special Education Report*. The recommendation includes that every school district must have a policy to determine appropriate workloads for special education teachers. Districts are also to include language when determining caseloads for pupils receiving special education services 60% or less and a new clause added for children receiving special education services 60% or more of their instructional day. This is to provide the option of lowering the number of students with high behavioral and mental health needs on a special education teacher's caseload. A definition of caseload should be determined to clarify the meaning of the rule. There should also be further consideration of paperwork issues and strategies to improve educator workload and due process effectiveness.

The Minnesota Department of Education published a study on workload considerations for special education teachers (Yecke & Hale, 2001). MDE assembled the Workload Task Force to research this area and they found the six elements that drives MDE's concept of work load. Their findings resulted from reviewing literature concerning special education teacher retention and they documented the reasons special education teachers leave the field. The goal was to identify factors that influence special education teacher workload. MDE's manual addresses the issue of workload versus the traditional concept of caseload (the number of students a special education teacher manages). The task force identified six elements that include most of the workloads of special education teachers. The elements are: specially designed instruction (service minutes), evaluations and reevaluations, due process procedures (IEP management responsibilities), preparation time, paraprofessionals managed, and other duties. This manual provides a model and formula intended to be a framework that can be adapted to the changing

tasks, responsibilities, and requirements of special education teachers so that administrators are better able to analyze the workloads of staff and respond proactively.

Table 1

Department of Minnesota Workload Formula

The table below is Minnesota Department of Education's Workload Analysis Formula that was used to determine the workloads of six elementary school teachers in three rural elementary schools.

Contact Minutes	IEP's Managed	Workload
<p>Total special education service minutes provided by teacher divided by the total number of minutes available for instruction = contact minutes. The two numbers in this calculation are:</p> <p>1) Numerator: the total number of special education service minutes per week for all students served.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing specially designed instruction (direct) • Indirect service minutes for IEP's managed • Conducting evaluations and reevaluations <p>2) Denominator: The total of minutes available for instruction during the week. Example: <u>Service Minutes Per Week</u> Instructional Minutes per week</p>	<p>The number of IEPs for which the Special Education teacher is the IEP manager.</p>	<p>The final number represents the actual workload.</p>

Table 2**Elementary School Workload Results**

This table shows data obtained from six special education teachers from three rural elementary schools in Minnesota and the results of using Minnesota Department of Education's Workload Analysis Formula. The information and data obtained was from March 2016. Permission was granted by St. Cloud State University's Institutional Review Board (see attached documentation in Appendix A).

	Elementary School-1 Teacher-1	Elementary School-1 Teacher-2	Elementary School-2 Teacher-1	Elementary School 2 Teacher-2	Elementary School-3 Teacher-1	Elementary School-3 Teacher-2
Total Minutes Per Week	2896	3732	4862	9935	2880	1910
Evaluations Minutes Per Week	10 200 mins	12 240 mins	4 80 mins	7 140 mins	4 80 mins	6 120 mins
Available Instructional Minutes Per Week	1575	1575	1575	1575	1575	1575
Contact Minutes Ratio	1.97	2.52	3.13	6.39	1.88	1.29
Caseload	12	12	12	13	9	10
WORKLOAD	13.97	14.52	15.13	19.39	10.88	11.29
Other Duties	Paras managed 3 Problem Solving	Paras managed 1	Paras managed 2 Problem Solving	Paras managed 1	Paras managed 1 Problem Solving	Paras managed 1 Travel

In Table 2, the teachers provided his/her direct and indirect service minutes, the number of evaluations, caseloads, and other duties. I took their data and placed them in Table 2. The results indicated that School-3 demonstrated the lowest workloads at scores of 10.88 and 11.29.

The teachers' workloads at School-1 fell at 13.97 and 14.52. Finally, the teachers at School-2 had the highest workload at 15.13 and 19.39.

Chapter 2 Conclusion

In reviewing the literature and MDE's reports, there were common themes that stood out. There are many factors that contribute to the increasing demand for special education teachers. The rate of students qualifying for special education is increasing and the number of special education teachers is not. Teacher preparation programs are not graduating enough special education teachers to meet the needs of school districts. School districts are losing special education teachers as they move out of the field or into general education. After the first 5 years in education, 32% of those new teachers will have left the profession. The reasons that special education teachers leave the field vary; however, there are key factors that directly impact their decision. The critical factors for teacher retention and attrition are administrator support, manageable caseloads/workloads, and working conditions.

Special education teachers have a lot of duties beyond teaching and collecting data. Special educators are on committees, run numerous meetings, deal with problem behaviors, and spend countless hours on paperwork. Administrators must recognize the effort and responsibilities that special education teachers have and be conscientious of the use of their time. When administrators become blind to the duties of special education teachers and increase demands for them, job satisfaction decreases. Many staff development meetings and workshops do not pertain to their positions and their time would be better spent on things that will have a direct and positive impact on students. Administrators ought to be flexible and allow special education teachers to have influence during these times. Special education teachers also put in

extra time outside of their contract hours running meetings, planning lessons, or completing due process requirements. It is also not uncommon for special education teachers to work through breaks, not receiving adequate prep time and lunches due to addressing student needs. Prep time for lessons is replaced with the high demands of paperwork and unfortunately individualized instruction suffers. The administrators that recognize special education teachers' efforts and allow as much flexibility as possible in their work schedules have staff that are more satisfied with their careers.

Caseloads for many special education teachers are growing. When caseloads increase, so do other duties, including paperwork. Higher caseloads increase small group size, making it more difficult to individualize instruction. Workload policies need to be in place to help balance what is best for students and special education teachers. The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) made it mandatory for school districts to have a workload policy for special education teachers. MDE did not make it specific. The workload policy of the rural Minnesota school district that was analyzed is: Workload limits for special education teachers shall be determined by the appropriate special education administrator, in consultation with the building principal and the superintendent. In determining workload limits for special education staff, the school district shall take into consideration the following factors: student contact minutes, evaluation and reevaluation time, indirect services, management of IEPs, travel time, and other services required in the IEPs of eligible students. Although this district has a policy, there is currently not a general way to determine if a workload is too high. In my review completed

using MDE's workload formula on the rural school district, it was obvious that one building had higher numbers. It was also easy to determine why the numbers were high. In Table 2, Teacher-2 was providing more than double the direct service minutes as compared to other special education teachers. This teacher had very large groups making it difficult to individualize instruction. If the workload policy is set and enforced, many of the negative working conditions would improve. The working conditions influence a special education teacher's job satisfaction.

As mentioned earlier, it is necessary to have a workload policy to help address working conditions that include: paperwork, planning/prep time, meeting student needs, meeting with general education teachers, meeting with parents, and lunch breaks. The special education department's climate and job satisfaction deteriorates when the special education staff is stressed with overwhelming responsibilities.

Chapter 3: Reflection and Recommendations

Teacher attrition and retention for special education teachers must be addressed. The problem of finding qualified teachers is getting more difficult and there is not enough being done to retain the qualified staff already in the field. Special education teachers are leaving due to the lack of support from administrators. Special education teachers work many extra hours completing paperwork and other due process requirements. Some special education teachers that work with behavioral issues often miss preparation time and lunches to deal with problematic behaviors and students in emotional crisis. These types of issues must be dealt with at the moment and cannot be ignored. It is important for administrators to recognize the extra time that special education teachers spend outside of their contract hours and offer support.

Special education teachers are getting burned out due to working conditions. The number of students that each special education teacher manages is growing. When caseloads grow, so do the number of due process requirements such as paperwork (IEPs, evaluations, positive behavior support plans), meetings, and group sizes. The extra paperwork duties also make it almost impossible to plan adequate lessons. Larger groups make it challenging to individualize instruction for all students in the group. The Minnesota Department of Education's workload policy is a good start to address the demanding working conditions that special education teachers face; however, many districts do not have a solid plan. The workload analysis formula could be used to help determine workload benchmarks for special education teachers. In time and with comparative data year after year, respectable decisions could be made using this data. After completing this review, I think if districts implement a workload analysis formula they will

also be addressing many of the negative working conditions that burden special education teachers.

Recommendations

An area that my paper did not focus on is teacher preparation programs. I think it would be interesting to look into major Minnesota Higher Education Institutions and find out how successful some of these teacher preparation programs are by comparing the retention of new teachers whom have graduated with a degree in special education and then compare the colleges by how long their special education teacher graduates stay in the field of special education. It would be a longitudinal study, but it could be beneficial to the field of education in general. The Minnesota Department of Education's 2017 report noted 32% of educators left the field after 5 years. The information obtained from a study on special education teacher preparation programs could also be used to help other high teacher attrition fields. Some colleges have programs to turn paraprofessionals into teachers. This could help fill the need for highly qualified teachers. In addition, paraprofessionals know what they are getting into since they have experience in the field and may be more likely to stay teaching in the field of special education.

In the 2017 MDE legislative report, it was reported that 31.9% of teachers leave the field after 5 years. I think that it would be interesting to have those numbers broken down and compare special education versus other licenses. It would also be interesting to compare which disability category of teachers are leaving the field. It would be beneficial to look at those numbers and into the special education programming they offered to find any patterns. On the

opposite end, the teachers that are stay in the field of special education after 5 years should be interviewed and their programming analyzed.

Finally, it was noted that age contributed to special education attrition, specifically the younger the special education teacher, the increased rate of attrition. I wonder if a study could be done on the millennial generation in general and how they are affecting special education and look into their roles as parents, teachers, and administration.

Implications for Practice

The purpose of my research paper was to gain a better understanding of teacher attrition, retention, and to analyze MDE's workload analysis formula. The rate of special education teachers that leave the profession and the lack of new college graduates with special education degrees is alarming. The constant turnover of special education teachers ultimately effects student achievement. Special education students benefit from consistency, stability, and solid relationships. Administrators are burning out their special education staff with unrealistic expectations (workload), lack of support, and underappreciation.

As a special education teacher, my job satisfaction level would increase if I had a more manageable workload. The factors that influence MDE's workload analysis formula affect special education teachers directly. These factors include: the number of students case managed, initial and reevaluations, direct/indirect service minutes, and paraprofessionals managed. By having a manageable workload, special education teachers could avoid due process requirement burnout. They could also spend more time focusing on individual student needs and developing effective lesson plans. At the current workload level for many special education teachers we accept mediocracy. It is nearly impossible to spend the necessary time to effectively

individualize lesson plans and address student needs by developing adequate supports (visual aids, behavior plans, accommodations, modifications). In conclusion regarding the workload analysis formula, I believe it can be used as a tool to help guide school districts decision-making on whether or not a special education teacher is overworked in comparison to other similar schools. In review, Teacher-2 at School-2 was clearly overworked compared to their direct coworker and from their colleagues at different elementary schools working in similar positions. School districts could use this formula to effectively manage areas that lead to teacher burnout. First, the district would have to set a range or target workload number. This workload analysis ought to be used at the start of the school year and reviewed at the end of each quarter. When the maximum target range has been reached, schedules should be reviewed and adjustments made to efficiently use teachers. If adjustments cannot be made, an additional special education teacher may be needed.

Administrators must acknowledge the workload issue and be supportive to their special education staff. I want administrators to set a workload target for special education staff so that they can monitor workloads and adjust them by shifting students around or by adding more special education staff. During many workshops throughout the school year, the topic or agenda items do not pertain to special educators. It would be helpful for administrators to allow flexibility during workshop days so that the special education staff can collaborate and/or work on other due process requirements. Administrators could also collaborate with special education staff to include topics that do affect them as with the rest of the staff. The final and, in my opinion, the most important act that administrators can do, is to appreciate their special education

staff. Administrators can show appreciation to special educators by thanking them, bringing treats, allowing them flexible time after student contact hours are done (because of many out of contract hour meetings), and being there to help when needed. When administrators have a strong special education team, it makes their job easier.

Finally, students in special education benefit from educators whom are trained. In Minnesota, we are allowing many variances and community experts to fill special education positions. When we can retain our highly qualified special education staff and attract new special educators to pursue college degrees in special education, it is best for kids.

Table 3

Summary of Chapter 2 Findings

AUTHORS	STUDY DESIGN	PARTICIPANTS	PROCEDURES	FINDINGS
Billingsley (2004)	Quantitative	20 studies reviewed	Articles were researched for key terms such as teacher attrition, retention, and turnover. Studies prior to 1992 were not reviewed. Drafts of reports were excluded, as well as dissertations.	A wide range of factors influence attrition. Most studies focus on problematic work environments. The review suggests that work environment factors, such as low salaries, poor climate, and lack of administrative support can lead to negative affective reactions.

Table 3 (continued)

AUTHORS	STUDY DESIGN	PARTICIPANTS	PROCEDURES	FINDINGS
Cancio, Albrecht, & Johns (2013)	Quantitative	An email was sent to 1,831 members of CCBD and the members were only asked to fill out a survey if they worked with students that meet criteria for Emotional and/or Behavioral Disorders category. 408 participants (teachers) responded.	A questionnaire used consisted of 96 items with six clusters that included: extent of administrative support, satisfaction of various aspects of the job, feelings experienced concerning the job, views of the school, self-descriptive statements and demographic information.	<p>Characteristics of administrative support correlated with the intent to stay in the field. This includes opportunities for growth, appreciation, and trust.</p> <p>Long term teachers reported significantly higher administrative support.</p> <p>Long term teachers reported higher job satisfaction and views of the school.</p>
DeMik (2008)	Qualitative	Five participants that currently teach or previously taught some category of special education.	Obtained background information and educational experiences through an interview process. The information was examined and compared. The participants were interviewed twice. The first interview lasted 60-90 minutes. The participants were interviewed approximately one month later to reflect on the story they gave and to add clarification.	<p>The majority of the special education teachers agreed on the difficulties in special education.</p> <p>Working conditions: paperwork, planning time, meeting student needs, meeting with general education teachers, taking a break and lunch break.</p> <p>Special education teachers are overwhelmed with writing Individualized Education Programs, behavior plans, transition plans, and other documentation.</p> <p>There was no pattern regarding if a teacher will stay or leave the field of special education.</p>

Table 3 (continued)

AUTHORS	STUDY DESIGN	PARTICIPANTS	PROCEDURES	FINDINGS
Donne & Lin (2013)	Qualitative	A review of Wiki, an online induction program for new special education teacher.	A review of current university induction programs compared to Wiki, an online induction program.	<p>One way to address high turnover among new teachers is to provide necessary support through induction programs. These mentoring programs include, supportive school culture, opportunities for interaction between new and experienced teachers, degrees of professional growth, minimized evaluation, explicit intentions, diversified content, mentoring, and fiscal and political support.</p> <p>A way to increase participation of induction programs was to increase availability and accessibility through online programs. The Wiki Online Induction was reviewed and it was determined that it could be used as a tool to help aid the retention of new special education teachers.</p> <p>It was noted that a longer study would be needed to determine if the Wiki actually increases retention of new special education teachers.</p>
Gersten, Keating, Yovanoff, & Harniss (2001)	Quantitative	Three large urban school districts in the western part of the United States.	<p>887 special education teachers were sent a questionnaire and 81% responded.</p> <p>The survey was intended to measure teachers' perceptions of working conditions.</p>	<p>Districts need to address job design issues including special educators an active role in shaping professional development.</p> <p>More opportunities are needed for colleagues to collaborate.</p> <p>Clerical and technological support is needed to reduce the paperwork burden.</p>

Table 3 (continued)

AUTHORS	STUDY DESIGN	PARTICIPANTS	PROCEDURES	FINDINGS
Prather-Jones (2011)	Quantitative	<p>Special education teachers teaching for seven years produced 14 potential candidates. 13 agreed to participate.</p> <p>Schools across the Midwest metropolitan area including elementary, middle, and high schools. Schools varied in both size and socio-economic status.</p>	<p>Interviews and data were collected face to face with in depth interviews. Billingsley's (1993) broad categories of external, employment, and personal factors were used. The interviews were informal and conversational.</p>	<p>Issues of support had a determining influence on their decisions to remain in the field of teaching students with emotional and/or behavioral disorders.</p> <p>Administrative support was key to these teachers' decisions regarding their careers.</p>
Russ, Chiang, Rylance, & Bongers (2001)	Quantitative	Nine studies	<p>A review of the nine studies was focused on relating class size to student engagement and achievement.</p>	<p>Evidence throughout the research supports the belief that lower instructional group sizes are important of group engagement and achievement. Higher caseloads made it more difficult for special education teachers to individualize instruction.</p>
Thornton, Peltier, & Medina (2007)	Quantitative	24 articles reviewed	<p>Articles were reviewed to obtain information on how to reduce the special education teacher shortage.</p>	<p>Change the basic culture of schools to elevate the professional status of special education teachers.</p> <p>Leadership can address marketing, recruiting, teacher turnover, staff development, and salaries.</p> <p>Administrators can support teachers.</p> <p>Community leaders can work towards improving teacher salaries and welcoming new teachers into the community.</p>

Table 3 (continued)

AUTHORS	STUDY DESIGN	PARTICIPANTS	PROCEDURES	FINDINGS
Williams & Dikes (2013)	Qualitative	65 special education teacher	The third edition of the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey was used in this study	<p>The number of years teaching experience is positively correlated with burnout.</p> <p>Caseload numbers were found to be positively associated with burnout.</p> <p>Middle and high school teachers were found to be more prone to stress on the job.</p> <p>A positive correlation between the numbers of additional hours a special education teacher spends completing paperwork and burnout.</p>

Table 4

Minnesota Department of Education Reports

AUTHORS	STUDY DESIGN	PARTICIPANTS	PROCEDURES	FINDINGS
Minnesota Department of Education (2017)	Quantitative	<p>Minnesota's public school districts and charter schools; 74 percent responded to the survey.</p> <p>71% response rate from teacher preparation institutions.</p>	Two surveys to public school districts, charter schools and teacher preparation institutions.	<p>The number of teachers reported as leaving their positions has increased.</p> <p>The average percentage of teachers leaving the profession after 1 year is 15.1 percent and over a quarter of the teachers leave the profession after 3 years (25.9%).</p> <p>Reasons for not being able to retain qualified teachers include competitive job market, teacher salary, and teacher support.</p> <p>The perceived difficulty to fill positions correspond closely to the federal shortage list.</p> <p>In the next five years the most difficult staff to hire will be special education teachers</p>

Table 4 (continued)

AUTHORS	STUDY DESIGN	PARTICIPANTS	PROCEDURES	FINDINGS
Minnesota Department of Education (2015)	Quantitative	83% of Minnesota's public school districts and charter schools, and 94% of Minnesota's teacher preparation institutions.	Two surveys to public school districts, charter schools and teacher preparation institutions.	<p>Slight increase in demand for teachers.</p> <p>Supply of teachers has decreased based on new licenses awarded.</p> <p>Supply and demand balance provide conflicting data. There are fewer special permissions than in the past, however, districts are indicating it impossible or very difficult to hire qualified teachers to fill vacancies in hard to fill areas.</p>
Minnesota Department of Education (2014)	Quantitative	Not applicable	The task force consisted of 16 members that reviewed the following: special education funding, history of case load rule, other state case load approaches, current case load ratios, and state special education funding changes, IEP paperwork reduction project, workload analysis, and Office of the Legislative Auditor's Special Education Report.	<p>The Special Education Task Force was created to develop recommendations for appropriate caseloads and to develop strategies to improve student outcomes.</p> <p>The recommendations include that districts include language to when determining caseloads for pupils receiving special education services 60 percent or less.</p> <p>A new clause should be added for children receiving special education services 60 percent or more of their instructional day to provide the option of lowering the number of students with high behavioral and mental health needs.</p> <p>A definition of caseload should be determined to clarify the meaning of the rule.</p> <p>There should also be further consideration of paperwork issues and strategies to improve educator workload and due process effectiveness.</p>

Table 4 (continued)

AUTHORS	STUDY DESIGN	PARTICIPANTS	PROCEDURES	FINDINGS
Yecke & Hale (2001)	Quantitative	Not applicable	The six elements that drive the Minnesota Department of Education's concept of workload was derived from the review of literature concerning special education teacher retention and documented the reasons special education teachers leave the field.	<p>In 2001 the Minnesota Department of Education convened the Workload Task Force. The goal was to identify factors that influence special education teacher workload. This manual addresses the issue of workload versus the traditional concept of caseload.</p> <p>The task force identified six elements that comprise most of the workloads of special education teachers. The elements are, specially designed instruction (service minutes), evaluations and reevaluations, due process procedures (IEP management responsibilities), preparation time, paraprofessionals managed, and other duties.</p> <p>This manual provides a model and formula intended to be a framework that can be adapted to the changing tasks, responsibilities, and requirements of special education teachers so that administrators are better able to analyze the workloads of staff and respond proactively.</p>

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Appendix A
IRB Protocol Determination



Institutional Review Board (IRB)

720 4th Avenue South AS 210, St. Cloud, MN 56301-4498

Name: John Anderson

Address

USA

Email: jmanderson6@stcloudstate.edu

IRB PROTOCOL DETERMINATION: Exempt Review

Project Title: Workload Analysis

Advisor: Bradley Kaffar

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed your protocol to conduct research involving human subjects. Your project has been: **APPROVED**

Please note the following important information concerning IRB projects:

- The principal investigator assumes the responsibilities for the protection of participants in this project. Any adverse events must be reported to the IRB as soon as possible (ex. research related injuries, harmful outcomes, significant withdrawal of subject population, etc.).

- For expedited or full board review, the principal investigator must submit a Continuing Review/Final Report form in advance of the expiration date indicated on this letter to report conclusion of the research or request an extension.

- Exempt review only requires the submission of a Continuing Review/Final Report form in advance of the expiration date indicated in this letter if an extension of time is needed.

- Approved consent forms display the official IRB stamp which documents approval and expiration dates. If a renewal is requested and approved, new consent forms will be officially stamped and reflect the new approval and expiration dates.

- The principal investigator must seek approval for any changes to the study (ex. research design, consent process, survey/interview instruments, funding source, etc.). The IRB reserves the right to review the research at any time.

If we can be of further assistance, feel free to contact the IRB at 320-308-3290 or email ri@stcloudstate.edu and please reference the SCSU IRB number when corresponding.

IRB Institutional Official:

Dr. Latha Ramakrishnan
Interim Associate Provost for Research
Dean of Graduate Studies

OFFICE USE ONLY

SCSU IRB# 1692 - 2115	Type: Exempt Review	Today's Date: 2/28/2017
1st Year Approval Date: 2/28/2017	2nd Year Approval Date:	3rd Year Approval Date:
1st Year Expiration Date:	2nd Year Expiration Date:	3rd Year Expiration Date:

Appendix B

IRB Continuing Review/Final Report



Institutional Review Board (IRB)

720 4th Avenue South MC 204K, St. Cloud, MN 56301-4498

Continuing Review / Final Report

Principal Investigator: **John Anderson**

Co-Investigator:

Project Title: **Workload Analysis**

If the project has been completed (no longer collecting data on human subjects) please indicate your projects status under Final Report and complete questions 1 through 5. If you have completed collecting data on human subjects but continue to analyze the data, as long as no new data is being obtained, your project would be considered completed.

If the project has not been completed (you are collecting data on human subjects) please indicate the status of your project under Continuing Review/Project Continuation and answer questions 1 through 5.

Final Report

- The Project has been completed.
 Project has not and will not be conducted. Explain:

Continuing Review/Project Continuation

- Data collection continues with enrolled participants.
 Participant recruitment continues following approved IRB protocol.

Have any changes been made to your research project (changes in subject recruitment, informed consent documents, design, methodology, procedures, etc.) since it was approved by the IRB?

- No
 Yes, explain:

Final Report and Continuing Review/Project Continuation, please answer the following:

- How many participants have participated in your study 6
- Have any adverse events (complaints, unexpected reactions, discomfort, or problems) occurred during this research project?
 No
 Yes, explain:
- Have any participants withdrawn from the research, either voluntarily or at the researcher's request?
 No
 Yes, explain:
- Has any new information been identified that may affect the willingness of subjects to participate in this research project?
 No
 Yes, explain:
- Have any changes been made to your research project (changes in subject recruitment, informed consent documents, design, methodology, and procedures, etc.) since it was approved by the IRB?
 No
 Yes, explain:

Principal Investigator's Signature

Date

SCSU IRB#: 1692 - 2115