

ABSTRACT OF CAPSTONE

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The Graduate School  
Morehead State University

April 12, 2023

EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB SATISFACTION AND  
TEACHER RETENTION AMONG RURAL AND URBAN ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL TEACHERS IN KENTUCKY

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Abstract of Capstone

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A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the  
Ernst and Sara Lane Volgenau College of Education  
at Morehead State University

By

Whitney Shannon Wilson  
Flemingsburg, Kentucky

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Louisville, Kentucky

Committee Chair: Dr. Michael W. Kessinger, Associate Professor

Morehead, Kentucky

April 12, 2023

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The purpose of this mixed methods study was to identify factors that lead to job satisfaction and the specific practices that make a difference in workplace satisfaction among teachers in order to increase educator retention. Understanding these characteristics is critical to determining the impact they have on reducing the rate of teacher attrition in Kentucky's public school districts. Based on previous studies, the primary focus of this research was the impact that school leadership and culture have on the job satisfaction of teachers. As researchers, it was our belief that school leadership has a significant role in determining culture; and that support from school administration is critical to workplace satisfaction for teachers. Complex relationships exist between schools, administrators, teachers, communities, and others that are different for teachers in rural and urban settings. Through this study, factors were identified by teachers in both rural and urban schools and then compared. Themes related to job satisfaction emerged from data collected through a teacher survey. As Kentucky school leaders look for ways to address the teacher shortage in urban and rural areas, results from this study provide an inside look into practices that impact teacher attrition and retention.

**KEYWORDS:** Job Satisfaction, Leadership, Culture, Retention, Attrition

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SCHOOL TEACHERS IN KENTUCKY

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Edris Barnette Humphrey

The Graduate School  
Morehead State University

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## DEDICATION

Whitney Shannon Wilson

I would like to dedicate this work to those who believed in me over the years. My family, especially my mother, for always reminding me about the important things in life. I want to thank my children and husband for enduring the many nights of work and for keeping me grounded when things were hard. To my father, Gary Shannon, and Kim, for always offering their love and support no matter what I asked. To my stepfather, for helping run kids all over the country while I was studying: I do not know what I would have done without you, David. Thank you also to my grandparents, Jim and Kathleen White, Evelyn Shannon, and the late J.B. Shannon for making this dream a reality. Your love and support have been unwavering as you pushed me to be better. To Sherri, my kids' nanny, I have no idea what I would have done without you. Thank you for keeping up with my home life.

Thank you to Lesia Eldridge and Dr. Jesse Bacon. Both of you believed in me even when I couldn't see it in myself, and I am forever grateful. To Jordan Fritz, I can't imagine having a different partner; you helped make this journey possible for me by picking up my slack at work.

I am humbled and blessed by the love and support of my school, staff, and community. I have the best job in the world and, even when it is hard, the people I work with make me want to do more and be better every day. I must mention the teachers and educators who have touched my life. I can't imagine being from any

other small town and having the love, support, and push from any other group of people. You have truly impacted my life.

Finally, Edris, thank you for being my rock and keeping me focused. I can't imagine doing this with anyone else. Above all, I thank the Lord, my Savior, for seeing me through. I know that none of this would have happened without God pushing me to make a larger impact on my world.

## DEDICATION

Edris Barnette Humphrey

I would like to dedicate this paper to all educators, past and present. To those who have positively impacted students' lives and continue making a difference daily. To those advocating for equitable education for all students. To my parents, Edd and Corlis, who provided the financial support for me to become the first in our family to graduate with a college degree and continued that tradition of support for their children and grandchildren.

To my children, Cory, Abby, and Katy, who have endured every degree and certificate over the years. To my grandchildren, great-nieces, and great-nephews: May there always be an abundance of teachers who inspire you. To Ashley, J.P., Megan, Eric, Dick, Craig, Lisa, Amy, Daniel, Kyle, Brittany, Lane, and Sarah, who encouraged me every step of the way during the doctoral process. I would like to give my mother a special thank you for her daily gentle words of encouragement and steadfast belief in my abilities.

My deepest gratitude goes to Aaron, who was always by my side. His unwavering patience and support helped me finally reach this goal. To my partner in this project, Whitney, who said we would get through this together: I am honored to have worked on this project with such a passionate educator. Finally, I would like to thank my father again, who believed there was nothing more important than a quality education. That belief lives on in my life's work.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, we would like to acknowledge our Committee Chair, Dr. Michael W. Kessinger. His constant guidance and direction made it possible for us to complete this capstone. We are forever grateful for the many hours he dedicated to us as students throughout the P-12 Leadership Program. Dr. Kessinger made himself available any time of the day or night when we needed assistance. His expertise is reflected in our work and is most appreciated.

We would also like to acknowledge another Morehead State University staff member who started with us on our journey. Thank you to the late Dr. Shane Shope. His enthusiasm for our topic inspired us as we embarked on this project.

We thank the principals who agreed to include their schools in the study and allowed their teachers to participate. These teachers' willingness to share their voices will continue to impact the working conditions in our schools.

Our sincere appreciation goes to Libby Carlson for editing our work. Finally, Dr. Jesse Bacon and Dr. Kimberly Nettleton, thank you for agreeing to serve on our committee. We appreciate the time you graciously devoted to the proposal and defense of this capstone.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
List of Tables .....	20
List of Figures .....	22
Chapter 1: Introduction .....	23
Statement of the Problem.....	25
Significance of the Problem.....	26
Background of the Problem .....	28
Definition of Terms.....	31
School Leadership.....	31
Job Satisfaction .....	32
School Climate.....	32
School Culture .....	32
Rural and Urban Schools .....	33
Elementary School.....	34
Positive Perception of Workplace or Job Satisfaction .....	35
Summary .....	35
Chapter 2: Review of Literature .....	37
Teacher Workforce .....	39
Diversity in the Teacher Workforce .....	40
Teacher Supply and Demand.....	41
Teacher Program Enrollment.....	45

Attrition .....	46
Why Teachers Leave .....	47
Re-entrants .....	48
Retention .....	49
Job Satisfaction .....	51
Student Success.....	51
Teacher Performance .....	52
Administrator Support .....	53
Leadership Style.....	54
Transformational Leadership .....	54
Ethical Leadership .....	56
Servant Leadership.....	57
Conclusion .....	58
Motivation to Teach.....	58
Stress and Burnout .....	59
Culture.....	61
Why Teachers Stay .....	62
Conclusions.....	62
Chapter 3: Methodology .....	64
Local Context.....	64
Research Design.....	69
Research Questions and Hypotheses .....	71

Guiding Questions .....	74
Subjects and Sampling.....	75
Instrumentation .....	77
Procedures.....	79
Pilot Survey.....	80
Qualitative Study .....	83
Researcher Roles.....	83
Quantitative Analysis.....	84
Qualitative Analysis.....	85
Chapter 4: Findings.....	87
2022 Impact Working Conditions Survey Data.....	88
Rural and Urban Classification .....	88
Perception of Workplace Satisfaction.....	89
Overall State Perception Data.....	89
Top 30 Schools .....	90
Bottom 30 Schools.....	92
Top and Bottom Rural Schools.....	92
Top and Bottom Urban Schools.....	93
Top Five Rural and Top Five Urban Elementary Schools	94
Summary .....	96
2022 Impact Survey Themes .....	97
School Climate Theme.....	98

School Leadership Theme.....	98
Staff-Leadership Relationships .....	99
Teacher Turnover.....	109
Elementary Turnover .....	111
Turnover Percentage Top 30 Rural and Urban Schools ..	112
Turnover Percentage Bottom 30 Rural and Urban Schools .....	113
Turnover Percentage Top 30 Rural and Bottom 30 Rural Schools .....	114
Turnover Percentage Top 30 Urban and Bottom 30 Urban Schools.....	114
Turnover Percentage Top 5 Rural and Urban Schools ...	115
Rural and Urban Turnover .....	116
Summary of Quantitative Findings .....	118
Qualitative Data .....	119
Teacher Job Satisfaction Survey .....	120
Respondent Demographics .....	120
Rural Schools .....	123
Urban Schools .....	124
Benefits of Working in Rural Schools .....	125
Disadvantages of Working in Rural Schools .....	126
Benefits of Working in Urban Schools .....	127
Disadvantages of Working in Urban Schools .....	127



Compensation .....	128
Rural Schools .....	128
Urban Schools .....	129
Homegrown or Transplanted .....	129
Rural Schools .....	129
Urban Schools .....	130
Impact of Culture on Job Satisfaction .....	131
Rural Schools .....	131
Urban Schools .....	132
Leadership and Job Satisfaction .....	133
Rural Schools .....	133
Urban Schools .....	134
Remain as an Educator .....	135
Rural Schools .....	135
Urban Schools .....	137
Other Issues .....	138
Summary of Qualitative Findings .....	139
Chapter 5: Findings and Recommendations .....	143
Conclusion .....	144
Quantitative Findings .....	144
Finding One .....	144
Finding Two .....	145

Finding Three.....	146
Qualitative Findings.....	147
Finding One .....	148
Finding Two.....	149
Finding Three.....	150
Finding Four .....	151
Finding Five .....	152
Finding Six.....	153
Advantages.....	154
Disadvantages .....	154
Finding Seven .....	155
Finding Eight .....	155
Limitations, Delimitations, and Assumptions.....	156
Limitations .....	156
Delimitations.....	158
Assumptions.....	159
Recommendations.....	159
Future Actions.....	161
Reflection.....	162
References .....	165
Appendix A: Urban and Rural School Districts in Kentucky.....	178
Appendix B: Kentucky Rural/Urban Map .....	179

Appendix C: Kentucky District SEEK Allocation Sample.....	180
Appendix D: 2022 Impact Kentucky Working Conditions Survey Questions ...	181
Appendix E: Survey Questions.....	196
Appendix F: Principal Email for Information Regarding the Study .....	198
Appendix G: Teacher Survey Participation Email.....	200
Appendix H: Informed Consent.....	201
Appendix I: Morehead State University IRB Approval Letter .....	203
Appendix J: Follow-Up Email for Teacher Survey Participation.....	204
Appendix K: Top 30 Rural Elementary Schools with the Highest Perception ...	205
Appendix L: Top 30 Urban Elementary Schools with the Highest Perception...	207
Appendix M: 2022 Impact Survey by Themes for Selected Schools .....	209
Vita .....	210

## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1	
Rural and Urban Elementary Schools from the 2022 Impact Survey.....	89
Table 2	
Overall Perception Data for Rural and Urban Elementary Schools .....	90
Table 3	
Job Satisfaction for Top 30 Rural and Urban Elementary Schools .....	91
Table 4	
Job Satisfaction for Bottom 30 Rural and Urban Elementary Schools.....	92
Table 5	
Job Satisfaction for Top and Bottom 30 Rural Elementary Schools .....	93
Table 6	
Job Satisfaction for Top and Bottom 30 Urban Elementary Schools .....	94
Table 7	
Rural Elementary Schools with Highest Overall Perception Data .....	95
Table 8	
Urban Elementary Schools with Highest Overall Perception Data .....	95
Table 9	
Job Satisfaction for Top 5 Rural and Top 5 Urban Schools .....	96
Table 10	
Theme Data for Top Five Rural and Urban Schools .....	98
Table 11	
Selected Themes for Top Five Rural Schools.....	99
Table 12	
Selected Themes for Top Five Urban Schools .....	100
Table 13	
Rural Positive Response to Questions for Relevant Themes (by percentage).....	102

Table 14	
Urban Positive Response to Questions for Relevant Themes (by percentage).....	103
Table 15	
Analysis of Elementary Teacher Turnover .....	112
Table 16	
Analysis of Turnover Top 30 Rural and Urban Schools.....	112
Table 17	
Analysis of Turnover Bottom 30 Rural and Urban Schools .....	113
Table 18	
Analysis of Turnover Top 30 and Bottom 30 Rural Schools .....	114
Table 19	
Analysis of Turnover Top 30 and Bottom 30 Urban Schools .....	115
Table 20	
Analysis of Turnover Top 5 Rural and Urban Schools .....	116
<b>Table 21</b>	
2020 Teacher Turnover Rural Elementary Schools.....	117
Table 22	
2020 Teacher Turnover Urban Elementary Schools.....	117

## LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1 Historical Supply and Demand of Teachers 2005 - 2030 .....	40
Figure 2 Number of Education Degrees Conferred 1970 through 2020 .....	46
Figure 3 KSRC Data for Reported Working Conditions 2017 to 2022 .....	66
Figure 4 Kentucky Student Enrollment in Public Education .....	68
Figure 5 Words Appearing More Than 10 Times .....	82
Figure 6 Coded Responses by Themes from the Pilot Study .....	83
Figure 7 Teacher Turnover 2017-18 to 2021-22 .....	111
Figure 8 Number of Years Employed at Current School .....	121
Figure 9 Years of Experience .....	122
Figure 10 Word Frequency from Teacher Job Satisfaction Survey Responses ....	140

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

Recent headlines about public education and the teaching profession suggest a looming mass exodus of teachers from the profession. The American Federation of Teachers (2022) reports that within the next two years, 38% of teachers will seek opportunities outside of education because of poor working conditions, political attacks, school shootings, low pay, lack of respect, stress, and workload. A survey conducted by Hart Research Associates (2022) among 2,379 members of the American Federation of Teachers included representatives from several sectors, including healthcare, the public sector, school support staff, and higher education, to explore the outlook of its members. Hart Research Associates found that teachers from across the nation reported a 33% increase in job dissatisfaction from 2020, with 42% of teachers surveyed in 2020 saying they were very dissatisfied, the highest among all P-12 members surveyed.

Survey data supports that schools nationwide are facing teacher shortages. They cannot fill vacant positions with qualified applicants, which has left districts scrambling to staff schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). The educational landscape after the COVID-19 pandemic has changed significantly, and the teaching profession has not been immune. This includes teachers citing the pandemic as one reason they are leaving the profession (National Center for Education Statistics). Teachers, like healthcare workers, have been on the front lines

of the COVID-19 pandemic, and data support the strain on the public education system (American Federation of Teachers, 2022).

Teacher turnover has become an alarming issue for school districts and administrators when education and students require stability. Consistency for students after the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic is paramount as public education systems work to serve students affected by a completely unprecedented educational experience. Nearly 71% of teachers report that 2020 was one of the worst years ever for public education for various reasons including workload, unrealistic expectations, lack of support, and student behavior issues for the sharp rise in the dissatisfaction of teachers (Hart Research Association, 2022).

In this post-pandemic world, it is crucial for public education systems to hire and retain teachers who work to build relationships with students, are invested in their school and community, and provide engaging instruction. Examining teachers' working conditions will help answer why teachers leave the profession. However, a close look into why teachers stay – either in their current school or the profession in general – is central to promoting teacher attrition and student success (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2016).

The primary focus of this study was to determine the impact that school leadership and culture have on the satisfaction of teachers, based on our belief that school leadership ultimately determines school culture. Leaders have the ability to develop cultures that are supportive and uphold a collaborative environment.



**Statement of the Problem**

Understanding both why teachers leave and why teachers stay at their current school is central to maintaining the teacher workforce. Analyzing how leadership can improve culture and teacher job satisfaction is critical to improving teacher working conditions. The specific factors that equate with job satisfaction have been studied, but the characteristics and practices that influence a teacher's decision to stay have had minimal coverage.

School leaders in all geographical areas must be well-equipped to improve the satisfaction of educators, which includes understanding how their role can impact school culture. The existing literature supports that leadership (Ilyas & Abdullah, 2016) and culture (Zahed-Babelan, 2019) directly impact teacher satisfaction. School cultures are complex and exist on the basic principles of how teachers feel about the character of the school in which they work. Culture can also be driven positively (or negatively) by school leaders if the leader understands the school's culture and works to improve it in order to impact the satisfaction of teachers. Understanding how these factors differ from school to school is essential to addressing the alarming rate of educator turnover.

A rewarding work environment for teachers positively impacts the student experience and may reduce teacher turnover. Retention of teachers at this critical time is essential to providing consistency and stability for students. This capstone examined what teachers identified as parts of their job or workplace that created the most job satisfaction. School leaders can use this information to assess existing

working conditions and make improvements that will positively impact teacher attrition.

### **Significance of the Problem**

The nationwide teacher shortage has consistently made national news since 2020. The shortage has become one of the most significant concerns of school leaders since the COVID-19 pandemic. Teacher shortages existed in Kentucky before the pandemic due to a lack of pay, benefits, and strains on the Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System. Since the pandemic, filling school positions has become even more challenging. Difficulty filling positions has been exacerbated because the teacher workforce does not exist, either due to a lack of certified teachers or because teachers have left the profession for other opportunities (U.S. Department of Education, 2022). Teachers are the linchpin of public education, and, like all states, Kentucky has seen a significant rise in the number of positions that go unfilled each year since 2015 (Glass, 2022).

While school leaders seek new strategies to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers, many need direction on what makes quality teachers stay. Schools with high rates of teacher turnover experience disruptions in the continuity of instruction and high costs associated with training replacement teachers (Farinde-Wu & Fitchett, 2018).

In June 2022, Kentucky Education Commissioner Dr. Jason Glass reported that the average teacher turnover rate in Kentucky was 17% from 2017 through 2021. This was slightly higher than the national average of 16%. However, this only tells

part of the picture. Thompson (2022) reported that, on average, only 83.5% of teacher vacancies in Kentucky are filled. Furthermore, an increase in emergency certifications issued in an attempt to fill the need for educators indicates a rising problem.

Commissioner Glass confirmed that 72% of teachers are at risk of leaving the profession due to retirement or because they fall into the high-risk category of having less than five years of experience (Thompson, 2022).

The significance of this study was to analyze schools with high workplace satisfaction among teachers and the reasons for that satisfaction. Understanding the factors that improve the workplace in schools and how leaders can improve teachers' working conditions is essential to teacher retention. Developing systems that support teachers and their satisfaction is critical for schools that want to retain quality teachers. Ultimately, this study provides suggestions for improving teacher job satisfaction in order to improve teacher retention rates. The future of a successful education system in Kentucky is contingent upon the procurement and retention of high-quality educators. The quality of education in the Commonwealth will suffer without certified teachers leading our classrooms. Determining what makes a school a great place to work is vital as it improves the overall quality of education for students (Shila & Sevilla, 2015). The desired outcome of this study was to provide guidance for school administrators that will help improve the quality and culture of the workplace, which will positively impact teacher retention and support systems that keep teachers employed in public education.

### **Background of the Problem**

Researchers have been studying teacher shortages for years, as states experienced difficulty filling many teaching positions throughout the 1900s. Behrstock-Sherratt (2016) notes teacher shortages dating back to 1936 during the Great Depression. A review of 55 reports indicated an upward trend in employment from 1931 that continued through 1936, resulting in difficulty staffing teaching positions in several states (Behrstock-Sherratt, 2016). Research on teacher shortages conducted by Sutchter et al. (2019) shows a shortage of math and science teachers dating back to the 1950s and a shortage of special education teachers beginning in the 1960s. The well-known report, *A Nation at Risk* (Gardner et al., 1983), notes a continued shortage in these teaching fields, adding foreign language, gifted and talented education, and language minority education to the list of critical shortage areas.

Once recognized as a job for life, teaching has evolved into a career with a bad reputation, characterized by high stress and high turnover. High attrition rates used to be limited to specific content areas, including mathematics, science, and special education (Sutchter et al., 2019), but now can be found across the board. The teacher shortage has been even more of a concern since the COVID-19 pandemic, as areas that have traditionally been easy to staff are also becoming difficult to fill (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). In 2022, the U.S. Department of Education cited that difficulty in staffing critical shortage areas “such as special education; bilingual education; science, technology, engineering, and math; career

and technical education; and early childhood education have only been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic” (U.S. Department of Education, 2022, Institutions and System Leaders Section, para 1). Furthermore, once someone enters the profession, there is no guarantee that they will stay. Teacher attrition is concerning because departures mainly occur early in one’s career (Vagi et al., 2019).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2022), almost half of the nation's public schools report unfilled vacancies, citing COVID-19 as a significant barrier to filling open positions. Sutchter et al. (2019) noted that, based on the American Association for Employment in Education survey conducted in 2016-17, 69% of districts reported not having qualified applicants to fill positions, which doubled from the same study conducted in 2013-14. Reports indicate that an estimated 109,000 teaching positions were filled by teachers who were not fully qualified, which was substantiated by data collected in individual states (Sutchter et al.). Teaching positions are going unfilled, meaning students will likely receive education from an unqualified or uncertified teacher (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Having a better understanding of teacher retention is essential to finding solutions for the teacher shortage. It’s not enough for school leaders to just acknowledge that there is a teacher shortage, they must look for solutions. Having a better understanding of the contributing factors can help school leaders address teacher turnover. Other agencies, including the U.S. Department of Education (2022), recognize the need to improve access to teacher education programs and eliminate

barriers to their success. Commissioner Glass (2022) even suggested a state-paid student-teacher incentive to attract more teachers to the profession.

Miller et al. (2020) found three key reasons why teachers leave: school demographics, leadership, and working conditions. The study found that teachers who are more effective with their students are less likely to leave than ineffective teachers (Miller et al.). Teachers with less experience may need more support and strong leadership, which improves new teacher retention (Miller et al.). Research supports that strong leaders whom teachers can trust are essential to retention. Miller et al. reported that working conditions increase teacher retention even when other determining factors predict the likelihood of turnover. When teachers view the principal as a strong instructional leader and have input into decisions, turnover is less prevalent in those schools.

Students are impacted most in schools with high turnover rates. Farinde-Wu and Fitchett (2018) emphasize that teacher attrition comes with a high price on student achievement. Students who experience disruptions in the continuity of instruction and budgets are heavily impacted due to costs related to training replacement teachers. Administrators and veteran teachers spend their time training new teachers instead of focusing on improving student achievement. Shila and Sevilla (2015) identify that job satisfaction is directly related to student achievement. Therefore, high teacher turnover harms students. Baptiste (2019) confirms that students need motivated teachers in optimal workplace environments in order to increase student achievement.

While attrition can considerably impact student achievement as teachers move to a different school or district, or high-quality educators leave the profession altogether, the impact goes beyond student achievement. Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) emphasize that districts and schools also sustain a significant financial burden from training new teachers and the disruption due to turnover, estimated to cost districts more than \$20,000 annually per teacher who leaves. High-achieving school systems in Finland, Singapore, and Ontario report low attrition rates of 3% to 4%, “if attrition rates in the U.S. could be reduced by half to be comparable with these systems, the national teacher shortage could be virtually eliminated” (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017, p. 3).

For the state of Kentucky, approximately 72% of teachers who were part of the workforce in 2022 were at risk of leaving the profession (Glass, 2022; Thompson, 2022). This number is not an anomaly, but a trend, as other states throughout the nation are experiencing similar projections. The National Education Association Survey (2022) found that 55% of teachers nationwide have considered leaving the profession. This concern predates the COVID-19 pandemic, as researchers were already projecting teacher shortages. The Bureau for Labor Statistics (2022) found that the ratio of new hires to job openings in the education sector has reached new lows, dropping significantly in the last decade.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following definitions clarify how they were used throughout this study.

***School Leadership***

For this study, school leadership and administration refer to the school principal and the school assistant principal or vice principal. The definition only applies to the school principal in schools that do not employ a school assistant principal or vice principal.

***Job Satisfaction***

Job satisfaction and workplace satisfaction were used interchangeably. Job or workplace satisfaction is identified as a teacher's feelings toward their job, their sense of success and achievement, and how their work impacts their well-being. This definition was determined based on Sahito and Vaisanen's (2016) definition of job satisfaction, "a worker's sense of achievement and success, which is directly linked with productivity and personal wellbeing" (p. 44).

***School Climate***

Panorama Education (n.d.) considers the climate of schools to be the perceptions of learning and well-being at the overall school. Climate, while related to culture, was defined separately for this study. The definition for climate provided by Panorama Education (n.d.), as related to the 2022 Impact Kentucky Working Conditions Survey, was used.

***School Culture***

Culture encompasses almost every aspect of an organization. The organizational culture of schools is even more complex as it assumes the culture from multiple perspectives. For this study, culture was defined, according to Murtedjo and



Suharningsih (2016), as “philosophy, ideology, values, assumptions, beliefs, expectations, attitudes, and norms that are held together and bind in a particular community” (p. 87).

### ***Rural and Urban Schools***

There are multiple definitions for the terms “rural” and “urban” when considering counties in Kentucky and determining rural and urban status for schools. For this study, we defined rural and urban schools based on their identification through the U.S. Census Bureau delineation from 2010 and the Office of Budget and Management’s definition for defining central counties. Schools were considered urban if they were included in counties considered central counties. Unfortunately, data from the latest 2020 U.S. Census were unavailable at the time of this study.

The U.S. Census provides data to the Office of Budget and Management, identifying counties as metropolitan and micropolitan statistical area programs. Considering this data, the Office of Budget and Management considers an urban area as a Core Based Statistical Area (CBSA) with a population of at least 50,000 or a Census Bureau-delineated urban cluster of at least 10,000 population (2010 Standards for Delineating Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas, 2010).

Further, the Census Bureau defines central counties as counties with a population of at least 50,000 or “have within their boundaries a population of 5,000 located in a single urban area of at least 10,000 population” (2010 Standards for Delineating Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas, p. 6). The 2010 Standards for Delineating Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas states:

A central county is associated with the urbanized area or urban cluster that accounts for the largest portion of the county's population. The central counties associated with a particular urbanized area or urban cluster are grouped to form a single cluster of central counties for purposes of measuring commuting to and from potentially qualifying outlying counties (p. 6).

Based on this definition, rural and urban counties can be challenging to understand. The Economic Research Service (2019) provides a complete map of the urban areas in Kentucky that meet this definition. According to the 2010 Census Data and the Office of Management and Budget definition, 33 counties in Kentucky are considered urban, and 87 counties are considered rural. A list of the central counties or urban counties and rural counties in Kentucky is provided in Appendix A. The map created by the Economic Research Service, which highlights these county designations, can be found in Appendix B.

### ***Elementary School***

In Kentucky, the term elementary school can take on different meanings depending upon the grade levels included in each school. Elementary schools were named "Elementary Schools" on the 2022 Impact Kentucky Working Conditions Survey regardless of their grade levels. Some elementary schools in Kentucky are composed of grades preschool through fifth grade, some kindergarten through sixth grade, and others preschool through sixth grade. Intermediate schools, preschools, early learning centers, primary schools, kindergarten through third-grade schools, and

combined elementary and middle schools were not considered elementary schools for this study. Elementary schools with middle-grade students were not included in this study.

### ***Positive Perception of Workplace or Job Satisfaction***

Positive perceptions of the workplace or positive perceptions of job satisfaction were determined by the 2022 Impact Kentucky Working Conditions Survey, collected from Kentucky schools during the fall semester of the 2021 school year.

### **Summary**

Teacher turnover and staffing have become one of the most pressing issues for schools and stakeholders. Not only are teachers leaving the profession, but the pipeline of teachers to replace retirees does not exist (Glass, 2022). Creating a school culture fortified by effective leadership and support is vital to retaining teachers, both at a school and in the field of education in general.

Knowing which factors influence a teacher's decision to stay, whether it is in the same school or district, is critical for improving teacher retention rates. Previous studies identified administrative and collegial support as the leading reasons teachers are satisfied with their workplace (Sezer, 2019). Some teachers report that they are impacted most by school leadership and the support of their principals when managing student behavior (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017), while others prioritize school culture and its value to the organization (Baptiste, 2019). Feelings of job dissatisfaction have been attributed to a lack of administrative

support, low salaries, and poor working conditions (Podolsky et al., 2016; Sutchter et al., 2016). Regardless of why teachers leave their current schools or the education profession in general, understanding why teachers stay and how to keep them employed is vital for schools and districts as they work to hire and retain a certified teacher workforce.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Review of Literature**

Teacher retention is critical to creating the stable school environments that students need to succeed. Teachers choose to stay in schools where they experience high workplace satisfaction. This chapter focuses on research on the teacher workforce and job satisfaction – those places where teachers feel supported and fulfilled. These topics relate to improving the workplace satisfaction of teachers and the number of teachers leaving the profession. Identifying characteristics that make teaching feel like a fulfilling career can help leaders better understand why teachers leave the profession early.

It is no secret that teaching can be a stressful career, with the stress generated by a number of factors. Knowing the early signs of stress associated with the profession could give individuals who eventually consider leaving time to make changes before experiencing burnout. Harris et al. (2019) noted that continued increases in expectations for teachers and an overall decrease in respect from stakeholders are reasons for high attrition in the profession. Approximately 10% of teachers leave the profession during their first year, and up to 50% will leave within the first five years (Miller et al., 2020). A recent Bryner (2021) study identified the top reasons teachers change professions: lack of competitive salaries, concerns about personal safety, and the lack of support from stakeholders ranked highest. Many teachers cite a lack of respect for the profession as another concern. The Hart Research Association (2022) found that 90% of teachers surveyed felt that lack of

respect and support for teachers and staff was a very or fairly serious problem.

Further, Wiggan (2020) found that only 34% of teachers believe the teaching profession is valued.

Lack of support also comes in financial form, when local governments do not provide funding needed for basic things: maintaining facilities, providing pay raises and benefits, or improving safety. At the local level, many public school districts have to resort to proposing tax increases to fund such initiatives. This is often met with opposition from stakeholders in the community (Bryner, 2021). The constant narrative and press about funding and taxes further damages the complex dynamic between teachers and the community.

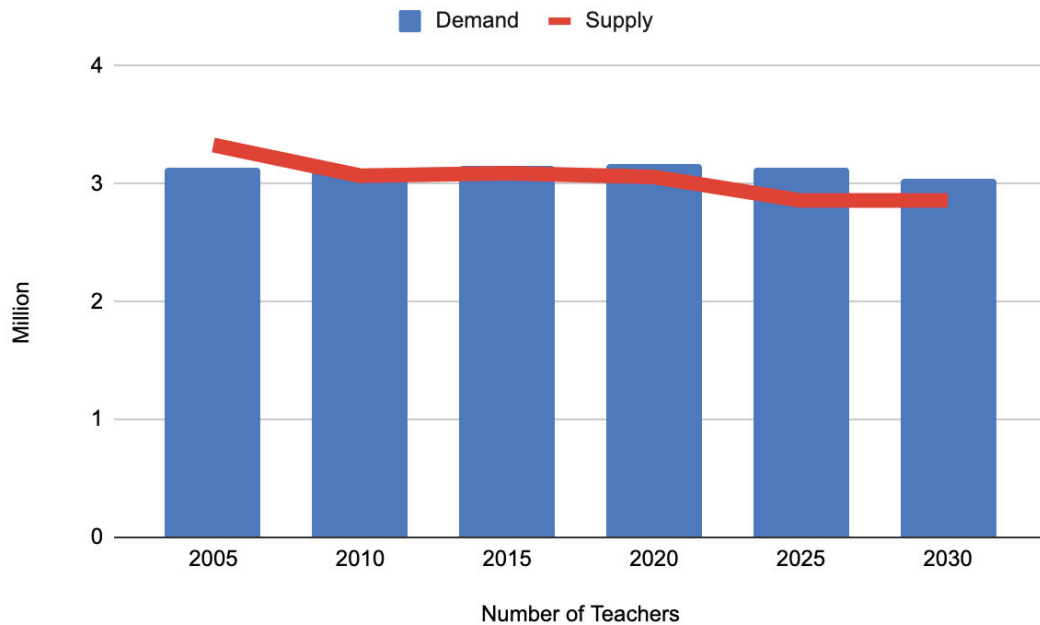
The pandemic increased the frustration among stakeholders – from both a public health and technological perspective. When students transitioned to an online learning platform, the adjustment to online instruction and related technology created a learning curve for teachers that some chose not to overcome. When schools reopened, teachers became anxious about returning to in-person instruction despite reports of it being safe for students and staff to return to school (Bryner, 2021). These health concerns prompted some teachers to retire instead of returning to the classroom after the pandemic. Smith (2020) reported these additional stressors as contributors to teachers deciding to retire instead of returning to the classroom. While teachers were heartbroken to leave the classroom, many felt they had to keep themselves and their families safe (Smith). Considering that many of these teachers were experienced and certified, this loss could have a lasting impact on schools and education.

### **Teacher Workforce**

Teachers directly impact student learning more than any other in-school factor (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). A highly qualified teacher workforce is needed to improve the quality of the local, state, and national public education system. The *Report on the Condition of Education 2022* produced by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) provides data on the national teacher workforce. The annual report shows that as of 2017-18, 3.5 million public school teachers were active in the workforce. Approximately 90% of public-school teachers held a standard or advanced teaching certificate. Recent data show that the U.S. teacher workforce was predominantly White (79%) and female (76%) (NCES, 2022). Teacher gender-related demographics look similar in Kentucky.

Teacher shortages continue despite a 3% drop in K-12 enrollment due to the COVID-19 pandemic (NCES, 2022). Teacher workforce shortages are reaching crisis levels in some teaching fields (Podolsky et al., 2016). Sutchter et al. (2016) refer to the teacher workforce as a “leaky bucket” due to the hundreds of thousands of teachers that leave each year before retirement age.

Each year there is a need for approximately 250,000 teachers to fill the gaps from increases in student enrollment, a change in student-teacher ratios, or teachers leaving the profession (Sutchter et al., 2016). Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) advocate for better policies to stabilize and improve the teacher workforce to effectively serve all students and retain the teachers needed to staff our nation’s schools. The historical supply and demand of teachers are provided in Figure 1.

**Figure 1***Historical Supply and Demand of Teachers 2005 - 2030*

*Note.* This chart was created from teacher supply and demand data provided by Sutchter et al. (2019) and statistical data from Duffin (2022).

### ***Diversity in the Teacher Workforce***

A nationwide teacher shortage has school districts struggling to hire qualified teachers. In addition to the need for more teachers in critical content areas, recruiting a diverse workforce is even more challenging (Carver-Thomas, 2018). According to Redding & Nguyen (2020), new teachers are often placed in schools where most students are classified as a minority and living in poverty. Inexperienced teachers may require additional training and support from colleagues and administrators when working with underserved populations. High-minority schools will have higher rates



of alternatively certified teachers and higher turnover rates than low-minority schools (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Recruiting and retaining a diverse teacher population is vital to rural and urban schools. When children interact with individuals from other racial backgrounds, they exhibit fewer biases in adulthood than those who have not had diverse racial and ethnic experiences. “Being taught by a diverse teacher workforce can help all students develop dispositions that prepare them for civic life and the workforce” (Carver-Thomas, p. 6). Students need to experience a variety of racial backgrounds in the educational setting.

### ***Teacher Supply and Demand***

A better understanding of the teacher labor market helps school leaders prepare for teacher supply and demand patterns. Factors influencing teacher demand include student population, pupil-teacher ratios, and attrition rates. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) initially estimated a steady increase in student enrollment by 2025 (as cited in Sutchter et al., 2019). Unfortunately, new statistics show a drop in student enrollment which can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic (Irwin et al., 2022). With hopes that the student population will eventually rebound in the coming years, student-teacher ratios will play a large part in determining how many teachers will be needed to serve students. Sutchter et al. (2019) and Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) indicate that those ratios can be as high as 24 to 1 in California and drop as low as 11 to 1 in Vermont. Projections show

that even the slightest drop in ratios could require an additional 145,000 teachers per year (Sutcher et al.).

With fewer teachers entering the profession, the supply of teachers is down considerably. Sutcher et al. (2019) addressed critical shortage areas and the decline in workforce diversity from 2009 to 2014, and projected that this pattern would continue through the next decade. In 2018, the Learning Policy Institute reported a shortage of 112,000 teachers (Wiggen et al., 2021). Currently, 44% of school districts are reporting unfilled vacancies, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (2022). Tracking the number of new entrants and re-entrants who may return to the profession can help project statewide, regional, and local district needs. Sutcher et al. developed the awareness that the teacher supply can help districts plan for trends in the labor market. Knowing the number of college students enrolled in traditional education programs helps evaluate the current supply. The economy will also play a role in the supply of teachers. Wiggan et al. data indicate that the supply of teachers is lowest in states where the economy is solid and other job opportunities are available. “The gap between the supply and demand of teachers is widening” (Wiggan et al., p. 55).

Sutcher et al. (2019) found that teachers entering the profession make up over half the annual teacher supply for the first time. In terms of experience, the trend no longer shows that a model teacher has 15 years of experience. Since 2007-2008, first-year teachers are now the norm (Redding & Nguyen, 2020). Graduates from teacher education programs have yet to be hired, but they are fully credentialed and have

completed a traditional pathway to become educators. Conventional pathway teachers enter the profession at a rate of 70% to 90% after graduation (Sutcher et al.).

The remaining percentage of students educated as teachers who did not enter the teaching profession might not choose teaching for various reasons. Current trends show a shift in the time that new teachers begin teaching. Some graduates who went through the pathway to become a teacher are hired for other education-related jobs. Therefore, they are not directly entering the classroom, and others with teacher training may or may not enter the profession later (Sutcher et al., 2019). Wiggen et al. (2021) determined that low salaries are a primary reason those with teaching degrees do not enter or remain in the profession. This data is further supported by the Hart Research Association (2022), which stated that 93% of teachers surveyed feel that current teacher salaries are one of the top problems faced by public education. Teacher salaries were considered by 77% of teachers who participated in the Hart Research Association (2022) study to be a very serious problem, and 14% said it was a fairly serious problem as wages do not keep up with the cost of living.

In 2016, the national average teacher salary was \$58,353, and a new teacher's salary was less than \$36,000. The national average salary has only increased slightly nearly five years later. In the 2020-2021 school year, the National Education Association (2022) reported an average salary of \$65,293. Wiggen et al. (2021) advocate for overall increases in teacher pay, claiming that teachers avoid the profession because they are underpaid. Clark (2022) addressed teacher pay during an interview with Kentucky's Commissioner of Education. Dr. Jason Glass expressed

that teachers in the Commonwealth should earn a livable wage that offers access to a middle-class life from which they retire with dignity. In 2022, the National Education Association reported that the average teacher salary in Kentucky in 2020-21 was about \$11,000 below the national average (Clark, 2022).

Further reports indicate that Kentucky ranks 36th in teacher pay (National Education Association, 2022). The highest salaries for teachers in the United States are in New York, reported at slightly more than \$90,000 (National Education Association). The National Education Association estimates that teachers make approximately \$2,200 less than they did ten years ago when inflation is factored in. Considering teachers' salaries, many would-be candidates choose other careers with sufficient compensation and benefits.

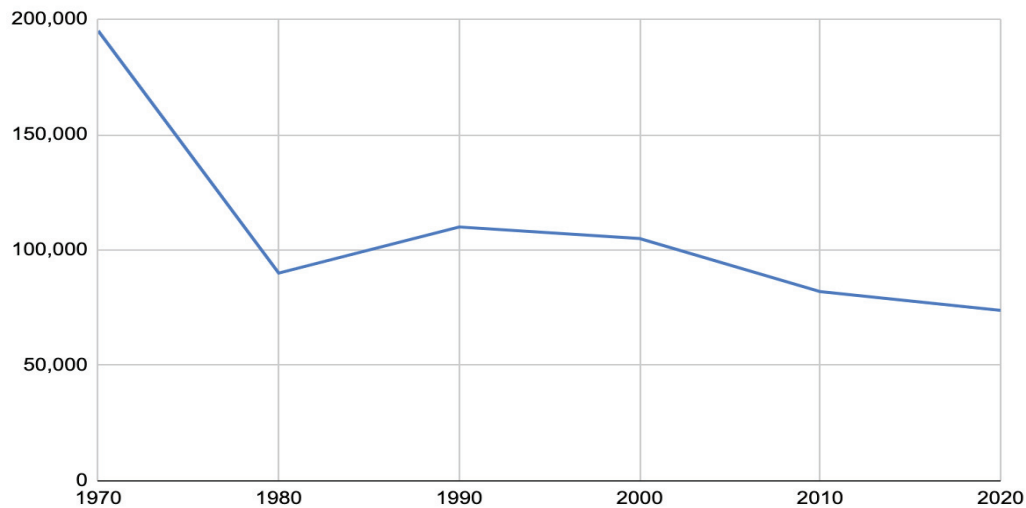
The estimated number of teachers in the supply pool entering the profession through an alternative pathway range from 18% to 34% and varies by grade level, content area, and geographical location (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018; Sutch et al., 2019). These individuals have a bachelor's degree and enter education through a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program. While these teachers are considered fully credentialed in some states, most have not participated in education courses to prepare them for the classroom. Data from Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) support that the first years of teaching can be even more challenging for alternatively-certified teachers, and reported that they are 25% more likely to leave the profession.

***Teacher Program Enrollment***

Overall enrollment in teacher training programs showed a steep drop between 2008 and 2018, with teachers enrolling in programs down nearly 35% (Will, 2022). Will also compared the number of bachelor's degrees awarded from 2006 to 2019 with the number of bachelor's degrees awarded in education, which showed that other fields significantly increased. The data support that candidates considering the profession ultimately chose to pursue degrees outside of education. Redding & Nguyen (2020) consider policies that scrutinize new teachers and stagnated salaries as reasons for lower enrollment in teacher preparation programs. Post-pandemic data is not yet available, but surveys conducted in the fall of 2020 and 2021 showed an 11% decline in enrollment in traditional teacher-preparation programs (Will, 2022). These numbers correlate with the drop in enrollment in undergraduate programs in general, as provided in Figure 2.

**Figure 2**

*Number of Education Degrees Conferred 1970 through 2020*



*Note.* This chart was reproduced from historical data reported by Will (2022).

### ***Attrition***

Researchers calculate that cutting the attrition rate to 6% would replace approximately 63,000 teachers (Sutcher et al., 2019). Attrition, in their study, was defined as the number of teachers who leave the profession. The attrition rate in the U.S. has increased from 7.68% in 2013 (Sutcher et al.) to 16% in 2019 (Carver-Thomas & Darling Hammond, 2019). According to Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond, retiring teachers comprise one-third of the teacher population leaving the profession annually; the other two-thirds who leave are not eligible for retirement.

Teachers who leave the profession even though they are not yet eligible for retirement do so primarily because of working conditions that result in job dissatisfaction (Harris et al., 2019). Wiggan et al. (2021) identify misconceptions

about the teaching profession that lead to dissatisfaction. Sahito and Vaisanen (2020) found that individuals first entering the profession consider summers off, workday schedules, and the school calendar as factors that attract them to education. However, new teachers discover that the job is more challenging than it appears, which is a leading cause of teachers leaving the profession. Overworking teachers intensifies the profession's demands, creating high stress and dissatisfaction.

### ***Why Teachers Leave***

Investigating the reasons for a teacher's departure or transfer can better explain why teachers become dissatisfied early in their careers and what support is needed to reduce the odds of leaving. Previous research indicates that teachers leave due to inadequate administrative support, low salaries, and undesirable working conditions (Sutcher et al., 2016). Other factors leading to dissatisfaction include licensure requirements and a lack of collegial relationships (Hester, 2020). Garwood et al. (2018) identify feelings of physical exhaustion, a lack of accomplishment, meeting student needs, and student and staff relationships as factors contributing to job dissatisfaction. Schools where teachers feel unprepared for the classroom experience higher turnover rates (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Høigaard et al., 2012; Podolsky et al., 2016; Sutcher et al., 2016).

Kokka (2016) included reasons teachers leave the profession in a mixed methods study about teacher longevity and job satisfaction among urban math and science teachers. Teachers indicated that the response from administrators when addressing disruptive student behavior helped them feel more competent in the

classroom. Additionally, Kokka suggested that recruiting teachers who have lived in the community or were previous students can increase longevity.

### ***Re-entrants***

A re-entrant is defined as “a new hire (someone who was not teaching in public schools the previous year) who has experience teaching in public school” (Sutcher et al., 2019, p.17). Teachers who left the profession for personal or professional reasons, but might be open to returning under optimal conditions, creates the potential for a reserve supply pool of re-entrants (Sutcher et al.). The number of teachers available to re-enter the profession is difficult to estimate, but knowing the number that exist can be valuable. Podolsky et al. (2016) identified factors that would bring teachers back to the profession. Survey data from this study showed that the availability of positions, maintaining retirement benefits, salary increases, and smaller class sizes ranked the highest. Understanding what impacts a teacher’s decision to leave can help leaders identify the conditions under which teachers would consider returning (Podolsky et al.). Sutcher et al. conducted surveys in 2003-04, 2007-08, and 2011-12, indicating that 37% to 49% of the teachers entering the workforce were re-entrants. Approximately 32% of teachers will potentially return to the classroom within the first five years after leaving, and 38% will return to education at some point (Sutcher et al.). The more time a teacher spends away from the classroom, the less likely they will return.

Projections of teacher re-entrants can help leaders determine possible improvements in the workforce. Sutcher et al. (2019) found that the lowest number of



teacher entrants in 10 years occurred in 2016, with the supply estimated between 180,000 and 212,000 and the demand at 260,000. Sutchter et al. estimated that the supply would remain low through 2021, before the COVID-19 pandemic. The U.S. Department of Education (2022) data showed that the teacher supply was even lower than projected because of the pandemic.

### ***Retention***

Teacher retention is a topic relevant to all educators. With a growing number of teacher vacancies in both rural and urban districts, school leaders face the challenge of recruiting and retaining a quality teacher workforce. “Preventing and solving teacher shortages so that all children receive high-quality instruction in every community every year is essential in a 21<sup>st</sup>-century economy for the success of individuals as well as for society as a whole” (Sutchter et al., 2016, p. 7). Teacher shortage projections are driven by the decline in enrollment for traditional teacher programs, desire for lower student-teacher ratios, increased student enrollment, and higher teacher attrition rates (Sutchter et al.). Continued projections of a national teacher shortage call for more in-depth research into teacher retention to gain insight into the problem.

School leaders must also recognize the effort needed to retain these teachers. Wronowski (2018) emphasized that “it is not enough to recruit new teachers; you must keep them” (p. 550). The attrition rate of teachers is significantly higher than in other professions (Rumschlag, 2017). An increase in teacher turnover is attributed to reasons other than being eligible to retire (Carver-Thomas, 2018). Most departures

occur early in their career (Vagi et al., 2019). Studies indicate that 50% of teachers transfer schools or leave entirely within the first five years (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Dell’Angelo & Richardson, 2019; Miller et al., 2020).

Under more favorable work conditions, teachers who stay experience passion, purpose, service, and commitment (Dell’Angelo & Richardson, 2019). Miller et al. (2020) put strong principal leadership at the forefront of teacher job satisfaction. Retention is higher in schools where the teachers view the principal as a strong instructional leader, have trust in the principal, and are involved in making decisions (Miller et al.). The principal has a significant role in creating a school's culture, which equates to a positive and collaborative environment (Wronowski, 2018).

Schools that have a culture of collaboration also have lower turnover rates. Sezer (2019) agreed that administrative and collegial support contributes to job happiness. “Collaboration may be particularly beneficial for developing the confidence of novice teachers since they will be able to both learn from more experienced colleagues and be able to see that they are not the only teachers to encounter a particular challenge” (Reeves et al., 2017, p. 228). Teachers new to the profession can benefit from working in schools with leadership styles that create a culture of support. New teachers with opportunities to collaborate with veteran teachers can help reduce teacher turnover early in their careers (Wronowski, 2018). This practice demonstrates supportive leadership, indicating a culture of support and collaboration.

**Job Satisfaction**

The job satisfaction of teachers can be a central driving force to the success of school organizations as it impacts many aspects of the school system. School administrators determine the tone of the school as they implement a shared vision that moves the school to accomplish goals related to the vision. While the school's vision rarely contains language describing job satisfaction and culture, both can ultimately determine the school's success (Ilyas & Abdullah, 2016). According to Ilyas and Abdullah, school leadership directly impacts teacher performance, and teacher performance is impacted by job satisfaction. The specific actions of school administrators directly affect the perceptions of job satisfaction by teachers and the school's culture. Teacher job satisfaction and positive school culture impact the school organization's success, directly reflecting the school leader's leadership style (Baptiste, 2019).

The significance of administrators' ability to promote satisfaction and positive school culture is directly related to the success of schools. Determining specific practices leaders can implement with the most positive impact can be the jumping-off point for school improvement, which will ultimately lead to higher student achievement and lower costs.

***Student Success***

At each school, the principal is ultimately responsible for student achievement, which requires creating an intentional community in which community and culture work hand in hand to impact students' success (Cetin & Kinik, 2016).

Baptiste (2019) supports that school administrators are central to students' success because they hold the keys to the school experience for students and teachers. According to Cetin and Kinik, improvement outcomes require consistency and the community to implement programs that impact student achievement. Student achievement is related to teachers who have been in place and understand the goals and improvement objectives of the school to enact real change.

School leaders define the organization and are in the position to work to promote a school culture that positively impacts students' success. Unhappy teachers result in turnover, which can negatively impact student achievement, creating instability that can take its toll on schools and students (Harris et al., 2019; Sutchter et al., 2016). When schools suffer high turnover rates, administrators are forced to hire unqualified teachers, cut course offerings, or increase class size, all of which are detrimental to students' success (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). High teacher turnover further results in a lack of consistency which can affect a school's achievement when trying to reach goals that improve student performance.

### ***Teacher Performance***

Wolomasi et al. (2019) examined the relationship between teacher job satisfaction and teacher performance in an elementary school setting and found a significant correlation. The study by Wolomasi et al. also acknowledged that principal leadership is an undeniable factor that impacts teacher job satisfaction and performance. Some studies show that teachers who experience high job satisfaction

are more productive and less likely to be absent (Khanka, 2007, as cited in Asif et al., 2016).

Job performance was studied by Wijayati et al. (2020) to determine what has a positive and negative impact on the job performance of female teachers. Wijayati et al. found that work-family conflict negatively impacts teachers' job performance but has no impact on their job satisfaction. Researchers believe this could be related to the fact that the teachers in their study were female and often struggled to balance work and family responsibilities. Further, the researchers found that job satisfaction had a significant positive impact on job performance. The more satisfied teachers were in their positions, the higher their commitment to their organization.

#### ***Administrator Support***

Support from the school leader can come in many forms. Exactly what form that support takes and how it impacts teacher job satisfaction can be a vague area. Sahito and Vaisanen (2016) explain that support is created through feedback, appreciation, and good relationships. Wronowski (2018) encouraged principals to move toward a culture of collaboration. Satisfied teachers are part of an environment with a shared voice and a sense of empowerment when dealing with "school policy, teacher work-life, student experience, and instruction" (Wronowski, p. 570). Wronowski stated that successful principals use professional learning communities to break barriers that sometimes exist between administrators and teachers and create support for teachers.

Findings from Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) confirm that the support of school leadership is essential and that teachers who report a lack of support are twice as likely to leave their schools. Teacher satisfaction is primarily related to school leadership. Teachers identifying leadership deficiencies, such as the school leadership's inability to acknowledge staff, establish a clear vision, and operate a school efficiently, are likely to leave their school (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond).

### ***Leadership Style***

Schools are complex systems with similarities and differences to business organizations. The school administrators are more than bosses; they manage a complex system in which they have a crucial role when defining the culture of a school. Leadership styles play an essential role in determining organizational culture and the perceptions of those organizations. A substantial amount of research shows a positive correlation between perceptions of teacher job satisfaction and transformational leadership styles.

**Transformational Leadership.** Kouni et al. (2018) found that the transformational leadership style had three characteristics relevant to positive job satisfaction in teachers; and that these characteristics set the direction of the organization, develop the workforce, and structure the organization. Kouni et al. further explained that leaders who employ transformational leadership styles use a solid vision to drive school organizations, develop relationships with employees, provide growth opportunities to those with whom they work, and develop standard

systems. Transformational leaders value their employees, work to create common goals, develop relationships with their staff, and are sincere (Cansoy, 2019).

Baptiste (2019) also studied the use of transformational leadership by school administrators and determined a positive correlation between the style and teacher job satisfaction. Ahmad (2018) confirmed that transformational leadership positively impacts job satisfaction because leaders who use that style work to create a shared vision. Baptiste identified the characteristics of transformational leadership style as charisma or idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized considerations (Avolio, 1993, as cited in Baptiste).

Shila and Sevilla (2015) found that transformational leadership was the style most used by school leadership. The behaviors associated with this style of leadership include motivation and idealized attributes. Shila and Sevilla also identified that using transformational leadership positively correlated with organizational commitment; research supports that teachers stay in their positions longer when their principal utilizes a transformational leadership style. Teachers also put more effort towards the organization's goals and objectives, have better attendance, and perform at higher levels when school leaders use a transformational leadership style (Shila and Sevilla). Not only does commitment impact student achievement, but it also impacts district operations as less money is spent on training new teachers.

Other studies also look at the impact of transformational leadership on teacher job satisfaction. However, there is little consistency in identifying the specific behaviors associated with transformational leadership style and teacher job

satisfaction. Cansoy (2019) completed a comprehensive quantitative literature review of 27 studies that analyzed leadership behaviors and eight leadership styles. This study was interesting because it analyzed not only style but behaviors. From the Cansoy (2019) study, a transformational leadership style positively impacted teacher perceptions of job satisfaction; however, the discussion section encourages further investigation of the servant, ethical, and distributive leadership styles.

**Ethical Leadership.** Ethical leadership is ethical behavior and doing what is right (Channing, 2020). Channing further identified ethical leadership as a style that upholds social responsibility and the drive to do good for others. Özgenel and Aksu (2020) defined ethical leaders as those who make decisions based on ethical values and create an organization that is “fair, respectful, tolerant, honest, positive, neutral, and gains the trust of its employees.”

Güngör (2016) found that ethical leadership positively impacted job satisfaction. Ethical leadership from this study was identified as leaders who were good role models, honest, did the right thing, and lived their personal lives ethically (Güngör). Ethical leadership is like servant leadership in that those styles both model ethics with the intent to serve.

Isik (2020) examined how ethical leadership impacts school effectiveness. Responses from 309 teachers indicated a positive link between job satisfaction, affective commitment, and school effectiveness regarding ethical leadership. This idea is supported by Özgenel and Aksu’s study (2020), which found a positive relationship between ethical leadership and the health of an organization. The study



upholds that the behavior of the principal impacts aspects of an organization and ethical leadership positively impacts climate and organizational commitment (Özgenel & Aksu).

**Servant Leadership.** This study defines servant leadership as demonstrated by love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service (Shaw & Newton). Servant leaders are servants of their schools, staff, and community with an unwavering commitment to helping others. The Cansoy (2022) study examined multiple leadership styles and found that servant leadership positively impacted teachers' working conditions. Cerit (2009) used a well-known instrument to measure the impact of servant leadership on job satisfaction. The Servant Leadership Scale developed by Laub (1999) determined that the servant leadership style, as used by principals of primary schools in Turkey, was a predictor of teacher job satisfaction. Cerit agreed with Laub's servant leadership factors: valuing people, developing people, building community, displaying authenticity, providing leadership, and sharing leadership. The study found that teacher job satisfaction is most impacted by valuing people and demonstrating authenticity as having the most positive impact on teacher satisfaction. Shaw and Newton (2014) looked at teacher retention and the correlation between job satisfaction and found a positive correlation between servant leadership styles and retention as well as job satisfaction.

Holmes (2021) investigated leadership characteristics that would best meet the demand of 21<sup>st</sup> century schools. This study asked leaders to shift toward servant leadership, building relationships, and empowering their followers (Holmes). Bier

(2021) reported that teachers working in schools under servant leadership feel supported in replicating ethical and virtuous relationships. They will likely embody a servant relationship with other teachers, staff, and students. Bier emphasized that a servant leadership style is the best model for achieving the organization's mission and impacting society. Holmes's study on the impact of servant leadership on urban school districts found that 80% of urban school leaders practicing servant leadership felt that they positively impacted staff, students, and parents.

Bellows (2022) added to the recent body of research on servant leadership in a case study that examined the principals' impact on job satisfaction, teacher morale, and necessary support for teachers regarding teacher retention. Results from the study identified interpersonal relationships among teachers as a critical factor that impacts teacher retention. Bellows connected the administrator's leadership style and how supportive behaviors could minimize teacher turnover.

**Conclusion.** Principal leadership styles, support, and behavior continue to be a dominating theme when considering job satisfaction. Understanding how principal support impacts teacher motivation and satisfaction is essential when considering the complexities of the school system. The details of how satisfaction is impacted can be an entry point into improving staff motivation, school culture, student achievement, and retention.

### ***Motivation to Teach***

Asif et al. (2016) found that teachers are more likely driven by intrinsic factors, such as building student relationships, rather than extrinsic factors, such as

pay. Factors unrelated to school administration and culture that impact job satisfaction have also been studied. Studies examining teachers' job satisfaction at the university level identify opportunities, benefits, and facilities as indicators or perceptions of job satisfaction (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2016). Positive relationships between stakeholders also have an incredible impact on teacher job satisfaction perceptions, as identified by Sahito and Vaisanen. In another study by Sahito and Vaisanen (2017), researchers studied motivation and time management, which were found to positively impact teachers' job satisfaction.

Further impacting teacher job satisfaction is teacher pay. A 2020 study conducted by Allegretto & Mishel about teacher pay estimated that teachers earned 20% less than other professionals with the same level of degrees. However, this literature review was completed before the inflation in 2022, which means that the pay gap for teachers and educators is now even more significant. While studies cite that teacher pay is not generally a motivating factor for those who choose to teach, being unable to make a living wage undoubtedly impacts teachers' job satisfaction and is related to teacher turnover (Asif et al., 2016).

### ***Stress and Burnout***

Stress and burnout should be considered when determining things that negatively impact teacher job satisfaction. Significant research examines teacher burnout and job-related stress, which has increased since the COVID-19 pandemic. A study by Gallup (Markin & Agrawal, 2022) among several industries found that teachers surveyed experienced the most burnout in the workforce, with 44% of

educators saying they experienced burnout “always” or “very often.” This number has increased since March 2020 from 36% before the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic (Markin & Agrawal).

Burnout is prevalent in the teaching profession and is often linked to reactions to stressors in the workplace (Maslach et al., as cited in Amico et al., 2020). Based on findings from the Gallup Study (Martin & Agrawal, 2022), women are more stressed than men when studying burnout in education. The Gallup Study from Martin and Agrawal about K-12 employees found that 55% of women, compared to 44% of men, were always or very often stressed at work. The study cited low wages, complicated family/community dynamics, COVID-19, and ever-changing state and federal educational policies as reasons for high teacher stress and burnout (Martin & Agrawal).

All professions or jobs have a certain amount of stress. Understanding the stress experienced by new teachers is noteworthy for this study as there is evidence to support that the turnover rate among teachers within the first five years of their careers is high (Thompson, 2022). The reasons for new teacher burnout are much the same as they are for veteran teachers. Still, additional factors related to new teacher burnout include a lack of support from mentors and a lack of preparation from teacher programs (Høigaard et al., 2012). New teachers that lack support and training have difficulty dealing with the workload, student behavior, lack of resources, and building positive relationships with their colleagues (Høigaard et al.). Lack of experience and background knowledge further exacerbates stress for new teachers.

### *Culture*

Culture is crucial to teacher job satisfaction. Culture is unique to each school and based on the perception of the context of the system. Even though a lot of school culture is integrated with tradition, school leadership can change the culture of a school. Before changing a school's culture, the principal must understand the dynamics of the school's deeply held values and beliefs (Zahed-Babelan et al., 2019). Balkar (2015) concluded that an empowering school culture positively impacts teacher job satisfaction. An empowering school culture focuses on creating professional development opportunities, social events, teacher autonomy, utilization of teacher skills and talents, and building relationships between teachers and principals (Balkar).

Gaziel (2014) found that the school community has the most positive impact on teacher job satisfaction. Community is directly related to perceptions about the organizational culture as shared values, beliefs, mission, and vision of the school are part of the complexities of culture. Gaziel also studied the sense of control and efficacy, finding that teachers who work in cultures where they feel they have control of their environments demonstrate higher levels of job satisfaction. Culture, in this case, extends beyond just having a voice in decision-making and includes a culture with collaborative and collegial support.

Several studies identify culture and leadership as crucial to teachers' job satisfaction. In Zahed-Babelan's (2019) study, participatory leadership was viewed as a culture rather than a leadership style; this study also hypothesized that school

administrators impact culture. Participatory leadership engages those who are part of the culture by empowering them to participate in decision-making (Zahed-Babelan).

**Why Teachers Stay.** In a study by Chiong et al. (2017) on long-serving teachers and why they stay in the profession, teachers cited intrinsic and altruistic motivations as reasons for staying. Participants indicated that the art of teaching and a passion for their content area made the profession enjoyable (Chiong et al.). Long-serving teachers ranked the social aspects of working with children higher than pay and a desirable work schedule. Findings from Kokka (2016) indicate that teacher-student interactions and relationships are essential to feel that teachers are part of meaningful work. The research by Chiong et al. confirmed that teachers who stay in the profession are fulfilled by making a difference in students' lives and impacting the community. Research conducted by Wronowski (2018) adds that teachers who stay longer do so because they want to see the school improve.

### ***Conclusions***

The demand for teachers far outweighs the supply. Among other consequences, this forces school leaders to make tough decisions regarding teacher quality and classroom sizes, both of which directly impact student performance, as well as the likelihood of continued high rates of teacher attrition. The teacher drought is felt in both urban and rural areas, and it is not anticipated to get better unless leaders take some big steps to making the teaching profession more attractive. This includes drawing re-entrants and retirees to return by an appealing and supportive culture.

Understanding how school leaders can change the workplace environment is essential for encouraging teachers currently working in schools to stay and encourage others to join (or re-join). Good school working conditions and culture are areas that school administrators can influence and impact. No longer can teachers' job satisfaction be left to chance. School administrators must work to improve the conditions that contribute to satisfaction of teachers, as they are an essential factor in students' success.

Specific themes point to individual characteristics that positively impact teachers' job satisfaction. Studying schools with a high perception of workplace satisfaction can help determine the specific characteristics that affect the workplace environment. Teachers working in schools with such environments may hold the answers to how administrators can transform schools into optimal working environments. Schools with high workplace satisfaction become schools with fewer staffing issues because of their low turnover rate, and their teachers are happy.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Methodology**

School leaders have dealt with increased teacher turnover since the COVID-19 pandemic. As school leaders look at why teachers leave, they should also pay attention to why they stay. Investigating what makes some school environments great places for teachers is vital to combatting the record rate of teacher turnover. This capstone studied elementary schools with the highest positive perception of workplace satisfaction in Kentucky based on the 2022 Impact Kentucky Working Conditions Survey (2022 Impact Survey). We invited educators from the five rural and five urban schools with the highest positive perception to participate in the qualitative phase of the study. The teachers at those schools were asked about their working conditions and the characteristics that significantly impact their satisfaction.

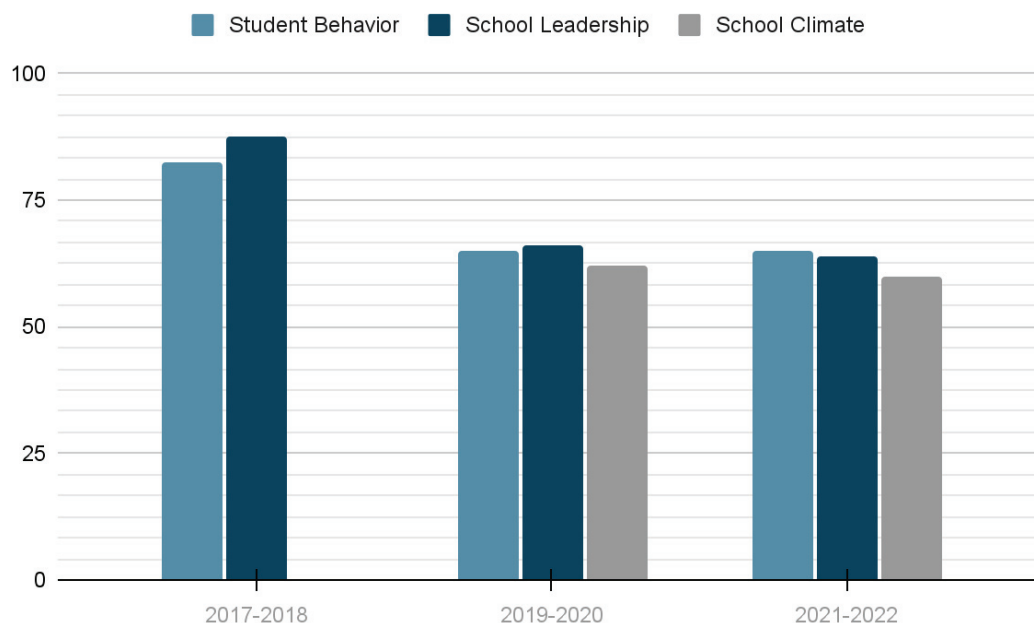
#### **Local Context**

Each year, the Kentucky Department of Education uses the Kentucky School Report Card (KSRC) to report state, district, and school education data. According to the 2020 KSRC, the Commonwealth of Kentucky had 171 school districts, 1477 schools, and 638,236 students from preschool through 12th grade. There were approximately 42,525 teachers employed in the state, with approximately 78% of the workforce being female and 95% White (Kentucky Department of Education, 2021). According to the 2020 KSRC, 18% of teachers were inexperienced, meaning they had less than three years of experience, and 5% had an emergency or provisional certification. The average length of experience for the teacher workforce in Kentucky



was 12 years, and the average salary was \$54,548 in 2020 (Kentucky Department of Education, 2021). According to the KSRC (2022), in 2020, the state had a teacher turnover rate of 16%.

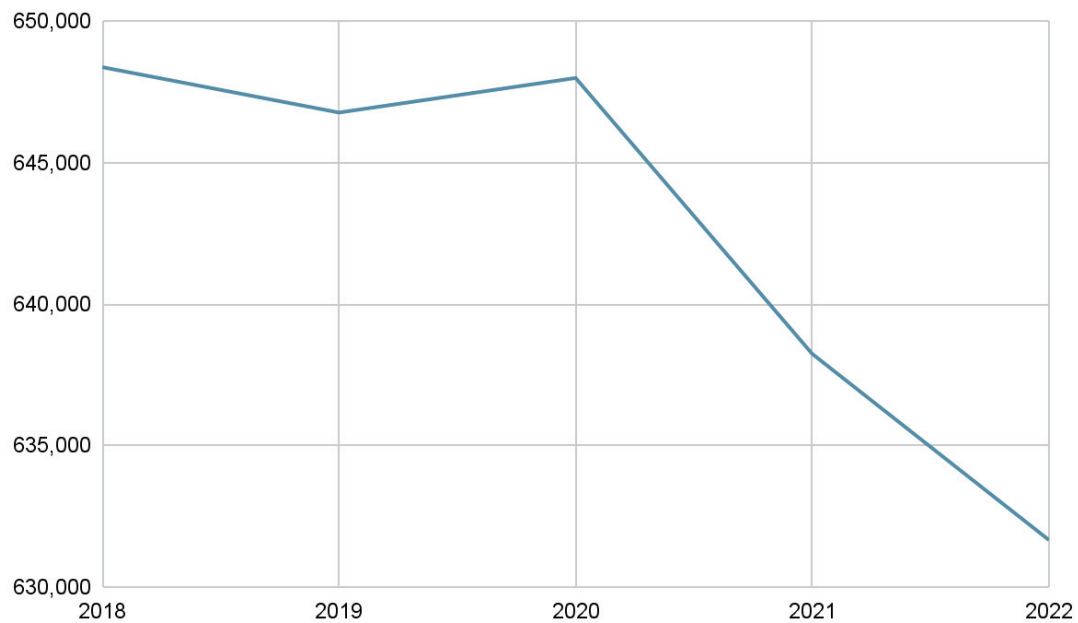
Based on the 2020 Impact Survey, as reported in the KSRC, 62% of teachers worked in a favorable school climate, and 66% surveyed had a positive perception of school leadership (Kentucky Department of Education, 2022). The KSRC only reports three themes from the culture and climate survey each year. Before 2020 the instrument used to collect workplace and environment data was called the TELL Survey. After 2020, the instrument used was called the 2022 Impact Survey and administered by Panorama. In 2017-2018, the state used the TELL Survey to report three areas related to culture and climate: school climate, school leadership, and community engagement and support. In 2020 and 2022, the state reported data from the 2022 Impact Survey related to school climate, school leadership, and student behavior. Data from the past teacher voice surveys, TELL Kentucky, and the 2020 and 2022 Impact Surveys are provided in Figure 3.

**Figure 3***KSRC Data for Reported Working Conditions 2017 to 2022*

Before 2018, state law required all Kentucky teachers to obtain a minimum of 30 hours of graduate credits or a master's degree within 10 years of beginning teaching. This is also known as a Rank II certification for teachers (Kratzenberg, 2018). In 2018, this regulation was changed by providing a waiver, and teachers were no longer held to the certification expectation. The new rule may explain the high number of teachers holding a master's degree throughout the state. In 2020, 46% of teachers in Kentucky held a master's degree, and 28.5% had obtained a Rank I certification (Kentucky Department of Education). In Kentucky, a master's degree plus 30 hours of graduate credit or Rank I certification is one way for teachers to reach a higher pay level. The rank change requires an additional master's degree or

30 hours over the Rank II requirement. This change is interesting because some teachers subject to meeting these requirements before 2018 could not, or did not, and therefore left the profession.

The student population in the Commonwealth of Kentucky has seen a sharp decrease since the COVID-19 pandemic. Almost 10,000 students have been unenrolled from Kentucky Public Schools since 2018 (Kentucky Department of Education). This decline is likely due to the homeschool movement and the hardships of the pandemic. The number of unenrolled students can also impact the teacher workforce, as not as many teachers will be needed to staff schools if student enrollment declines, as indicated by Figure 4.

**Figure 4***Kentucky Student Enrollment in Public Education*

*Note.* The information in Figure 4 was reproduced from data provided by the KSRC through the Kentucky Department of Education (2022).

The student population in Kentucky public schools is predominantly economically disadvantaged, and students with this designation receive free or reduced lunch (Kentucky Department of Education, 2022). In Kentucky, 60.50% of students fall into this category. Minority students have a higher rate of students who are identified as disadvantaged, with African American students having the highest rate at 81%. Since 2018, the number of students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) in the state has slightly increased, and the number of students classified as English Language Learners (ELL) has drastically increased (Kentucky Department of

Education, 2022). The state's four-year and five-year graduation rate for students was 91% in 2020, while the retention rate was just above 1% for students in grades four through twelve.

Funding for Kentucky Public Schools comes from three sources: federal, state, and local. In 2020, the statewide education fund was close to \$10 billion, most of which was funded by the state (Kentucky Department of Education, 2022). The Commonwealth of Kentucky utilizes the Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK) program funding formula to provide equitable financial resources to all districts. The Kentucky Department of Education (2022) explains that since its inception in 1990, the SEEK program has used a complex formula containing many factors, but primarily based on average daily attendance to determine district funding allocations. Additional funding calculations include the formula for at-risk populations, including free-reduced lunch, exceptional children, home and hospital, and transportation. Districts can request funding adjustments for student enrollment growth and facility improvements. An example of a Kentucky district's SEEK allocation is included in Appendix C.

### **Research Design**

In this study, we searched for the “why” behind teachers’ decisions to stay in their schools, as opposed to studies that focus on factors influencing teachers’ decision to leave the profession or move to another school or district. This study chose to look at teacher retention through an asset-based lens because the reasons to stay are just as, if not more, important than reasons teachers leave. Identifying details

about the factors that influence a teacher's decision to stay could lead to retention and recruitment strategies that may be replicated throughout the state and beyond. This capstone used quantitative and qualitative descriptive techniques to study workplace satisfaction and teacher retention, including: identifying and analyzing the data; seeing if it supports school leadership and how culture impacts job satisfaction; and exploring how those factors differ for teachers who work in rural and urban schools.

Creswell and Creswell (2018) recommend using a mixed methods design when researchers want to provide a more in-depth explanation of the quantitative results by collecting supporting qualitative data. This explanatory sequential mixed methods study summarizes student and staff survey data collected from the KSRC and the 2022 Impact Survey. This study used a mixed-method research design because the data provided an in-depth view of teachers' working conditions in schools with high workplace satisfaction.

Quantitative data from the survey are represented in charts, graphs, and tables to help convey and enhance the qualitative findings. The quantitative data summary included in the study provides a complete understanding of the research problem. It provides other ways to examine the data provided to schools and the state and compare rural and urban schools (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Qualitative research design seeks to explore and understand a problem from the participant's point of view. Using data from the 2022 Impact Survey, we identified five rural and five urban elementary schools to participate in the qualitative research portion of the study based on their level of reported teacher workplace

satisfaction. The qualitative study incorporated an open-ended survey that provided additional insight into teacher job satisfaction in the selected schools. In-depth responses enabled us to draw out emerging themes from the collected data and hone in on factors that impact teacher retention and job satisfaction. Drawing on the experiences of their staff can provide school leaders with data needed to transform their schools and culture, leading to higher teacher job satisfaction. Ultimately, improving school culture and teacher satisfaction can reduce teacher turnover.

### ***Research Questions and Hypotheses***

The study for this capstone project sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How does data from the 2022 Impact Survey regarding the positive perception of workplace satisfaction compare in rural and urban elementary schools?
2. How do schools with high workplace satisfaction perceive the impact of school leadership and culture according to the 2022 Impact Survey?
3. How do the turnover percentages of rural and urban elementary schools that participated in the 2022 Impact Survey compare as identified in the KSRC?

The first set of research questions that guided this study focused on the differences in teachers' job satisfaction in rural and urban elementary schools. Six null hypotheses were examined using an independent t-test, with a significance level of 0.05, to determine if there was a significant difference between the job satisfaction of rural and urban teachers.

H<sub>0</sub> 1: There is no significant difference in the positive perception of workplace satisfaction in rural and urban elementary schools.

- H<sub>0</sub> 2: There is no significant difference in the positive perception of workplace satisfaction in the top 30 rural elementary schools and the top 30 urban elementary schools with high job satisfaction.
- H<sub>0</sub> 3: There is no significant difference in the positive perception of workplace satisfaction in the bottom 30 rural elementary schools and the bottom 30 urban elementary schools with low job satisfaction.
- H<sub>0</sub> 4: There is no significant difference in the positive perception of workplace satisfaction in the top 30 rural elementary schools with high job satisfaction and the bottom 30 rural elementary schools with low job satisfaction.
- H<sub>0</sub> 5: There is no significant difference in the positive perception of workplace satisfaction in the top 30 urban elementary schools with high job satisfaction and the bottom 30 urban elementary schools with low job satisfaction.
- H<sub>0</sub> 6: There is no significant difference in the perception of workplace satisfaction in the top 5 rural elementary schools and top 5 urban elementary schools with high job satisfaction.

The second set of research questions that guided this study focused on the turnover percentage of teachers at rural and urban schools. Six null hypotheses were examined using an independent t-test, with a significance level of 0.05, to determine if there was a significant difference in the turnover percentage between rural and urban schools.



- H<sub>0</sub> 7: There is no significant difference in the teacher turnover percentage of Kentucky's rural and urban elementary schools.
- H<sub>0</sub> 8: There is no significant difference in the turnover percentage of the top 30 rural elementary schools and the top 30 urban elementary schools with high job satisfaction.
- H<sub>0</sub> 9: There is no significant difference in the turnover percentage of the bottom 30 rural elementary schools and the bottom 30 urban elementary schools with low job satisfaction.
- H<sub>0</sub> 10: There is no significant difference in the turnover percentage of the top 30 rural elementary schools with high job satisfaction and the bottom 30 rural elementary schools with low job satisfaction.
- H<sub>0</sub> 11: There is no significant difference in the turnover percentage of the top 30 urban elementary schools with high job satisfaction and the bottom 30 urban elementary schools with low job satisfaction.
- H<sub>0</sub> 12: There is no significant difference in the turnover percentage of the top five rural elementary schools and the top five urban schools with high job satisfaction.

The quantitative portion of this study was informed by analyzing and creating a summary of the 2022 Impact Survey data. The nine themes from the 2022 Impact Survey were used to create an average of positive responses from the 78 questions on the survey. Understanding how the questions from the culture and the school leadership themes were answered helped determine the school environment's qualities

and the school leadership's impact on schools. The quantitative data was used to determine the percentage of positive perceptions among elementary schools participating in the 2022 Impact Survey. After the percentages were determined, the 10 schools chosen for the qualitative portion of the study were selected by identifying the top five rural and top five urban elementary schools. Statistical data analysis occurred using a two-tailed independent t-test.

### ***Guiding Questions***

This study examined the following questions surrounding this capstone project:

1. What is the teachers' perception of school culture in schools with high workplace satisfaction?
2. What is the perception of school administration in schools with high workplace satisfaction?
3. Is compensation a factor in teacher job satisfaction?
4. Do teachers from schools with high job satisfaction plan to remain in the profession? Why or why not?
5. Does being homegrown or an implant impact teacher job satisfaction?
6. Are the advantages and disadvantages of working in schools with high job satisfaction different for rural and urban teachers?
7. What are the factors impacting teacher job satisfaction in rural and urban schools?

Understanding specific characteristics of the culture of a school with high workplace satisfaction is essential data for the retention of teachers. We believe

school leadership predominately impacts school culture and that the support from school administration has an incredibly positive impact on teacher job satisfaction. Qualitative research, along with asking teachers employed in schools with high workplace satisfaction about their administration and culture, was used to examine whether practices support their responses on the 2022 Impact Survey.

Recognizing that factors other than culture and administration could be important to those teachers who choose to remain in a school with a good workplace environment, we worked to identify factors possibly not assessed by the 2022 Impact Survey to explore other things teachers identify as influential in their decision to stay in a school.

The practical importance of these questions directly relates to efforts to reduce the teacher attrition rate in rural and urban school districts by examining which practices teachers perceive as essential to remain at their current schools. School leaders, particularly those in hard-to-staff schools, are challenged with filling vacancies and keeping teachers in those positions. Information gained through this study could help struggling schools replicate identified successful practices; be helpful when trying to improve retention rates; and be used to determine if there are differences between rural and urban schools.

### ***Subjects and Sampling***

Data from the 2022 Impact Survey includes all public schools in Kentucky that had at least 10 survey responses per school and a 50% response rate based on the number of certified staff employed in each school. From these data, the top10 schools

were selected for this capstone: five rural and five urban elementary schools. The qualitative instrument was distributed by principals to teachers in the identified schools. Data provided by teachers who participated in the 2022 Impact Survey and those employed at the school during the 2021-2022 school year were used for the quantitative study.

Teachers eligible to participate in the qualitative portion at the 10 selected schools formed the sample population for this study. School leadership served as the point of contact at each school. The principals at the selected schools received guidance on survey distribution to ensure that it would be delivered to the correct individuals. One of us worked with the contacts at the urban schools and, with their consent, sent an email to certified personnel with the embedded survey. The other did the same for the rural schools selected.

Given that the main goal for this study was to investigate job satisfaction at schools where teachers perceive their working environment as favorable, purposeful sampling was used. Purposeful sampling was chosen because all subjects who were selected to participate had to be teachers employed at the school in the previous school year. Further, participants also had to take part in the 2022 Impact Survey.

The survey began with questions about the participant's experience as a teacher. The qualitative instrument also asked participants about school culture, leadership, and job satisfaction. Participants in the qualitative survey were given the option to consent to additional contact. If subjects agreed, we could contact them via phone, email, or virtually to ask them to elaborate on or clarify their answers.

### *Instrumentation*

Two instruments were used to obtain data for this mixed methods study. For the quantitative instrument, we used the 2022 Impact Survey data. The qualitative instrument was adapted from Dr. John Huysman's (2007) study about the rural job satisfaction of teachers. The combination of quantitative and qualitative survey information allowed us to gather data that would provide a more complete account of the working conditions in each school, including those that most impacted the satisfaction of teachers selected for this study.

In Kentucky, a workplace conditions survey is administered to certified staff in Kentucky public schools every other year. Known as the TELL survey in previous years, this survey allows teachers to provide feedback about their school and workplace environment. Now known as The Impact Survey, this survey is also a part of the state assessment and accountability system. The survey for 2020 and 2022 was administered through Panorama, an organization dedicated to improving education for every student by providing and administering research-backed surveys that help support educational institutions (Panorama, 2023). Data from the 2022 Impact Survey was used to identify possible participants in the qualitative portion of this study, based on the level of perception of working conditions or job satisfaction.

The 2022 Impact Survey included 78 questions grouped into nine themes (see Appendix D for the survey questions). Themes from the 2022 Impact Survey are emotional well-being and belonging, resources, feedback, coaching, professional development, school climate, managing student behavior, school leadership,

educating all students, and staff-leadership relationships. This capstone focused on school climate, school leadership, and staff-leadership relationships. Seven questions were used to assess the climate of the school. School leadership and staff-leadership relationship themes were combined into one section with 17 questions. The data from the Impact Kentucky Panorama Website includes the analysis conducted by Panorama for each of the nine themes for each school and district in the state. In addition, a data file on the Impact Kentucky Panorama website at <https://www.impactky.org/> provides theme data for each school and district with a minimum participation rate of 50% and 10 survey responses.

The qualitative instrument was adapted from the 2007 research study by Dr. John Huysman. Huysman's dissertation was a mixed methods study that focused primarily on the satisfaction of rural teachers in Florida. For this study, Huysman's instrument was adapted by replacing rural with urban in the survey questions for urban school participants. This particular qualitative instrument was selected because Huysman piloted and tested the survey before completing his study.

The adapted qualitative instrument is an adaptive electronic survey. The following topics were addressed in the instrument:

- informed consent
- participation in the 2022 Impact Kentucky Working Conditions Survey
- employment at the same school during the 2021-2022 school year
- years of experience as a teacher and at their current school
- school culture

- school leadership
- factors that have the most significant impact on job satisfaction
- other information participants want to share about their school
- agreement for additional participation

A copy of the qualitative survey questions created using Google Forms can be found in Appendix E. The contact email for principals explaining the survey and study is provided in Appendix F. This email was sent to principals before the Teacher Survey Participation Email was sent to teachers to gain their consent for participation (Appendix G). Participants were provided the Informed Consent for the survey, which was attached to the email (Appendix H).

### ***Procedures***

Once the capstone proposal was approved, we worked with the capstone chair to complete and submit the required research protocol to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval of the qualitative survey portion of the study. (See Appendix I for the Morehead State University IRB Approval letter.) While waiting for IRB approval, we began collecting data from the 2022 Impact Survey.

The quantitative data from the 2022 Impact Survey were used to identify the 10 elementary schools that would be the focus of the study. Using the theme data from the survey, we selected the top five rural and top five urban elementary schools with the highest perceptions of job satisfaction based on the 2022 Impact Survey's highest percentage of positive responses.

Data from the 2022 Impact Survey available to the public were organized into themes. The publicly available data were used to identify the schools using pivot tables to average theme data and to identify and sort the percentage of positive responses. The results were sorted from greatest to least; the top five rural and top five urban elementary schools were identified based on the criteria. We determined the mean and standard deviation for each question response from the 2022 Impact Survey. These data were placed in charts to identify the highest percentage of positive responses to each question.

### ***Pilot Survey***

After receiving approval from the IRB, we selected a rural elementary school with a high perception of job satisfaction on the 2022 Impact Survey to participate in a pilot of the qualitative study. The principal of the school worked with us to obtain consent from certified staff willing to test the qualitative survey.

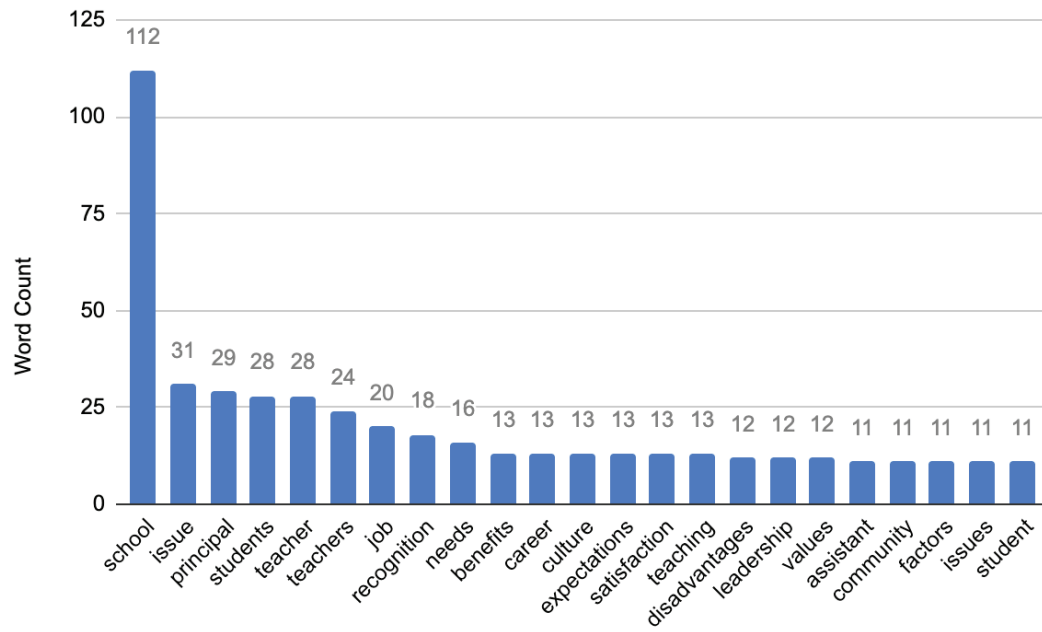
A total of 10 responses were received from the pilot survey. We analyzed and coded the responses. After analysis and coding, adjustments were made to the survey instrument to ensure that the instrument and questions were not repetitive in nature. Responses to several questions also indicated that some of the language from the questions required further explanation as they did not yield the desired information about why teachers chose to remain employed at their school.

Participant responses were entered into Atlas.ti to analyze the qualitative data collected in the pilot study. The computer software generated a list of keywords and related concepts from the survey responses. As we analyzed the data, we gained



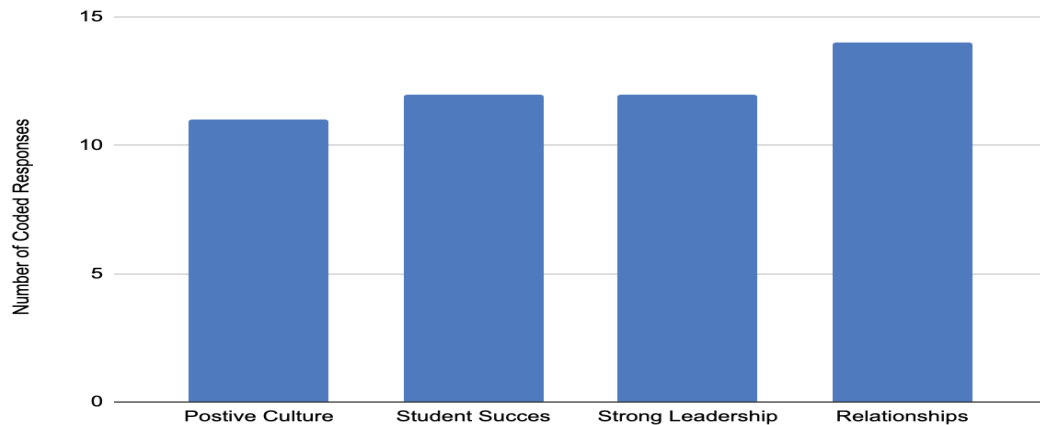
insight into the codes that were assigned in Atlas.ti, as well as codes that needed to be added to better capture the emerging themes. These results supported the need to revise some survey questions to clarify automatically generated codes from participant responses. Through this pilot, Atlas.ti identified a comprehensive list of frequently used words including culture, recognition, teaching, needs, issue, teacher(s), school, students, benefits, principal, job, career, expectations, and satisfaction.

When the words were converted to a list format and organized in the order of the number of responses, a detailed count was provided for all responses (see Figure 5 for words receiving more than 10 counts). Upon further review of the qualitative data, we assigned codes to the survey responses in addition to the functionality of the software. We identified the following top emerging themes from the qualitative data having more than 10 responses: student success, strong leadership, relationships, and positive culture (see Figure 6). All data from the pilot survey was recorded and saved in the Atlas.ti program.

**Figure 5***Words Appearing More Than 10 Times*

**Figure 6**

*Coded Responses by Themes from the Pilot Study*



### ***Qualitative Study***

We contacted the principals of the 10 selected schools and launched the survey. One of us worked with the urban school principals, and the other worked with the rural school principals. We provided basic contact information to principals and participants in case there were any questions.

Before the survey window closed, the principal of each school was sent a follow-up email, as were the teachers from the selected schools (see Appendix J). We collected data for several weeks from the 10 selected schools. The qualitative analysis began as we received data. We worked to identify themes from the data by hand and utilized a software program, Atlas.ti, to analyze the data.

### ***Researcher Roles***

Initially, one of us focused on job satisfaction and retention characteristics among urban teachers, while the other focused on job satisfaction and teacher

retention in rural schools. Both of us participated equally in the quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. One of us collected and analyzed quantitative and qualitative data from the five urban schools, and the other collected and analyzed data from the five rural schools. Narratives derived from both of us about their respective schools included information gathered from the qualitative portion of the study.

### **Quantitative Analysis**

We analyzed quantitative data from the 2022 Impact Survey. The data was first analyzed statewide by creating an average of positive workplace perceptions for each elementary school. First, elementary schools were identified and filtered from the state's 2022 Impact Survey Data by searching for the word "elementary" in the list of schools and using the ones that only included "elementary." An additional school that included "elementary and middle school" as part of the school's name was also removed from the list.

Once the schools were sorted and filtered, we used pivot tables to isolate the school names and overall positive response data for each of the nine 2022 Impact Survey themes. The schools and positive responses for each theme were included in the pivot table. After the pivot table was complete, the mean and standard deviation were calculated for each theme. Data were also analyzed using independent t-tests. Finally, the elementary schools were sorted from highest to lowest based on the overall positive perception of workplace or job satisfaction.

Schools were then classified as either rural or urban. We first identified the county for each elementary school in the study. Then, using the Office of Management and Budget's designation of counties, each elementary school was identified as either rural or urban. Rural and urban schools were compared to see if there was a significant difference in the data for elementary schools based on their status by looking at the mean and standard deviation using t-tests.

The data were further analyzed by comparing individual theme data and state averages for the top five rural and top five urban elementary schools. We selected three question categories from the 2022 Impact Survey that were most relevant to this capstone for further study by including the mean and standard deviation for the perception of positive responses for individual questions in those categories. We further studied the data from questions on school climate, school leadership, and staff-leadership relationships. Descriptive statistics were provided for research questions by calculating the mean and standard deviation, and comparing how staff ranked the schools compared to each other and the state.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

The data collected during the qualitative teacher survey were analyzed by looking for broad themes used in the narrative report, as well as analyzed using Atlas.ti, a computer software program. Creswell and Creswell (2018) indicate that the qualitative data collected are typically dense, and not all the information may be used. Where quantitative studies try to preserve all the data, researchers working on

qualitative research must work with the data to cull out the unnecessary information and reach a smaller number of themes.

We conducted coding by hand and used Atlas.ti to transcribe participant responses, interpret data, and identify themes. Atlas.ti was chosen because it is a more efficient way to store and locate qualitative data and eliminate the time-consuming hand-coding process. Additionally, software programs increase accuracy and reduce threats to validity.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Findings**

This study sought to examine the factors contributing to teacher job satisfaction and their impact on teacher retention. The capstone posed three research questions and nine hypotheses to examine the perception of teacher workplace satisfaction and teacher turnover at rural and urban elementary schools reporting high job satisfaction compared to those reporting low job satisfaction. The research questions driving this study were:

1. How does data from the 2022 Impact Survey regarding the positive perception of workplace satisfaction compare in rural and urban elementary schools?
2. How do schools with high workplace satisfaction perceive the impact of school leadership and culture according to the 2022 Impact Survey?
3. How do the turnover percentages of rural and urban elementary schools that participated in the 2022 Impact Survey compare as identified in the KSRC?

The quantitative data analysis presented in this study was taken from the 2022 Impact Survey results and the Kentucky Department of Education 2021 KSRC. The survey results from the 2022 Impact Survey reports factors grouped into nine themes. The quantitative data identifies specific factors contributing to job satisfaction and ultimately influencing a teacher's decision to stay in their school.

The data and how they directly impact teacher working conditions in Kentucky's elementary schools provided insight into the working conditions and job satisfaction of teachers in Kentucky Public Elementary Schools. We anticipate that

exploring the working conditions that create job satisfaction among teachers will help inform school leaders about improving teacher working conditions and reducing turnover.

Further, a qualitative study of the schools with the highest perception of job satisfaction based on the 2022 Impact Survey was conducted. Participants in the qualitative research portion of the study were teachers from the top five rural and top five urban elementary schools from the 2022 Impact Survey. Input from teachers in these schools helped us identify the factors most positively impacting perception of working conditions.

### **2022 Impact Kentucky Working Conditions Survey Data**

Every school and district in Kentucky had the opportunity to take the 2022 Impact Survey. The data considered came from the elementary schools in Kentucky that met the qualifications for reporting: at least 10 survey responses and 50% or more of certified staff participating in the survey. Six hundred eighteen elementary schools in Kentucky participated in the 2022 Impact Survey, but only 580 met the reporting requirements.

### ***Rural and Urban Classification***

All participating schools were classified as either rural or urban based on the Office of Management and Budget's designation of counties. The location of each school was determined by county. Then, each was assigned a rural or urban status. The participating schools that met the reporting requirements included 271 rural and 309 urban elementary schools (see Table 1).



**Table 1***Rural and Urban Elementary Schools from the 2022 Impact Survey*

<b>Status</b>	<b>Met Requirements (N)</b>	<b>Not Meeting Requirements (N)</b>	<b>Total (%)</b>
Rural	271	17	288 (46.60)
Urban	309	21	330 (53.30)
Totals (%)	580 (93.85)	38 (6.15)	618 (100)

*Note.* Source: 2020 Kentucky Department of Education, KSRC***Perception of Workplace Satisfaction***

The elementary schools meeting the reporting requirements were given an overall average positive perception rating for the workplace or job satisfaction based on the average of the nine themes from the 2022 Impact Survey. Each theme included questions with five possible responses. A positive response was the first or second selection. Each question had a positive response percentage, as did each theme, which averaged all questions and positive responses for that theme. We used the positive response data from each theme and averaged the themes together for each elementary school to determine the mean. The standard deviation was calculated using the mean perception data for each school.

**Overall State Perception Data.** The state mean for all elementary schools for positive perception of the workplace environment was 65.16%, with a standard deviation of 12.02. All elementary schools were then sorted based on rural or urban

status. The mean for the rural and urban elementary schools was determined based on positive responses.

*H<sub>0</sub> 1: There is no significant difference in the positive perception of workplace satisfaction in rural and urban elementary schools.*

The findings indicated that the mean of positive perception of job satisfaction was significantly different for rural elementary schools ( $M = 67.17$ ,  $SD = 12.62$ ) and urban elementary schools ( $M = 63.40$ ,  $SD = 11.20$ ). Cohen's effect size value of 0.32 suggested medium significance. Based on the results,  $H_0$  1 was rejected  $t(578) = 3.81$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $d = 0.32$  (see Table 2).

**Table 2**

*Overall Perception Data for Rural and Urban Elementary Schools*

	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>d</b>
Rural Schools	271	67.17	12.62	578	3.81	.000	0.32
Urban Schools	309	63.40	11.20				

**Top 30 Schools.** After the mean of the nine themes was calculated for each school, all schools were sorted from greatest to least. The top 30 rural elementary schools and the top 30 urban elementary schools were identified (see Appendix K and Appendix L). We also used the overall data to identify the bottom 30 rural and urban elementary schools.

The average percentage of positive perception was 87.72 for the top 30 rural elementary schools, and 80.72 for the top 30 urban schools. The mean of all elementary school teacher job satisfaction was 65.16%, with a standard deviation of

12.02, according to data from the 2022 Impact Survey. The elementary school with the highest percentage of workplace perception was 94.33% (SD = 7.35). The overall state data reported by Panorama is rounded to the nearest tenth, which might allow for slight differences in data from this study and from the 2022 Impact Survey results.

The positive perception data about job satisfaction from the top 30 rural (M = 87.72, SD = 3.01) and top 30 urban elementary schools (M = 80.72, SD = 3.01) were analyzed using a two-tailed independent t-test to test the following null hypothesis.

*H<sub>0</sub> 2: There is no significant difference in the positive perception of workplace satisfaction in the top 30 rural elementary schools and the top 30 urban elementary schools with high job satisfaction.*

Results indicated a significant difference in the perception of teacher job satisfaction  $t(58) = 6.93$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $d = 1.79$  (see Table 3), supporting the rejection of the null hypothesis. Further, the mean showed that rural elementary school teachers had a significantly higher average job satisfaction perception (7.00%) than urban elementary teachers and warranted the rejection of the null hypothesis. Cohen's effect size value ( $d = 1.79$ ) suggested a high significant difference between the rural and urban means.

**Table 3**

*Job Satisfaction for Top 30 Rural and Urban Elementary Schools*

	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>d</b>
Top 30 Rural Schools	30	87.72	3.01	58	6.93	.000	1.79
Top 30 Urban Schools	30	80.72	4.64				

**Bottom 30 Schools.** Next, an independent two-tailed t-test was conducted to compare the perception of job satisfaction for the bottom 30 rural and the bottom 30 urban elementary schools by testing  $H_0 3$ . These data are presented in Table 4.

$H_0 3$ : *There is no significant difference in the positive perception of workplace satisfaction in the bottom 30 rural elementary schools and the bottom 30 urban elementary schools with low job satisfaction.*

**Table 4**

*Job Satisfaction for Bottom 30 Rural and Urban Elementary Schools*

	N	M	SD	df	t	p	d
Bottom 30 Rural Schools	30	44.66	5.10	58	2.50	.017	0.63
Bottom 30 Urban Schools	30	40.97	6.48				

Mean data for the bottom 30 rural and urban elementary schools show a difference of 4.67%. There was a significant difference in job satisfaction between the bottom 30 rural ( $M = 44.66$ ,  $SD = 5.10$ ) and bottom 30 urban ( $M = 40.97$ ,  $SD = 6.48$ ) elementary schools;  $t(58) = 2.50$ ,  $p = .017$ ,  $d = 0.63$ . These results indicated a significant difference between rural and urban schools with the lowest perception of job satisfaction and warranted the rejection of the null hypothesis. The effect size ( $d = 0.63$ ) indicated a medium practical significance based on Cohen's value.

**Top and Bottom Rural Schools.** A comparison of the positive perception of job satisfaction in the top 30 rural and bottom 30 rural schools is provided in Table 5. A two-sample two-tailed t-test was performed to test the null hypothesis  $H_0 4$ .

*H<sub>0</sub> 4: There is no significant difference in the positive perception of workplace satisfaction in the top 30 rural elementary schools with high job satisfaction and the bottom 30 rural elementary schools with low job satisfaction.*

**Table 5**

*Job Satisfaction for Top and Bottom 30 Rural Elementary Schools*

	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>d</b>
Top 30 Rural Schools	30	87.72	3.01	58	39.89	.000	10.30
Bottom 30 Rural Schools	30	44.66	5.09				

There was a significant difference in the positive perception of job satisfaction for the top 30 rural ( $M = 87.72$ ,  $SD = 3.01$ ) and bottom 30 ( $M = 44.66$ ,  $SD = 5.09$ ) rural elementary schools;  $t(58) = 39.89$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $d = 10.30$ . The rejection of the null hypothesis was warranted. Cohen's effect size ( $d = 10.30$ ) was significantly high and suggested a significant difference in the mean.

**Top and Bottom Urban Schools.** Table 6 compares the top 30 urban and bottom 30 urban elementary schools' positive perceptions of job satisfaction using the 2022 Impact Survey. A two-tailed t-test was used to test  $H_0$  5, the fourth null hypothesis.

*H<sub>0</sub> 5: There is no significant difference in the positive perception of workplace satisfaction in the top 30 urban elementary schools with high job satisfaction and the bottom 30 urban elementary schools with low job satisfaction.*

**Table 6***Job Satisfaction for Top and Bottom 30 Urban Elementary Schools*

	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>d</b>
Top 30 Urban Schools	30	80.72	4.64	58	27.32	.000	7.05
Bottom 30 Urban Schools	30	40.97	6.48				

The findings indicated that the mean of positive perception of job satisfaction was significantly better for the top 30 urban schools ( $M = 80.72$ ,  $SD = 4.64$ ) than the bottom 30 ( $M = 40.97$ ,  $SD = 6.48$ ) urban elementary schools. Cohen's effect size value of 7.05 suggested a high practical significance. Based on the results,  $H_0 5$  was rejected  $t(58) = 27.32$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $d = 7.05$ .

**Top Five Rural and Top Five Urban Elementary Schools.** The top five rural and top five urban elementary schools with the highest positive perception of workplace or job satisfaction in Kentucky are listed in Tables 7 and 8. The top five rural schools in terms of perception data from the 2022 Impact Survey include Bowen Elementary School, Whitley County East Elementary School, Porter Elementary School, Gamaliel Elementary School, and Phelps Elementary School. Each school had an average overall positive perception mean higher than 91%. Indicating that 91% of the responses were answered using the first or second answer choice for each question.

**Table 7***Rural Elementary Schools with Highest Overall Perception Data*

School	District	Mean	SD
Bowen Elementary School	Powell County	94.33	7.35
Whitley County East Elementary School	Whitley County	93.44	4.98
Porter Elementary School	Johnson County	92.89	9.37
Gamaliel Elementary School	Monroe County	91.44	9.26
Phelps Elementary School	Pike County	91.22	8.03

The top five urban elementary schools with the highest overall perception data based on the 2022 Impact Survey were Ft. Wright Elementary School, Meadowthorpe Elementary School, Whitesville Elementary School, Eastern Elementary School, and Calhoun Elementary School. The top five urban elementary schools had a mean positive percentage of 88.71. Calhoun Elementary School was the fifth highest school, with a mean of 86.78%, and the highest urban school, Ft. Wright Elementary in Kenton County, had a mean of 91.44%.

**Table 8***Urban Elementary Schools with Highest Overall Perception Data*

School	District	Mean	SD
Ft. Wright Elementary School	Kenton County	91.44	8.11
Meadowthorpe Elementary School	Fayette County	89.44	4.25
Whitesville Elementary School	Daviess County	88.44	11.35
Eastern Elementary School	Henry County	87.44	11.02
Calhoun Elementary School	McLean County	86.78	9.05

The top five rural and top five urban elementary schools were selected for further quantitative analysis and invited to participate in the qualitative portion of the research study. A two-sample two-tailed t-test was performed on the top five rural and top five urban elementary schools. The results in Table 9 compare the positive perceptions of teacher job satisfaction.

*H<sub>0</sub> 6: There is no significant difference in the perception of workplace satisfaction in the top 5 rural elementary schools and top 5 urban elementary schools with high job satisfaction.*

**Table 9**

*Job Satisfaction for Top 5 Rural and Top 5 Urban Schools*

	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>d</b>
Top 5 Rural Schools	5	92.67	1.32	8	3.91	.004	2.47
Top 5 Urban Schools	5	88.71	1.83				

There was a significant difference in the positive perception of job satisfaction for the top five rural ( $M = 92.67$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ) and top 5 urban ( $M = 88.71$ ,  $SD = 1.83$ ) elementary schools;  $t(8) = 3.91$ ,  $p = .004$ ,  $d = 2.47$ . The rejection of the null hypothesis was warranted. Cohen's effect size ( $d = 2.47$ ) was significantly high and suggested a significant difference in the mean.

**Summary.** Results showed significant differences in job satisfaction between top rural and urban schools, revealing that teachers in rural schools have higher job satisfaction than teachers in urban elementary schools. There was a significant difference between the bottom 30 rural and urban elementary schools regarding job



satisfaction. Results from the quantitative data support that there is a significant difference between the top 30 and bottom 30 rural elementary schools in terms of teacher job satisfaction which is the same for the top 30 and bottom 30 urban elementary schools.

Schools that were identified as the top five rural and top five urban elementary schools also show that there is a statistically significant difference in job satisfaction at rural and urban schools. Rural teachers indicated a higher rate of job satisfaction in terms of school climate, school leadership, and staff-leadership relationships.

### ***2022 Impact Survey Themes***

The 2022 Impact Survey identifies nine themes used to report data. These themes include: educating all students (EAS), emotional well-being and belonging (EWB), feedback and coaching (FC), managing student behavior (MSB), professional learning (PL), resources (R), school climate (SC), school leadership (SL), and staff-leadership relationships (SLR). The themes relevant to this study are school climate (SC), school leadership (SL), and staff-leadership relationships (SLR). These themes include questions most closely related to teachers' job satisfaction and how they relate to school culture, climate, and leadership. The mean for elementary schools for each theme is averaged equally by Panorama; and standard deviation was determined by using the mean of the three selected themes. Table 10 provides the overall state totals for the top 5 rural and top 5 urban elementary schools for the individual themes from the 2022 Impact Survey relevant to this study as rounded up to the nearest tenth by

Panorama. Overall theme data from the 2022 Impact Survey can be found in Appendix M.

**Table 10**

*Theme Data for Top Five Rural and Urban Schools*

	School Climate (SD)	School Leadership (SD)	Staff-Leadership Relationships (SD)	Mean (SD)
Top Five Rural Schools	96.80 (2.77)	98.80 (1.30)	98.20 (2.49)	92.67 (1.03)
Top Five Urban Schools	95.60 (2.07)	96.60 (2.88)	97.20 (2.68)	88.71 (0.81)
Top Five Rural & Urban Schools	<b>96.20</b> <b>(2.39)</b>	<b>97.70</b> <b>(2.41)</b>	<b>97.70</b> <b>(2.50)</b>	<b>90.69</b> <b>(2.57)</b>

**School Climate Theme.** The statewide overall average in positive perception of school climate was 70.31%, compared to the average positive perception for top rural and urban schools of 96.20%. The school climate theme shows a slight difference between the top rural and urban schools, with rural schools scoring 96.80% and urban schools scoring 95.60%. This data shows that climate can impact teachers' job satisfaction. All schools selected for the qualitative study have a minimum positive perception average of 93% and a maximum score of 100%. This data can be seen in Tables 11 and 12.

**School Leadership Theme.** All elementary schools in the state had a considerably high average when considering other themes, with an average of 69.79%. When looking at rural versus urban schools, there is only a slight difference between the positive perception of the top rural schools, 98.80%, and top urban schools, 96.60%. Only three other themes exceeded school leadership with a higher

average perception. By a slight margin, school climate, staff-leadership relationships, and managing student behavior exceed school leadership for all elementary schools in the state.

**Staff-Leadership Relationships.** This theme is significant because of its association with school climate and leadership. Staff-leadership relationships had the highest percentage of positive perceptions in the state at 78.73%. The mean for the top five rural schools was 96.80%. A slight difference existed between the top rural and urban schools, with a percentage of 98.20% for rural schools and 97.20% for urban schools. Data from the three themes of school climate, school leadership, and staff-leadership relationships is provided in Table 11 and Table 12.

**Table 11**

*Selected Themes for Top Five Rural Schools*

Schools	School Climate	School Leadership	Staff-Leadership Relationships	Mean Selected Themes	SD
Bowen	98.00	100.00	100.00	99.33	1.15
Whitley East	93.00	97.00	99.00	96.33	3.06
Porter	100.00	100.00	100.00	100	0.00
Gamaliel	98.00	99.00	98.00	98.33	0.58
Phelps	95.00	98.00	94.00	95.67	2.08
<b>Top Five Rural Schools</b>	<b>96.80</b>	<b>98.80</b>	<b>98.20</b>	<b>97.93</b>	<b>1.03</b>

**Table 12***Selected Themes for Top Five Urban Schools*

<b>Schools</b>	<b>School Climate</b>	<b>School Leadership</b>	<b>Staff-Leadership Relationships</b>	<b>Mean Selected Themes</b>	<b>SD</b>
Ft. Wright	98.00	99.00	100.00	99.00	1.00
Meadowthorpe	94.00	93.00	94.00	93.67	0.58
Whitesville	97.00	99.00	100.00	98.67	1.53
Eastern	96.00	98.00	96.00	91.00	1.15
Calhoun	93.00	94.00	96.00	94.33	2.88
<b>Top Five Urban Schools</b>	<b>95.60</b>	<b>96.60</b>	<b>97.20</b>	<b>94.97</b>	<b>3.10</b>

The 2022 Impact Survey contained several questions grouped under the three selected themes of school climate, school leadership, and staff-leadership relationships. The school climate theme included eight questions. The school leadership theme included eight questions. The staff-leadership relationships theme included ten questions. The mean data comes from the average of the three selected themes (School Climate, School Leadership, and Staff-Leadership Relationships). The total for each theme was averaged, and the standard deviation using the three themes was determined from each mean.

The school climate theme included questions about the school environment and the attitudes of students and teachers. This theme also contained questions about the positivity of the environment in which teachers work. The questions from the theme also considered collaboration and student enthusiasm for learning.

The school leadership and staff-leadership relationship themes were essentially about the school principal or assistant principal, but assessed different

elements of leadership. Questions for school leadership asked about the school's organizational operations and the influence of school leaders on culture. The staff-leadership relationships questions asked participants about how leadership treats them personally and professionally, as well as the level of trust in the school's leader. The questions are reported in Table 13 and Table 14.

Table 13 includes responses from the top five rural elementary schools to the 2022 Impact Survey questions on school climate, school leadership, and staff-leadership relationships. Each question from these themes is provided, and the positive response data is included. Questions from the 2022 Impact Survey had five possible responses; if respondents selected the first or second answer, that was considered a favorable response by Panorama. Table 14 provides the question responses from the top five urban elementary schools, with results presented for the corresponding questions related to school climate, school leadership, and staff-leadership relationships in urban schools, similar to the data presented in Table 13.

**Table 13***Rural Positive Response to Questions for Relevant Themes (by percentage)*

Item	Bowen (N=20)	Whitley East (N=26)	Porter (N=25)	Gamali el (N=19)	Phelps (N=25)	Overall (SD)	State Mean (SD)
<i>School Climate Questions:</i>							
On most days how enthusiastic are the students about being at school?	100.00	92.00	100.00	89.00	96.00	95.40 (4.88)	73.53 (16.03)
When new initiatives to improve teaching are presented at your school, how supportive are your colleagues?	95.00	88.00	100.00	95.00	96.00	94.80 (4.32)	62.34 (18.61)
How optimistic are you that your school will improve in the future?	100.00	96.00	100.00	100.00	96.00	98.40 (2.19)	73.56 (17.80)
How supportive are students in their interactions with each other?	100.00	96.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	99.20 (1.79)	72.66 (16.43)
To what extent are teachers trusted to teach in the way they think best?	100.00	96.00	100.00	100.00	88.00	96.80 (5.22)	70.65 (21.09)
How positive are the attitudes of your colleagues?	95.00	81.00	100.00	100.00	96.00	94.40 (7.83)	55.96 (21.61)
How often do you see students helping each other without being prompted?	95.00	96.00	100.00	100.00	96.00	97.40 (2.41)	76.90 (14.00)
Overall, how positive is the working environment at your school?	100.00	92.00	100.00	100.00	88.00	96.00 (5.66)	65.74 (21.82)
<b>School Totals - School Climate</b>	<b>98.13</b>	<b>92.13</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>98.00</b>	<b>94.50</b>	<b>96.55 (3.17)</b>	<b>70.31 (14.95)</b>
<i>School Leadership Questions:</i>							
How positive is the tone that school leaders set for the culture of the school?	100.00	96.00	100.00	100.00	96.00	98.40 (2.19)	75.19 (19.42)
For your school leaders, how important is teacher satisfaction?	100.00	96.00	100.00	100.00	96.00	98.40 (2.19)	71.87(19.33)
Overall, how positive is the influence of the school leaders on the quality of your teaching?	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	96.00	99.20 (1.79)	74.49(18.13)
How effectively do your school leaders communicate information to teachers?	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	96.00	99.20 (1.79)	69.35 (20.47)
How knowledgeable are school leaders about what is going on in teachers' classrooms?	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	96.00	99.20 (1.79)	68.44 (19.53)
How responsive are school leaders to your feedback?	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00 (0)	67.34 (18.81)
How clearly do your school leaders identify their goals for teachers?	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00(0)	76.77 (17.58)
When the school makes important decisions, how much input do teachers have?	100.00	92.00	96.00	89.00	100.00	95.4 (4.88)	55.60 (20.18)
<b>School Totals - School Leadership</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>98.00</b>	<b>99.50</b>	<b>98.63</b>	<b>97.50</b>	<b>98.73 (1.03)</b>	<b>69.83 (8.91)</b>

Item	Bowen (N=20)	Whitley East (N=26)	Porter (N=25)	Gamaliel (N=19)	Phelps (N=25)	Overall (SD)	State Mean (SD)
<i>Staff-Leadership Relationships Questions:</i>							
How friendly are your school leaders towards you?	100.00	96.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	99.20 (1.79)	84.49 (13.64)
How confident are you that your school leaders have the best interests of the school in mind?	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	96.00	99.20 (1.79)	81.98 (15.74)
How much trust exists between school leaders and faculty?	100.00	100.00	100.00	95.00	88.00	96.60 (5.27)	69.92 (21.47)
When you face challenges at work, how supportive are your school leaders?	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	92.00	98.40 (3.58)	76.19 (17.01)
At your school, how motivating do you find working with the leadership team?	100.00	100.00	96.00	95.00	96.00	97.40 (2.41)	65.46 (19.54)
How much do your school leaders care about you as an individual?	100.00	100.00	100.00	95.00	88.00	96.60 (5.27)	79.60 (15.39)
How respectful are your school leaders towards you?	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	96.00	99.20 (1.79)	86.00 (12.69)
When challenges arise in your personal life, how understanding are school leaders?	100.00	96.00	100.00	100.00	96.00	98.40 (2.19)	87.44 (11.57)
How fairly does the school leadership treat the faculty?	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	92.00	98.40 (3.58)	77.52 (16.50)
<b>School Totals - Staff-Leadership Relationships</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>99.11</b>	<b>99.56</b>	<b>98.33</b>	<b>93.78</b>	<b>98.16 (2.52)</b>	<b>78.73 (14.74)</b>

**Table 14***Urban Positive Response to Questions for Relevant Themes (by percentage)*

Item	Ft Wright (N=29)	Meadowthorpe (N=40)	Whitesville (N=26)	Eastern (N=15)	Calhoun (N=26)	Overall (SD)	State Mean (SD)
<i>School Climate Questions:</i>							
On most days how enthusiastic are the students about being at school?	100.00	95.00	96.00	100.00	88.00	95.80 (4.92)	73.53 (16.03)
When new initiatives to improve teaching are presented at your school, how supportive are your colleagues?	93.00	93.00	100.00	87.00	96.00	93.80 (4.76)	62.34 (18.61)
How optimistic are you that your school will improve in the future?	100.00	95.00	100.00	100.00	96.00	98.20 (2.49)	73.56 (17.80)
How supportive are students in their interactions with each other?	100.00	95.00	96.00	100.00	92.00	96.60 (3.44)	72.66 (16.43)
To what extent are teachers trusted to teach in the way they think best?	100.00	95.00	96.00	93.00	85.00	93.80 (5.54)	70.65 (21.09)
How positive are the attitudes of your colleagues?	93.00	95.00	96.00	93.00	88.00	93.00 (3.08))	55.96 (21.61)
How often do you see students helping each other without being prompted?	97.00	90.00	92.00	100.00	96.00	95.00 (3.58)	76.90 (14.00)
Overall, how positive is the working environment at your school?	100.00	90.00	96.00	93.00	96.00	95.00 (3.74)	65.74 (21.82)

<b>School Totals - School Climate</b>	<b>97.88</b>	<b>93.50</b>	<b>96.50</b>	<b>95.75</b>	<b>92.13</b>	<b>95.15 (2.32)</b>	<b>70.31 (14.96)</b>
<i>School Leadership Questions:</i>							
How positive is the tone that school leaders set for the culture of the school?	100.00	95.00	100.00	100.00	96.00	98.20 (2.49)	75.19 (19.42)
For your school leaders, how important is teacher satisfaction?	100.00	100.00	92.00	93.00	92.00	95.40 (4.22)	71.10 (19.33)
Overall, how positive is the influence of the school leaders on the quality of your teaching?	100.00	93.00	100.00	100.00	92.00	97.00 (4.12)	74.49(18.13)
How effectively do your school leaders communicate information to teachers?	100.00	90.00	100.00	100.00	96.00	97.20 (4.38)	69.35 (20.47)
How knowledgeable are school leaders about what is going on in teachers' classrooms?	100.00	93.00	100.00	100.00	92.00	97.00 (4.12)	68.44 (19.53)
How responsive are school leaders to your feedback?	100.00	90.00	100.00	93.00	92.00	95.00 (4.69)	67.34 (18.81)
How clearly do your school leaders identify their goals for teachers?	100.00	98.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	99.60 (0.89)	76.77 (17.58)
When the school makes important decisions, how much input do teachers have?	93.00	88.00	100.00	93.00	88.00	92.40 (4.93)	55.60 (20.18)
<b>School Totals - School Leadership</b>	<b>99.13</b>	<b>93.38</b>	<b>99.00</b>	<b>97.38</b>	<b>93.50</b>	<b>96.48 (2.86)</b>	<b>69.83 (8.91)</b>



Item	Ft Wright (N=29)	Meadowthorpe (N=40)	Whitesville (N=26)	Eastern (N=15)	Calhoun (N=26)	Overall (SD)	State Mean (SD)
<i>Staff-Leadership Relationships</i> <i>Questions:</i>							
How friendly are your school leaders towards you?	100.00	93.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	98.60 (3.13)	84.49 (13.64)
How confident are you that your school leaders have the best interests of the school in mind?	100.00	95.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	99.00 (2.24)	81.98 (15.74)
How much trust exists between school leaders and faculty?	100.00	95.00	100.00	93.00	96.00	96.80 (3.11)	69.92 (21.47)
When you face challenges at work, how supportive are your school leaders?	100.00	93.00	100.00	93.00	100.00	97.20 (3.83)	76.19 (17.01)
At your school, how motivating do you find working with the leadership team?	100.00	93.00	100.00	100.00	88.00	96.20 (5.50)	65.46 (19.54)
How much do your school leaders care about you as an individual?	100.00	95.00	100.00	100.00	88.00	96.60 (5.27)	79.60 (15.39)
How respectful are your school leaders towards you?	100.00	95.00	100.00	93.00	100.00	97.60 (3.36)	86.00 (12.69)
When challenges arise in your personal life, how understanding are school leaders?	97.00	98.00	100.00	93.00	96.00	96.80 (2.59)	87.44 (11.57)
How fairly does the school leadership treat the faculty?	100.00	93.00	100.00	93.00	100.00	97.20 (3.83)	77.52 (16.50)
<b>School Totals – Staff-Leadership Relationships</b>	<b>99.67</b>	<b>94.44</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>96.11</b>	<b>96.44</b>	<b>97.33 (2.41)</b>	<b>78.73 (14.74)</b>

Table 13 provides individual response data for each question from the themes of school climate, school leadership, and staff-leadership relationships for the top five rural schools. One of the questions that we felt was important to highlight from the study was, “Overall, how positive is the working environment at your school?” Three of the top five rural schools, Bowen, Porter, and Gamaliel had 100% of teachers select a positive response for that question indicating a positive climate. Whitley County East Elementary School had a positive response rate of 92%, of the 26 participants, two rated the school climate as “somewhat positive.” The same trend can be seen for Phelps Elementary School with three of the 25 responses for the question:

two respondents responded that the overall climate was “somewhat positive” and one selected “slightly positive”.

We also felt that it was important to look closely at the following questions from the school leadership theme, “How positive is the tone that school leaders set for the culture of the school?” and “For your school leaders, how important is teacher satisfaction?” For the first question about setting the tone for the culture, three of the top five rural schools Bowen, Porter, and Gamaliel had a 100% positive response rating. Whitley County East Elementary School and Phelps Elementary School both had a 96% positive response rating. Whitley County East had one teacher respond that school administration set a “slightly positive” tone for school culture. Phelps Elementary had one “not at all positive” response for the question relating to the tone set by school administrators. The question about the importance of job satisfaction for teachers had a very similar response pattern. Bowen, Porter, and Gamaliel Elementary all had a 100% positive response rate, whereas Whitley County East and Phelps Elementary had a 96% positive response rate. One respondent at both Whitley East and Phelps said that job satisfaction of teachers was only “slightly important” for school leaders.

Two questions from the staff-leadership relationships theme were identified for a closer look. The two questions were, “When you face challenges at work, how supportive are your school leaders?” and “How much do your school leaders care about you as an individual?” Bowen, Whitley East, Porter, and Gamaliel all had a 100% positive response rate to the question that asks about school leadership support

when facing challenges. Phelps Elementary School had two teachers select the “slightly supportive” response about school leaders' support. For the second question about how much your school leaders care about you as an individual, Bowen, Whitley East, and Porter all had a 100% positive response rating. Gamaliel Elementary had one teacher respond that their school leaders cared about them “a little bit.” Phelps had three teachers respond, “a little bit” to the same question.

Table 14 represents response data for the same questions from the themes of school climate, school leadership, and staff-leadership relationships for the top five urban schools. The data includes results from the school climate question, “Overall, how positive is the working environment at your school?” Fort Wright Elementary reported a 100% positive response rate; and the rates for Meadowthorpe, Whitesville, Eastern, and Calhoun ranged from 90% to 96%.

The first question from the school leadership theme, “How positive is the tone that school leaders set for the culture of the school?” had a positive response rate of 100% from Fort Wright, Whitesville, and Eastern. Meadowthorpe reported 95%, and Calhoun was just above with a positive rate of 96%. These percentages were similar to the response rates for rural schools. However, in response to the second leadership question, “For your school leaders, how important is teacher satisfaction?” the percentage of positive results was lower for urban schools. Fort Wright and Meadowthorpe reported a 100% response rate. Eastern had a positive response rate of 92%, while Whitesville and Calhoun were 93%. Results indicated a positive response

rate of 95.40% for urban schools compared to a three percent higher combined percentage of 98.40% for rural schools' positive response rates.

The two questions from staff-leadership relationships in urban schools yielded results like the response rates for rural schools. Fort Wright, Whitesville, and Calhoun reported 100%; and responses from Meadowthorpe and Eastern indicated a 93% positive response rate for each school for the first question, "When you face challenges at work, how supportive are your school leaders?" The combined positive response rate of 97.20% is just below the combined percentage of 98.40% for the top five rural schools. The second question, "How much do your school leaders care about you as an individual?" had equal combined positive response rates of 96.60% in rural and urban schools. Fort Wright, Whitesville, and Calhoun reported 100%, Meadowthorpe 95%, and Calhoun 88%.

When comparing the top five rural and top five urban elementary schools for the questions about school climate including, "Overall, how positive is the working environment at your school?" The rural schools' overall mean was 96%, and urban was 95%. This is considerably higher than the overall state, as the state mean for positive responses to the question was 65.74%.

The school leadership question, "How positive is the tone that school leaders set for the culture of the school?" had a statewide positive response rate of 75.19%. The mean for the top five rural schools was 98.40%, and the mean for the top five urban schools was 98.20%. The second question from this theme that we examined, "For your school leaders, how important is teacher satisfaction?" had an overall state

mean of 71.10%. The top five rural elementary schools had a mean of 98.40%, and the top five urban schools had a mean of 95.40%.

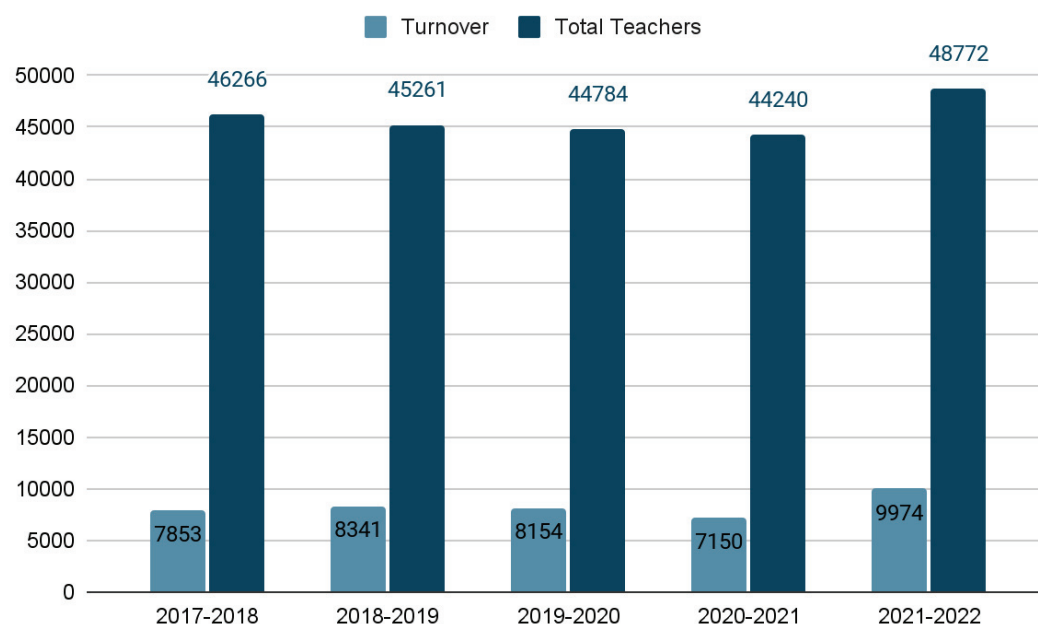
The staff-leadership relationship theme had an overall state-level positive response average of 78.73%. The top five rural schools had a mean of 98.16%, and the top five urban schools had a mean of 97.33%. The question, “When you face challenges at work, how supportive are your school leaders?” had a statewide positive response rate of 76.19%, while the top five rural schools had a mean positive response rate of 98.40% and urban schools had 97.20%. The other question from the staff-leadership relationship theme that was selected for a closer look was, “How much do your school leaders care about you as an individual?” This question had a state-level positive response rate of 79.60%. The top five rural schools had a mean positive response rate of 96.60%, and the top five urban schools also had a positive rate of 96.60%.

We selected the data for the individual questions selected for the top five rural and top five urban elementary schools showed similarities. Results were similar when comparing the top five schools from each category, but the state means were much lower than either the top five rural or top five urban elementary schools.

**Teacher Turnover.** The 2021 KSRC published by the Kentucky Department of Education (2022) provides a dashboard of data for each school and district. Select themes of the Kentucky Impact Working Condition Survey and teacher turnover data are also included in the KSRC. According to the KSRC, teacher turnover is defined as teachers who do not return to the school from the previous year, teachers who do not

complete the year, and new teachers who taught for 100 days but did not complete the year. However, teacher turnover data can be deceiving, as teachers who move to different positions within the same school are also included. Employees shifted at the district level from school to school are also considered part of the calculation.

State-level data shows increased teacher turnover for the 2021-2022 school year (Kentucky Department of Education, 2022). Figure 7 shows the number of teachers employed each year in Kentucky and the number of teachers who were considered “turnover” based upon the following criteria: did not complete a calculation year or full year of teaching; left, or moved to a different position; and teachers who did not return to the school the following year.

**Figure 7***Teacher Turnover 2017-18 to 2021-22**Note.* Source: 2022 KSRC

**Elementary Turnover.** Turnover data from the 2021 KSRC for elementary schools that met the participation criteria of the 2022 Impact Survey are provided in Table 15. Teacher turnover was compared to determine if there was a difference between the turnover rate for rural ( $M = 12.11$ ,  $SD = 8.54$ ) and urban ( $M = 14.89$ ,  $SD = 9.74$ ) elementary schools that participated in the 2022 Impact Survey. Urban elementary school teacher turnover rate is slightly higher than rural schools.

$H_0$  7: *There is no significant difference in the teacher turnover percentage of Kentucky's rural and urban elementary schools.*

**Table 15***Analysis of Elementary Teacher Turnover*

	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>d</b>
Rural Schools	271	12.11	8.54	578	3.64	.000	0.30
Urban Schools	309	14.89	9.74				

Results from an independent two-tailed t-test indicated a significant difference in the turnover percentage in rural and urban schools  $t(578) = 3.64$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $d = 0.30$  and warranted the rejection of  $H_0$ . Cohen's effect size value ( $d = 0.30$ ) was considered medium significance.

**Turnover Percentage Top 30 Rural and Urban Schools.** The top 30 rural and the top 30 urban elementary schools were analyzed using a two-tailed independent t-test to determine the difference in turnover percentages of a sample of elementary schools with high job satisfaction. Table 16 presents the turnover percentage for rural schools ( $M = 13.20$ ,  $SD = 10.39$ ) and urban schools ( $M = 14.25$ ,  $SD = 9.26$ ).

$H_0$  8: *There is no significant difference in the turnover percentage of the top 30 rural elementary schools and the top 30 urban elementary schools with high job satisfaction.*

**Table 16***Analysis of Turnover Top 30 Rural and Urban Schools*

	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>d</b>
Top Rural Schools	30	13.20	10.39	58	0.42	.680	0.11
Top Urban Schools	30	14.25	9.26				



Cohen's value ( $d = 0.11$ ) suggested an insignificant effect size. The results for the independent t-test,  $t(58) = 0.42$ ,  $p = .680$ ,  $d = 0.11$ , further supported that there is no significant difference in the turnover percentage in elementary schools with a perception of high job satisfaction. Therefore, the rejection of the null hypothesis  $H_0$  8 was not warranted.

**Turnover Percentage Bottom 30 Rural and Urban Schools.** As with schools with high job satisfaction, when examining schools with low job satisfaction, the t-test results indicated no significant difference in the turnover percentage for rural and urban schools. Table 17 summarizes data for the bottom 30 rural schools ( $M = 13.72$ ,  $SD = 10.83$ ) and the bottom 30 urban schools ( $M = 17.10$ ,  $SD = 11.42$ ).

$H_0$  9: *There is no significant difference in the turnover percentage of the bottom 30 rural elementary schools and the bottom 30 urban elementary schools with low job satisfaction.*

**Table 17**

*Analysis of Turnover Bottom 30 Rural and Urban Schools*

	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>d</b>
Bottom Rural Schools	30	13.72	10.83	58	1.18	.243	0.30
Bottom Urban Schools	30	17.10	11.42				

Independent t-test results showed no significant difference  $t(58) = 1.18$ ,  $p = .243$ ,  $d = 0.30$ . According to Cohen's effect size ( $d = 0.30$ ), only a small difference existed between the turnover between rural and urban schools with high job satisfaction and between rural and urban schools with low job satisfaction. We failed to reject the null hypothesis  $H_0$  9 based on the results of the independent t-test.

**Turnover Percentage Top 30 Rural and Bottom 30 Rural Schools.** The tenth hypothesis compared the turnover percentage for the top 30 rural schools with high job satisfaction and the bottom 30 rural schools with low job satisfaction. Table 18 provides a summary of the statistical analysis for  $H_0 10$ .

*$H_0 10$ : There is no significant difference in the turnover percentage of the top 30 rural elementary schools with high job satisfaction and the bottom 30 rural elementary schools with low job satisfaction.*

**Table 18**

*Analysis of Turnover Top 30 and Bottom 30 Rural Schools*

	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>d</b>
Top 30 Rural	30	13.20	10.39	58	0.19	.851	0.05
Bottom 30 Rural	30	13.72	10.83				

The mean of the top 30 rural schools ( $M = 13.20$ ,  $SD = 10.39$ ) was not significantly different from the mean of the bottom 30 rural schools ( $M = 13.72$ ,  $SD = 10.83$ ) according to the findings  $t(58) = 1.19$ ,  $p = .851$ ,  $d = 0.05$ . Cohen's effect size ( $d = 0.05$ ) for the bottom rural and urban schools was small. Thus, the rejection of the null hypothesis  $H_0 10$  was not warranted.

**Turnover Percentage Top 30 Urban and Bottom 30 Urban Schools.** The results  $t(58) = 1.06$ ,  $p = .293$ ,  $d = 0.27$  indicated that the top 30 urban schools ( $M = 14.25$ ,  $SD = 9.26$ ) with a perception of high job satisfaction and the bottom 30 urban ( $M = 17.10$ ,  $SD = 11.42$ ) elementary schools with a perception of low job satisfaction had no significant difference in the turnover percentage. The bottom mean for rural schools was 13.72%, and the mean for the top rural 30 rural schools was 13.20%. The

percentages indicate that the bottom 30 rural schools have a lower turnover percentage than the top 30 rural elementary schools.

*H<sub>0</sub> 11: There is no significant difference in the turnover percentage of the top 30 urban elementary schools with high job satisfaction and the bottom 30 urban elementary schools with low job satisfaction.*

**Table 19**

*Analysis of Turnover Top 30 and Bottom 30 Urban Schools*

	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>d</b>
Top 30 Urban	30	14.25	9.26	58	1.06	.293	0.27
Bottom 30 Urban	30	17.10	11.42				

H<sub>0</sub> 11 is not rejected based on the findings summarized in Table 19. Cohen's effect size value ( $d = 0.27$ ) is considered insignificant.

**Turnover Percentage Top 5 Rural and Urban Schools.** Table 20 contains the turnover percentages for the rural and urban elementary schools selected for the study. An independent t-test was used to analyze the mean data for the top five rural ( $M = 9.68$ ,  $SD = 9.47$ ) and the top five urban ( $M = 12.10$ ,  $SD = 7.97$ ) elementary schools.

*H<sub>0</sub> 12: There is no significant difference in the turnover percentage of the top five rural elementary schools and the top five urban schools with high job satisfaction.*

**Table 20***Analysis of Turnover Top 5 Rural and Urban Schools*

	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>d</b>
Rural Schools	5	9.68	9.47	8	0.44	.674	0.28
Urban Schools	5	12.10	7.97				

$H_0$  12 was not rejected based on the results that indicated no significant difference  $t(8) = 0.44$ ,  $p = .674$ ,  $d = 0.28$  in the turnover rate of rural and urban elementary schools with high job satisfaction. Cohen's value ( $d = 0.28$ ) supported an insignificant effect size.

**Rural and Urban Turnover.** For the top five rural and top five urban schools, turnover data shows little difference from the state average of 13.61%. There is little difference between teacher turnover percentages between all Kentucky rural and urban elementary schools. Teacher turnover data for the selected rural and urban elementary schools in Kentucky are provided in Tables 21 and 22. These data should be scrutinized as it is controlled mainly at the district level, with one check each year when schools approve their KSRC data. For example, even the slightest shift in courses or assignments can create teacher turnover. The standard deviation for turnover is calculated by using the turnover data from the top five schools for both rural and urban schools.

**Table 21***2020 Teacher Turnover Rural Elementary Schools*

<b>Schools</b>	<b>Mean (SD)</b>
Porter Elementary School	0.00
Gamaliel Elementary School	0.00
Phelps Elementary School	12.00
Whitley East Elementary School	15.00
Bowen Elementary School	21.40
<b>Top Five Rural Elementary School Totals</b>	<b>9.68 (9.47)</b>

**Table 22***2020 Teacher Turnover Urban Elementary Schools*

<b>Schools</b>	<b>Mean (SD)</b>
Meadowthorpe Elementary School	2.90
Calhoun Elementary School	4.80
Whitesville Elementary School	14.30
Ft. Wright Elementary School	17.10
Eastern Elementary School	21.40
<b>Top Five Urban Elementary School Totals</b>	<b>12.10 (7.97)</b>

Based upon the turnover data from the top five rural and top five urban elementary schools, the top five urban elementary schools have the highest turnover percentages. The top five rural elementary schools have turnover rates ranging from 0% to 21.40%, and urban schools have turnover percentages ranging from 2.90% to 21.40%. Two of the top five rural elementary schools had a 0% turnover rate from the

2020 School Report Card Data, whereas every school in the top five urban schools had at least some turnover.

### **Summary of Quantitative Findings**

Three research questions guided this study in exploring the factors that create teacher job satisfaction. The first two questions addressed the impact of school climate and school leadership in schools with high workplace satisfaction. The third question addressed teacher turnover in rural and urban schools with a high perception of job satisfaction. We examined the top 30 and bottom 30 rural and urban elementary schools. In addition, the top five rural and top five urban elementary schools with the highest perception of job satisfaction based on the results from the 2022 Impact Survey were studied.

An analysis of these survey results revealed high percentages in school climate, school leadership, and relationships between the staff and administration in rural and urban elementary schools, with the highest perception of teacher job satisfaction. Top schools reported a positive work environment for teachers where the students are excited about learning. Perceptions about leadership and organizational operations were also high when examining the data from the top schools. Levels of trust and how administration treats staff personally and professionally were rated high. Data from schools with low job satisfaction showed a significant difference in the positive perception of workplace satisfaction.

Data supported that teacher turnover in rural and urban schools was similar. In addition, there was a minimal difference in the turnover percentage between rural and

urban schools with a high perception of teacher job satisfaction. The state average teacher turnover in rural and urban elementary schools reported in the 2022 Impact Survey showed only a slight difference.

Data supported the rejection of seven of the twelve null hypotheses, while five were not rejected. When considering job satisfaction, there was a statistical difference between the top and bottom rural schools and the top and bottom urban schools. Teacher turnover in rural and urban schools was the same for schools with the highest or lowest perception of job satisfaction.

These findings suggest that the perception of job satisfaction is higher in rural elementary schools than in urban elementary schools in Kentucky. The results also support that there is little difference in teacher turnover for rural and urban schools and schools with a high perception of job satisfaction and low job satisfaction. Quantitative data from the 2022 Impact Survey and the 2020 KSRC supported qualitative findings for this study.

### **Qualitative Data**

We contacted the principals of the top five rural and top five urban elementary schools. The goal was to get as many teachers in each school as possible to respond to the qualitative survey. Principals for seven of the top 10 schools were receptive to communicating with their staff about the qualitative portion of the survey. After the principal contacted their staff about the study, the survey link was sent to the teachers. The survey remained open for three weeks. Any survey responses submitted past the deadline were not included in the study.

The data collected using the Teacher Job Satisfaction Survey Google Form was exported into an Excel spreadsheet for analysis. We tabulated the survey results of the multiple-choice and yes/no items. Open-ended survey questions were analyzed using computer-assisted software, Atlas.ti. This software identified keywords from participant responses by counting the word frequency and coding them by theme.

### ***Teacher Job Satisfaction Survey***

**Respondent Demographics.** At the close of the survey, 49 surveys were collected. From the 49 surveys, 47 participants chose to participate in the study. There were 18 participants from rural schools and 29 participants from urban schools. Participants came from a total of seven schools. Four rural and three urban schools participated in the qualitative portion of the survey, although five rural and five urban schools were invited to participate.

Question two of the survey asked respondents about their participation in the 2022 Impact Survey. Answering this question determined if the respondent met one of the two initial criteria to participate in the survey. If the teacher did not complete the 2022 working conditions survey, then the Teacher Job Satisfaction Survey ended at that point and the participant did not continue with the remaining questions. Forty-seven teachers consented to the survey. Of the teachers who agreed to take the survey, 40 participated in the 2022 Impact Survey and were therefore eligible to continue.

The third question of the survey provided the second criterion for participating in the teacher job satisfaction survey. Of the 40 teachers deemed eligible, 22 worked in urban schools, and 18 worked in rural schools. It was later discovered that one of

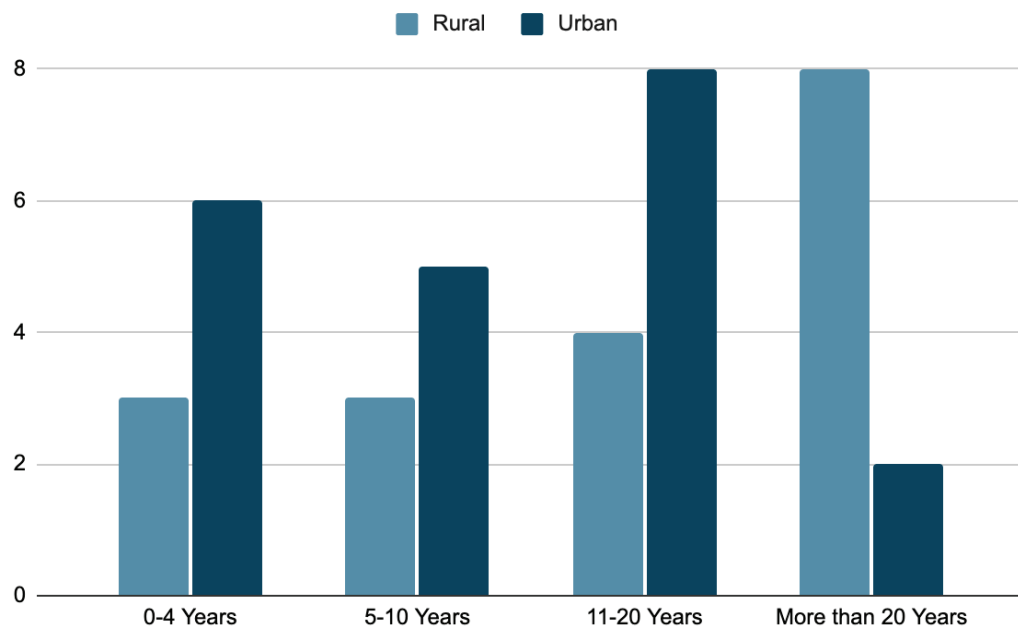


the respondents from an urban school was a classified staff member. This left 18 rural teachers and 21 urban teachers for a total of 39 participants.

The responses show little variety when asked about the number of years taught in their current school. More urban participants said they had taught at their current school for 11-20 years than in any other category. Rural teachers with over 20 years of experience comprised this survey group's most significant number of teachers. Figure 8 details participant responses regarding the years they have taught at their current school.

**Figure 8**

*Number of Years Employed at Current School*

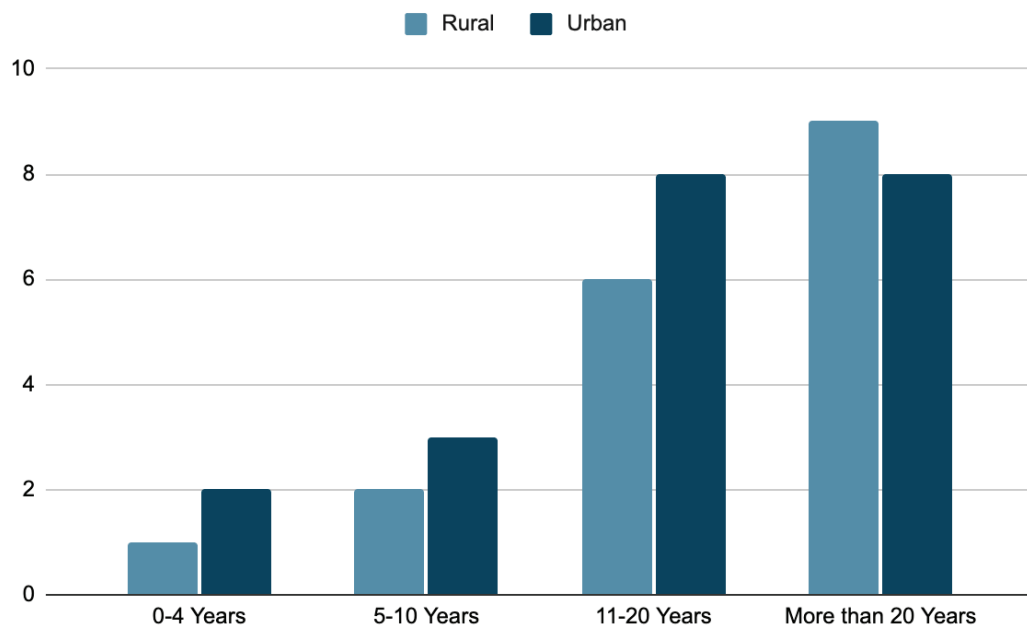


We felt it was relevant to survey participants about the length of their experience in education. Most teachers who answered question five in the survey had

20 or more years of experience in education. Out of 39 teachers, nine rural and eight urban teachers surveyed had over 20 years of experience. Fourteen teachers, six rural and eight urban, had between 11 and 20 years of experience. Five teachers that participated in the study had between five and 10 years of experience in education; two of those teachers were rural teachers, and three were urban. Three survey participants had less than five years of experience, one rural teacher and two urban teachers. The results for this question are provided in Figure 9.

**Figure 9**

*Years of Experience*



The sixth survey question was open-ended and the first from the survey to ask participants to respond with a narrative. Response coding indicated that culture, relationships, and school administration significantly impact teacher job satisfaction.

Other factors were identified, but culture and administration were the most stated by participants.

***Rural Schools.*** Teachers from rural schools identified school culture and administrative support as top factors impacting job satisfaction. The 18 responses included 14 school culture-related responses. Teacher responses that identified a “caring atmosphere and culture within the school” and “a building and work environment where you feel safe and comfortable means a lot” were coded as culture. “Family” was also essential, as the word was mentioned by participants to describe the culture of their schools. The words “care” and “respect” were mentioned by several participants when describing their work environment. One participant noted that “genuine respect and care among colleagues and principal; the value of family is evident.”

Support from the principal was also consistent throughout responses to question six. Administrative support was second only to culture, with 11 of 18 respondents citing that the support of the principal as the most important factor in job satisfaction. Respondents mentioned principal support consistently, with one respondent stating that the “principal is very understanding and supportive in both our personal and professional endeavors.” Many other respondents identified the support of the principal as understanding and caring. One participant said that a “principal who is a mother and understands mom [*sic*] responsibilities” was very significant to their satisfaction. In the words of a different respondent, “Our principal always has our backs and [*sic*] we have hers.” Participants identified the kind of support from the

principal that creates a family-like culture as a good indication of job satisfaction. Comments about the principal and staff relationships are also crucial to job satisfaction. One participant stated, “[r]elationships with leadership and coworkers and being treated as competent at my job” as the most crucial factor to their satisfaction as a teacher.

Finally, rural teachers identified students as the third most important factor for job satisfaction. Of the 18 respondents, four mentioned that students played an essential role in their satisfaction with their work. “Seeing [students] excited to be at school and excited about learning makes being a teacher great.” Other respondents simply stated that “student achievement” was the most important factor for job satisfaction.

**Urban Schools.** The support of administrators was the most identified factor for job satisfaction among teachers at urban schools. Thirteen of the 22 respondents from urban schools identified the school administrator and their support as being central to teacher job satisfaction. As one respondent stated, “The factors that impact my satisfaction most is [*sic*] the support that we receive from our administration and the fact that our voices are heard.” This comment was similar to those that identified “relationships with administration” as well as “administration that values my time and supports my needs” as essential to job satisfaction. Administrative support was also identified as “focused on what is best for kids” by more than one participant.

Beyond the support of school administration, the support of colleagues was the second most important factor for job satisfaction identified by teachers in urban

schools. Ten respondents identified that their colleagues and the support they offer were central to how they feel about their job. “Feeling supported by peers” and “having a community of teachers to rely on for help” were representative responses. One teacher simply stated, “the people I work with” are the most important factor for my job satisfaction.

Six of the 22 respondents representing urban schools also cited that the students impacted teacher satisfaction. “GREAT kids” was followed up with several responses identifying “students” as an essential factor. One participant even stated that “positive behaviors from students” was the most important factor to their satisfaction.

Understanding how rural and urban school teachers view their workplace environments is essential when deconstructing the complex systems in which they work. While many teachers can readily identify the advantages and disadvantages of working in their schools, looking at the differences between rural and urban schools was important in this study. Responses to question seven revealed that rural and urban school teachers have different opinions about the advantages and disadvantages of working in their respective schools.

***Benefits of Working in Rural Schools.*** Six of the 18 teachers from rural schools who responded to the survey identified a caring, supportive community as the most significant benefit of working in a rural school. Working in a school with a family-like atmosphere ranked equally important among six of the participants. Five teachers reported supportive staff as a top benefit of working in a rural school.

Teachers have “the ability to develop meaningful relationships with all stakeholders [*sic*]” and “make connections.” Knowing the families of students you work with creates a “close-knit like family” atmosphere. “Everyone knows everyone,” and “personal relationships” with the families are advantageous when working with students. Schools are often perceived as a “community hub” in rural settings. In the words of one respondent, “Working in a small town is great because there is a greater sense of community already built in.”

Another participant elaborated: “Benefits include smaller staff and student population which enables everyone to truly know each other and a genuine interest in wanting everyone to be their best.” A smaller student-teacher ratio means “more opportunities to explore learning environments” and “teacher sharing ideas.” One respondent summed it all up: “Being in a small school in a small community means you know a lot about the children you work with, or their families, and can relate to them and better meet their needs.”

***Disadvantages of Working in Rural Schools.*** A lack of resources was identified as one of the disadvantages of working in a rural school setting. For example, a respondent reported that “technology is not as good as in other areas.” Another teacher said, “resources are limited [*sic*], and we are often overlooked because we are a small school in the middle of nowhere.” Other teachers identified the community's socio-economic status as a disadvantage to working in a rural school. One teacher stated that their school is in a “low-income community” where “money to do things is harder to come by for parents.” Teachers also identify that

equity could be an issue because there are “not a lot of available resources.” One teacher noted, “students have less background knowledge as [*sic*] those in urban areas,” which could be impacted by location and available resources.

***Benefits of Working in Urban Schools.*** Urban teachers reported some of the same benefits as rural teachers. Seven teachers from urban schools said that the family atmosphere was one of the benefits of working in an urban school. Six participants referenced class size as an advantage.

One participant stated that “everyone knows one another and their families.” These responses are similar to the responses from rural schools because some of the schools identified as urban are in areas with small communities and small schools. Participants also identified that class size was important. One participant stated, “[o]ur class sizes are small in comparison to other schools around us. This allows teachers to be able to meet student needs much more easily through intervention and small groups.”

***Disadvantages of Working in Urban Schools.*** Five teachers from urban schools identified that a lack of financial resources as a disadvantage. Teachers stated that although many of their students are “underprivileged,” they are still held to high standards. Others say that resources are limited due to financial constraints.

A few urban teachers also mention that salary related to financial resources is a disadvantage to working in an urban school. Some smaller urban districts have lower pay scales than those in bigger cities. Several teachers explicitly stated that

opportunities for students in small urban schools are lacking, which can be a significant disadvantage.

**Compensation.** Rural teachers reported more concerns with teacher pay than urban teachers when responding to the eighth question. Based on survey responses, 56% of rural teachers view compensation as an issue, and 44% of rural teachers do not see it as a problem. In comparison, 43% of urban teachers see teacher pay as a concern, 52% do not (one urban teacher did not respond, leaving a response rate of 95%). Most responses referenced better pay in surrounding districts or higher pay in larger districts. Answers to this question echoed what teachers said in the previous question as they identified the advantages and disadvantages of working in rural and urban schools.

**Rural Schools.** Responses from teachers at rural schools indicated that most do not feel compensation is an issue. However, those who saw compensation as an issue quickly pointed out that surrounding districts paid more money, negatively impacting their schools. One teacher said, “we are compensated thousands of dollars less than the independent school district just 35 minutes from our school.” Another teacher said, “[i]t would be nice to be paid more equitably. Our district pay lags behind others.” This response: “Our school district does not compare to the pay wages in surrounding counties,” confirmed that many rural school teachers feel their compensation is not equitable to those teachers in neighboring counties. Of the 18 responses, seven teachers stated their pay was less than those in surrounding districts.



***Urban Schools.*** Teachers from urban school districts have mixed reactions concerning compensation. Twenty responses were collected from teachers in urban school districts about compensation. From those 20 responses, 10 teachers stated that compensation was not an issue. Nine teachers either responded that compensation was an issue or noted that their pay was lower than surrounding areas. Seven of those respondents identified pay inequity between their district and surrounding districts. One teacher stated, “our salaries are low compared to our surrounding counties.” Another responded, “I could be making at least \$20,000 more a year if I taught [in a neighboring county].”

***Homegrown or Transplanted.*** Rural and urban teachers participating in the study did not view being homegrown as an issue for working in their schools. Of the 39 participants responding to question nine, 25 felt that being homegrown or transplanted was not an issue. Some teachers from the study indicated that they were homegrown and teaching in a school they once attended. Other participants stated that they were not originally from the school they were teaching, but their experiences varied when considering the community's acceptance. Teachers identified that being homegrown or transplanted could connect to teacher retention.

***Rural Schools.*** Many rural school teachers who responded to this question agreed that being homegrown was vital because it equated to investment in rural schools and communities. In the words of one respondent, “If they aren’t from a rural area [*sic*] they won’t stay. Our school has been a stepping stone for many great

teachers due to the distance from our closest city.” Another teacher expressed, “I feel that the homegrown staff is more likely to stay rooted.”

Four teachers from the survey said they grew up in the community or attended the school in which they now teach. Comments included, “I attended elementary and high school in this community” and “I enjoy working in the same school that I attended. Helping the community that helped me is rewarding.” Two of these teachers shared feeling a sense of pride working in the same school they attended. One stated:

“I grew up in the community that I now teach in, and find a great sense of community and respect towards the people in my community. I am fortunate enough to be able to teach at the elementary school that I went to myself, and [sic] have a great sense of pride to represent it each day.”

In the words of the other respondent:

“I work at the elementary school in which I attended as a child; I currently teach with 6 [sic] colleagues that I formerly taught as students; there is definitely an atmosphere of personal pride when employees have such strong connections to the school.”

Other respondents representing rural schools indicated that although they were not originally from the area, they still felt welcome by the community and the school.

**Urban Schools.** Urban teachers shared a variety of opinions when it came to being homegrown. Fifteen teachers felt that being homegrown was not an issue. Several of these respondents remarked that they felt welcomed even though they were not homegrown. In contrast, another respondent stated, “I actually feel that being

homegrown is what makes our school so special. Most of the teachers in our building have rooted themselves in our county (if they weren't already here) and they plan to stay." Another respondent agreed that "it took me a while to fit in."

Several teachers agreed it took them a while to feel accepted by the community and school. In the words of one respondent:

"As a teacher who grew up outside the district, it took a little while to get to know families and to gain their trust. Other co-workers who grew up in the county know families [*sic*] and they know them, so they are able to have a stronger relationship initially."

Another teacher stated, "The first two years [*sic*] I was an 'outsider' with even students remarking 'you aren't from here'. Now, however [*sic*] I feel included and valued."

**Impact of Culture on Job Satisfaction.** Ninety-seven percent of rural and urban teachers believe that culture impacts teacher job satisfaction. The word culture was coded 38 times among the responses to the tenth survey question. While teachers from both rural and urban schools identified the importance of culture, they also elaborated on the culture of their schools and emphasized its importance to their job satisfaction.

**Rural Schools.** All 18 rural school teachers that participated in the study agreed that school culture was one of the most important factors for job satisfaction. While several respondents answered the question with a simple "yes," others were quick to explain that culture is essential. In the words of one respondent, "[c]ulture is

everything to a successful school.” Another teacher stated, “I can’t imagine working in a school that doesn’t put an emphasis on culture.” Other teachers connected culture to a great work environment due to the consistency in expectations and the willingness of staff to work together to help the school succeed. One respondent summed it all up: “We are all on the same page and willing to do what it takes for each other to help our babies to succeed.”

Another respondent stated, “You have to hire good people who are hard workers. Good people care for their students [*sic*] and hard workers will do whatever it takes to help their students succeed.” Student success is a common element of culture, as indicated by this teacher who said, “Our staff is full of caring, stable amazing people who value hard work, love people, value honesty/authenticity, and [*sic*] willing to do what it takes to make our school a place that children feel loved, valued, and can learn.”

The responses also referenced working together and helping each other several times. One respondent stated, “We are always supporting and helping one another. It is beneficial to know you can ask anyone for help no matter the issue [*sic*] and they will be right there for you.” Another teacher even stated that the principal was key to the practice of working together saying, “our principal strives to help us in every way imaginable.”

***Urban Schools.*** Twenty of the 21 urban school teachers that responded to the survey agreed that school culture was essential to teacher job satisfaction. The related

words “family,” “support,” and “expectations” also appeared in several responses.

One respondent stated:

“Our school culture is that of a family. Everyone jumps in to support each other in any way possible. We look to learn from each other in order to grow to be the best possible educator that we can be.”

Another teacher agreed that “[o]ur culture is that of a family.” Another teacher said, “I am very satisfied with my job mainly because of the culture of my school.”

Expectations were identified by several teachers, with one respondent stating that “the expectations are manageable and struggle is met with support,” while another stated that “we have high expectations.” One teacher mentioned that “the expectations from admin down are high... our principal is very supportive of teachers and helps with any issues that arise.” Another urban school teacher said, “We are a kids first school. The admin values us and let’s [*sic*] us take care of our needs without fear.”

**Leadership and Job Satisfaction.** All rural and urban teachers surveyed believe that school administration impacts job satisfaction. All 39 respondents agreed that the principal or school leadership was essential to teacher job satisfaction. Based on their responses to question eleven, rural and urban school teachers agreed that the administration set the direction for the success of their schools.

**Rural Schools.** Many of responses from rural school teachers indicated that their school leader was willing to do whatever it takes to make their school a success. One respondent added, “[t]hey would not ask us to do anything they would not be

willing to do themselves.” Other respondents reported that their school leader is “amazing,” and their “work ethic” pushed others to work hard. In the words of one respondent, “Leadership sets the tone for the whole school.” In the words of another, “Great leaders drive success in schools.”

Some teachers even referenced how leadership impacts the culture of their school. For example, one respondent stated, “A good leader makes a workplace somewhere that you want to be.” Another indicated that their leader “will stand beside me through thick and thin.” A different respondent replied, a leader that “has your back and your best interest at heart” had an impact on job satisfaction. Another teacher stated:

“Our leadership here [*sic*] Principal and assistant principal do a great job of leading the teachers and students. I feel that we have a clear vision of what they want our school to look like [*sic*], based on their expectations. The expectations are made clear to all students and staff.”

**Urban Schools.** Urban school teachers praised the efforts of their school leaders. Support was a common theme throughout responses by urban school teachers. For example, one respondent stated, “If you don’t feel supported, it could feel really discouraging. My admin listens to the wants and needs of teachers and supports us through everything.” Five other teachers explicitly stated that the administration's support is key to their satisfaction, but many others describe support in their responses. For example, one teacher said:

“My principal focuses on what is BEST for students. She also stands up for teachers when there are issues with parents, and she voices concerns when she doesn't agree with practices or extra work that is being talked about by higher ups [*sic*]. She remembers what it is like to be in the classroom.”

Similarly, other teachers also mentioned the willingness of administrators to be hands-on and help wherever they are needed. One teacher said, “Our principal always jumps in and helps where and when needed... She is very hands on [*sic*] and trusts us and our craft.” Another responded, “She would not ask another person [*sic*] to do a job she wouldn't do herself. She has been seen as kitchen staff, substitute teacher, custodian [*sic*], maintenance [*sic*] and front desk secretary when staff is short handed [*sic*].”

**Remain as an Educator.** Responses to question 12 indicated that all but one of the 39 teachers from this study plan to continue their career in education. Comments from participants show a passion for the profession. Many teachers identified that education was a calling and felt that serving their schools was what they were meant to do.

**Rural Schools.** Rural school teachers surveyed said they plan to continue their career in education. However, several did note that they were nearing retirement. One teacher stated that “In retirement, I don't plan to continue my career in education.” Another said, “[y]es I have reach [*sic*] my years to retire, but still enjoy my job. I plan to continue a couple more.” Another teacher said, “I love my school and hope to be able to finish my career in education at this school.” Another respondent replied,

“yes, I only have one year left.” Another teacher noted that the “support from administration helps” continue their career.

Two respondents from the rural schools mentioned that they planned to further their education by pursuing other degrees. For example, one respondent stated, “I plan on achieving my doctorate one day.” Another rural teacher said, “I am continuing on [*sic*] my educational journey and seeking an Educational Specialist Certification.”

Rural school teachers also identified students as a reason they would stay in education. Many stated that teaching was fulfilling. In the words of one respondent, teaching is “a very rewarding job.” Another stated that they “want to be a positive impact on the children that I come into contact with. With some children, their teacher may be the only positive they have in life.” Another teacher said:

“I feel that as long as I enjoy what I do [*sic*] I have something to offer students and the community. Should my passion ever fade [*sic*] I would walk away immediately to ensure that a poor attitude did not impact the students around me.”

Several rural teachers also mentioned compensation in their responses about continuing their careers in education. In the words of one respondent, “You did it for the kids, not for the money.” While another teacher said, “this is an incredibly stressful job with very little compensation.” Another rural teacher noted that one reason they would not continue in education after retirement was because of the low compensation and lack of respect. One teacher said, “students and parents have



changed tremendously as well as the responsibilities of a teacher for the pay we receive isn't quite right though. It's getting harder to want to stay. My workplace doesn't really affect that [sic] though."

**Urban Schools.** Many urban teachers love the students and the community they serve. For example, one teacher shared, "I have a love for the students and families that I get to work with daily." Another replied, "I am happy in education and love my school." While another stated, "I love being with the kids at this school." A few teachers mentioned that the people they worked with were a draw for them to remain in education. In the words of one respondent, "I love the kids and people I work with." Another shared, "I enjoy collaborating with a team that has the same goal in mind to put the students [sic] need [sic] first."

Several responses referenced retirement as a factor in their decision to stay in the profession. One response was, "I'm not close to retirement". While others indicated that they were closer to retirement and staying to receive the most benefits. For example: "I am half way [sic] to retirement" was one response while another participant replied, "I have taught for 22 years and plan to retire from teaching at 27 or 30 years" and another "I only have one year left." Another teacher said:

"I have spent my entire career in... County with 25 years at my current school. I have a love for the students and families that I get to work with daily. I am actually teaching students whose parents I taught previously. The support from this community and families is overwhelming. I can't imagine being any where [sic] else."

Several other urban school teachers said that their happiness in their position was central to their decision to remain in the education profession. One teacher said, “I love being a teacher.” Another stated, “I love what I do.” One teacher who had left the profession and returned after several years said it was “the best choice I ever made.” Another teacher responded, “I am happy in the position I have now [*sic*] and I don’t foresee that changing.” Several teachers also expressed that it is what they felt called to do and could not imagine doing anything else. One urban school teacher also stated, “I enjoy my work. I feel like it is a calling, and I am where I need to be doing what I need to do.” Even though being a teacher has challenges, teachers said that it can be an enjoyable, rewarding, and fulfilling career. One teacher stated, “it is one of the most challenging jobs I have ever had [*sic*] but it is also the most rewarding job as well.” Another simply said, “[m]y job is very fulfilling.”

**Other Issues.** While question 13 allowed respondents to discuss other issues impacting job satisfaction, it generated a limited number of responses from participants. There were only three responses for this section from rural school teachers. One stated, “Low Pay[*sic*], Limited [*sic*] money for resources.” Another commented:

“Once a new teacher commented that she appreciated me staying after school to help with projects. I said I don’t even think about it, [*sic*] this school feels like home. When you love where you work, you want it [*sic*] be the best place. Cleaning, decorating [*sic*] and working after hours doesn’t feel like work.”

Finally, another rural teacher said, “I 100% attribute our success to the small school size; it is a family - NOT an institution.”

Only two urban school teachers responded to this question. One teacher commented on the current state of the teaching profession by saying, “[t]eachers as a whole are overworked, underpaid, micromanaged, and not compensated for many of the PD hours and time working from home.” The other urban teacher responded by saying:

“[my school] is the fourth school I have taught at in 13 years. It has the best atmosphere and culture I have ever experienced. Everyone has the same common goal - do what's best for our students. It is a culture, and no one has to be micromanaged to accomplish what is needed. Our community is very supportive as well [*sic*] and it shows in our student behavior.”

### ***Summary of Qualitative Findings***

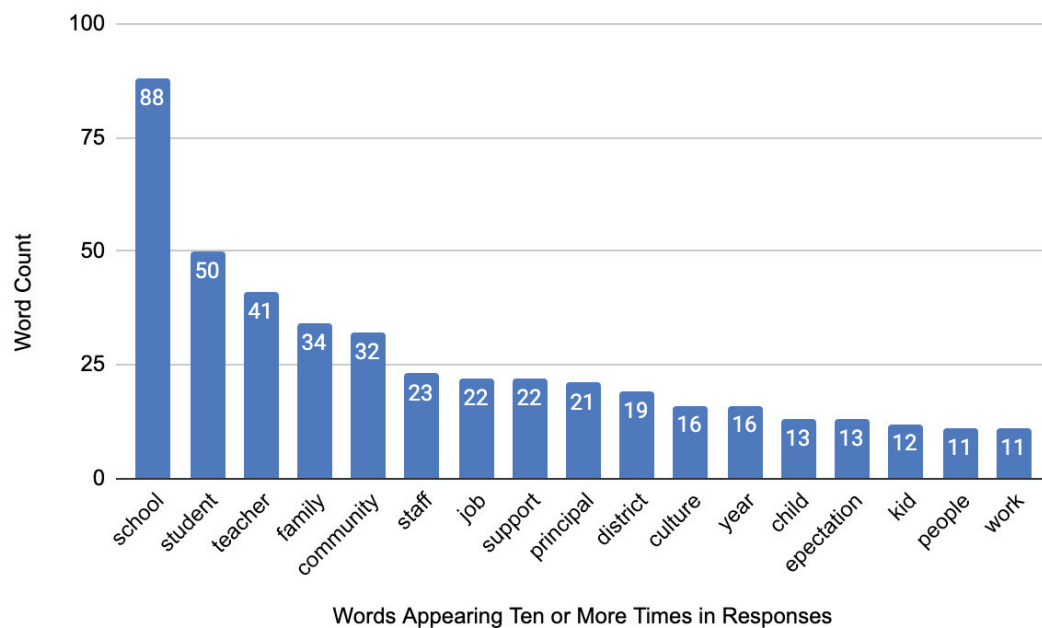
Using a qualitative survey with open-ended questions captured in-depth responses from rural and urban teacher participants. We utilized Atlas.ti to summarize the qualitative data collected from the Teacher Job Satisfaction Survey responses. The words most often included: school, student, teacher, family, staff, job, support, principal, district, culture, year, child, expectation, kid, people, and work.

A more detailed description of the word count can be found below in Figure 10. A threshold of 11 was used to identify words receiving more than 10 counts. This information provided a visual summary of the number of occurrences the words

appeared in participant quotations. All Teacher Job Satisfaction Survey data were recorded and saved in the Atlas.ti program.

**Figure 10**

*Word Frequency from Teacher Job Satisfaction Survey Responses*



The survey identified many factors that create job satisfaction among rural and urban teachers in Kentucky, with the most significant factor for both groups being school leadership. Urban teachers also valued relationships with colleagues. While rural teachers identified the culture, family atmosphere, and community as additional factors that created job satisfaction. When looking at the factors identified beyond school leadership, one can assume a close correlation between the presence of those factors and leadership.

School leadership has the power to create schools where teachers want to work and continue their careers. Leadership is uniquely positioned to directly impact job satisfaction by improving the working conditions for all staff. School leaders can set the tone for a family-like atmosphere where students are nurtured in a supportive learning environment. Leaders can create a safe working environment for staff where ideas are shared, and positive professional relationships exist. School leaders who extend these relationships into the community amplify their impact by building outside support for school initiatives that impact the success of students and the school.

Teachers working in schools with strong leadership and sound culture can have fulfilling and rewarding careers despite having challenging jobs. School leaders that require high but manageable expectations for all students and staff while providing the support needed to reach goals positively impact teacher working conditions. These types of school administrators lead by example and have respect for the people they serve while remaining focused on what is best for students.

Findings from the qualitative portion of the study provide a more in-depth understanding of the quantitative responses in the 2022 Impact Survey data. Qualitative findings described the high perception of job satisfaction among teachers working in the top elementary schools and specific characteristics of the leadership and culture in their schools. Even though we looked at rural and urban schools separately, survey responses about the leadership and culture in these schools were similar. Respondents agreed that supportive and attentive administrators are essential

to job satisfaction. Further, a school culture that promotes collaboration and community equates to higher job satisfaction regardless of whether a school is classified as rural or urban status. Qualitative responses supported the importance of leadership and culture in their schools and are congruent with the quantitative data.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Findings and Recommendations**

Students continue to suffer because of the national teacher shortage, and school leaders are searching for ways to solve the problem. Districts continue to feel the strain of finding qualified teachers to fill existing openings in traditional critical shortage areas, while vacancies in content areas that have not traditionally been difficult to fill are becoming harder to staff. The problem is compounded by an increase in vacancy rates due to the pandemic, those leaving the profession early, teachers choosing to retire as soon as eligible, and lowered enrollment in teacher preparation programs.

This study aimed to examine factors that create job satisfaction among teachers. We wanted to identify the reasons why some teachers make a long-term commitment to stay in the profession so that leaders can use that information to cultivate a school culture and leadership practices that contribute to favorable working conditions as part of their strategy to increase teacher retention. School and district leaders need insight into what teachers believe makes their school a great place to work, with the idea that these factors can be replicated in other school environments.

This chapter discusses findings as they relate to the body of research on the impact of leadership and culture on job satisfaction in rural and urban schools included in the study. Implications, limitations, delimitations, and assumptions of the

study are included. Recommendations are also provided for future research on teacher job satisfaction.

## **Conclusion**

### ***Quantitative Findings***

The quantitative portion of this mixed methods study indicated that school leadership and culture directly impact teacher job satisfaction. There was little difference between how rural and urban teachers view their workplace. The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How does data from the 2022 Impact Survey regarding the positive perception of workplace satisfaction compare in rural and urban elementary schools?
2. How do schools with high workplace satisfaction perceive the impact of school leadership and culture according to the 2022 Impact Survey?
3. How do the turnover percentages of rural and urban elementary schools that participated in the 2022 Impact Survey compare as identified in the KSRC?

**Finding One.** We hypothesized that there was no significant difference between rural and urban elementary schools 2022 Impact Survey Data when analyzing teacher job satisfaction. The analysis indicated a significant statistical difference in the 2022 Impact Survey data when comparing all rural and urban elementary schools as determined by a two-tailed independent t-test. We compared rural and urban schools using the 2022 Impact Survey data. All elementary schools had an average positive workplace perception of 65.16%. All rural elementary



schools had a positive workplace perception of 67.17%, and all urban elementary schools had a 63.40% positive workplace perception.

This picture shifted when looking at workplace perception for the top and bottom rural and urban elementary schools. The top 30 rural elementary schools had an average positive perception of 87.72%, and the top 30 urban elementary schools a positive perception of 80.72%. A significant difference was found in teacher job satisfaction when comparing the top 30 rural elementary schools with the bottom 30 rural elementary schools. Similarly, a significant difference was also found when comparing the top and bottom 30 urban schools. Teachers in the top 30 elementary schools in both rural and urban settings had significantly higher levels of teacher job satisfaction than those teachers in the bottom 30. Finally, a significant difference was found when comparing the bottom 30 rural and bottom 30 urban elementary schools.

When we narrowed the focus to compare the top five rural and top five urban elementary schools to all elementary schools from the study, we found a significant statistical difference in teacher job satisfaction. The top five rural elementary schools had a positive perception rate of 92.67%, and urban elementary schools had 88.71%.

**Finding Two.** We hypothesized that school leadership and culture were the most critical factors for teacher job satisfaction. After examining the nine themes from the 2022 Impact Survey, we confirmed that the themes with the highest average favorable response rates were associated with school leadership and culture. The Staff-Leadership Relationships (SLR) theme had the highest overall positive response

rate for elementary schools in the state at 78.73%. This was even higher among the top five rural and top five urban elementary schools, with a rate of 97.70%.

The theme of School Leadership (SL) came in a close fourth when looking at the statewide 2022 Impact Survey data, with a positive perception rate of 69.79% for all elementary schools. In contrast, the positive response rate for the top five rural and top five urban elementary schools in the state was 97.70%.

Finally, the School Climate (SC) theme, which aligned with school culture for the purposes of this study, ranked second highest among the top five rural and top five urban elementary schools, with a score of 96.20%. In contrast, statewide, the SC theme had the third highest percentage of positive response rate at 69.79%.

When considering the top five rural and top five urban and elementary schools, it is essential to remember that these schools have the highest job satisfaction in Kentucky, according to the 2022 Impact Survey. This data is relevant because the top themes for these schools are indicators of which factors may have the most impact on teacher job satisfaction.

**Finding Three.** As identified by the 2022 Impact Survey, there were 580 elementary schools statewide, with 271 categorized as rural and 309 categorized as urban. The turnover rate for all rural elementary schools in 2020, according to the KSRC, was 12.11%. The turnover rate for all urban elementary schools in 2020, according to the KSRC, was 14.89%. Based on the quantitative data available for this mixed methods study, teacher turnover in Kentucky elementary schools is slightly higher in urban schools than in rural schools and was significantly different.

The difference between the teacher turnover rate for the top 30 rural and urban schools and the bottom 30 rural and urban schools was not statistically significant. The rate of turnover for the top 30 rural schools was 13.20%, and 14.25% for the top 30 urban schools. Similarly, no significant difference existed in turnover between the bottom 30 rural and bottom 30 urban schools. The bottom 30 rural schools had a turnover rate of 13.72%, and the bottom 30 urban schools had a turnover rate of 17.10%. There were no significant differences when comparing the top 30 rural and bottom 30 rural schools' teacher turnover percentages. No significant difference existed between the top 30 and bottom 30 urban schools when considering teacher turnover percentages.

The teacher turnover rates from the top five rural and top five urban schools also showed no statistical difference. The top five rural elementary schools had a turnover rate of 9.68%; and the top five urban schools have a turnover rate of 12.10%. These data were similar to the statewide turnover rate of 13.61%.

### ***Qualitative Findings***

Consistent with our hypotheses, the qualitative portion of this study showed that school leadership and culture significantly impacted teacher job satisfaction, with few differences between teachers in rural and urban settings. We used the following guiding questions for the qualitative part of the study:

1. What is the teachers' perception of school culture in schools with high workplace satisfaction?

2. What is the perception of school administration in schools with high workplace satisfaction?
3. Is compensation a factor in teacher job satisfaction?
4. Do teachers from schools with high job satisfaction plan to remain in the profession? Why or why not?
5. Does being homegrown or an implant impact teacher job satisfaction?
6. Are the advantages and disadvantages of working in schools with high job satisfaction different for rural and urban teachers?
7. What are the factors impacting teacher job satisfaction in rural and urban schools?

Results indicated that the most influential factors in determining teacher job satisfaction included support from school administrators, collegial relationships, and a school with a family-like atmosphere. Additional factors that lead to job satisfaction included a caring culture, high expectations for student achievement, the students themselves, smaller class sizes, a safe work environment, feeling valued and respected, and support from parents and the community.

**Finding One.** The characteristics of schools with high workplace satisfaction include a caring atmosphere with a community or family feeling. One respondent shared:

“We are always supporting and helping one another. It is beneficial to know you can ask anyone for help no matter the issue [sic] and they will be right

there for you. This goes for anyone in the building. We are one big happy family.”

The positive culture at another school was identified by one respondent who stated that the school is “...full of caring, stable amazing people who value hard work, love people, value honesty/authenticity, and willing to do what it takes to make our school a place where children feel loved.” Additional qualities mentioned in survey responses included “positive attitudes,” “high expectations,” and staff with “the same values.” School leaders should consider these characteristics and qualities when recruiting and evaluating staff

Multiple participants referenced their school as a safe and comfortable environment where they felt like valued team members. One teacher’s comments emphasized a culture where “...teachers feel respected and supported make for happy teachers” and a culture where the staff leans on each other for assistance. These qualities are essential because they align with what teachers say impacts their satisfaction as an educator. Further, a team-oriented culture where everyone is viewed as a team member is important because staff feel their team will jump in and do anything necessary to help students.

**Finding Two.** Support from administrators was another consistent theme among the participants in the study. Responses from all schools with a high perception of workplace satisfaction indicated that administrative support was critical; and it was identified by all but one participant as essential to job satisfaction. One teacher signified the importance of leadership by identifying the administrator as

“the captain of the ship.” Another teacher stated, “Leadership sets the tone for the whole school.” Multiple other respondents mentioned their administrator’s work ethic, with one teacher identifying the importance of being “willing to do whatever it takes to keep our school running efficiently.” All survey responses elevated the role of the leader and the leader’s direct impact on teacher job satisfaction. Direct quotes about the support of the principal often reflected that the principal “has our back” and that leadership appreciated their work and values their expertise. One respondent said that a supportive leader “removes as many barriers as she can.”

Several other participants mentioned that high expectations for students and staff were important characteristics of their schools. One teacher commented, “The expectations are made clear to all students and staff.” Another identified a leader who can “...synthesize ideas into something attainable” as an important characteristic. Based on participant responses, schools taking part in this study seemed to be working toward a shared mission and goals. Other participants stated that their school and administration always did what was best for students.

**Finding Three.** Findings from the qualitative survey identified compensation as a concern. Even though the survey question asking about compensation as an issue yielded similar results, we felt it worth calling attention to the responses about teacher compensation in Kentucky. Participants echoed that there are significant differences in pay. Multiple respondents mentioned the disparities in teacher compensation from one district to another, especially regarding pay in rural districts compared to urban districts.

Overall, comments about low teacher pay substantiated the concern about teachers leaving the profession in Kentucky. One response indicated that pay is higher in neighboring states, impacting retention in school districts near border states: “[o]ur state pays less than surrounding states; educators are not compensated for the amount of time dedicated [*sic*]”. The previous comment supports Commissioner Glass's (2022) appeal for a higher standard of living for teachers. Another response called attention to a disparity in overall salary increases for critical shortage jobs when returning to work after the pandemic: “Pay has increased in the workforce due to the worker shortage (for example [*sic*] the fast food industry), however [*sic*] teachers and school personnel receive [*sic*] same pay as pre-pandemic.”

Other responses from participants who viewed compensation as a concern supported more equitable pay among school districts. The variance in salary schedules from district to district increases the risk of teachers leaving low-paying jobs for nearby districts offering more compensation and better benefits. One respondent stated that it is “disappointing to know I could be making significantly more per year within 30 minutes of my school. However, I love my school and just make due [*sic*] with the salary available.” Another participant claimed she could make \$20,000 more teaching in the neighboring urban district. However, even though teachers could be making more money working in larger districts, many still chose to work in a lower-paying district. One respondent shared, “I left a neighboring school district and lost \$10,000 from my salary in that move. I wanted to teach in the district where I lived and where my own children went to school.” Another response pointed

out that smaller districts lack funding sources for higher salaries and do not have teacher unions to secure those benefits.

**Finding Four.** We were surprised to find that all survey participants but one plan to stay in the profession as it was expected some participants would express their intent to leave. Teacher responses specified retirement as a factor for staying in the profession. One teacher said, “Currently, I am only 1 1/2 [*sic*] years from retirement.” The comments suggested that participants in this study are in teaching for the long haul and plan to retire from the profession. Retirement was referenced by teachers with all levels of experience, not just those close to eligibility. A teacher with less experience answered the question about intent to remain in the profession by stating, “Yes, because I’m not close to retirement.” Another teacher said that even though she could retire, she still enjoyed her job.

This finding supports data from the study conducted by Podolsky et al. (2016), which concluded that retirement benefits are one of the key factors in a teacher’s decision to stay or leave. This finding indicates that Kentucky legislators must support efforts to maintain teacher retirement benefits and continue state contributions to the pension system at full capacity. The current system offers more significant benefits to teachers who stay in one state’s retirement system, discouraging teachers from leaving to work in a nearby state.

**Finding Five.** Whether a teacher is from the same area as the school they are working in, also known as being “homegrown,” does not seem to be a significant factor. After the pilot survey, we were uncertain about including this question, but



ultimately decided to keep it to see if participants from urban and rural schools had different views on the importance of being homegrown.

As we expected, homegrown status was more of a factor in rural than urban school districts. Responses indicated that understanding the community and where the students come from is essential to student success. Having a good understanding of community was evident in the comment:

"I work at the elementary school in which I attended as a child; I currently teach with 6 [*sic*] colleagues that I formerly taught as students; there is definitely an atmosphere of personal pride when employees have such strong connections to the school."

More often, participants indicated that their school is welcoming and participants plan to remain in the profession. With upward trends in teacher job dissatisfaction, it is important for everyone to feel welcome. In the words of one respondent, "Everyone gets along and is welcoming to others no matter where they came from [*sic*]. Everyone in the school is always willing to help and get to know others and make them feel included and welcome in our environment."

Data collected from the survey question about being homegrown could be used to support "Grow-Your-Own Programs" in Kentucky, an initiative to recruit high school students into the teaching profession. The National Educators Rising supports the Teaching and Learning pathway in all 50 states. These programs aim to address the teacher shortage in Kentucky and increase diversity in the teacher workforce (Kentucky Department of Education, 2022).

**Finding Six.** As identified by participants, rural and urban elementary schools have similar advantages and disadvantages. Participants from rural and urban schools identified similar factors that create good places to work and factors that negatively impact teacher job satisfaction. Teachers also identified different disadvantages for their schools for rural and urban elementary schools.

***Advantages.*** As identified in this study, the benefits of working in rural and urban schools were almost identical. Teachers in rural schools cited knowing the school community as a benefit to working in a rural school. Multiple teachers from rural schools cited that knowing students and families was a benefit, with one respondent specifically stating that a benefit to working in a rural school is that you “know your students and their families.” This is consistent with other responses about the benefits of working in rural schools. Surprisingly, teachers from urban schools also mention this benefit. Urban participants cited similar benefits. Another benefit mentioned by both rural and urban teachers is class size. More urban school teachers referenced small class or school sizes as a benefit than rural school teachers. Rural and urban teachers mentioned the school community as a benefit of the school where they work.

***Disadvantages.*** Nearly every survey participant, regardless of whether they taught in a rural or urban school, identified insufficient resources as a disadvantage. Many teachers from the study simply stated that there was a lack of available resources. Other respondents referenced specific resources and their availability as an issue in their responses. While maybe not directly referring to school resources, one

teacher referenced that housing in their community was lacking – a resource issue potentially impacting turnover and/or job satisfaction. The identification of a lack of resources as a disadvantage was not surprising as it was consistent with the statewide results from the 2022 Impact Survey regarding the theme of Resources (R). This theme received the lowest overall score for all elementary school teachers – including the top five rural and top five urban elementary schools.

**Finding Seven.** We expected that the factors impacting teacher job satisfaction would be different for rural and urban teachers. However, the qualitative survey responses provided little evidence to support distinct differences in job satisfaction for teachers in rural and urban schools. Rural and urban school teachers cited similar factors that contributed to their satisfaction. As rural and urban elementary school teachers mentioned, school culture was one of the most important factors, second only to school leadership. One of the most notable differences between rural and urban teachers was that more urban school teachers recognized that the relationships with their colleagues were essential to their satisfaction. Rural teachers did not explicitly state collegial relationships. However, both rural and urban teachers recognized a “family like [*sic*] atmosphere” as essential to their satisfaction.

**Finding Eight.** Another finding from the study that we found interesting was that several respondents from urban schools felt that their schools were rural because of their size and location. Several participants from the urban elementary schools echoed the following comment from a respondent: “Working in a rural school is a different kind of poverty. I worked in an urban Title I school [*sic*] and the poverty

looked very different.” Another teacher from an urban school said, “[t]here are not many opportunities for housing and jobs in our rural community.”

The discrepancy between a school’s urban status and how teachers at urban schools perceived their status as rural could be due to how schools were categorized in this study or individual teachers’ perception of their school’s location. We could not find a listing of schools provided by the Kentucky Department of Education that definitively identified schools or districts as rural or urban. Therefore, the definition set by the U.S. Office of Budget and Management was used to categorize schools in this study.

### **Limitations, Delimitations, and Assumptions**

#### ***Limitations***

As with other research projects, this study had several limitations. The sample size was the first limitation. This study depended on the participation rates for both the quantitative and qualitative surveys. There were higher participation rates in the quantitative survey, which could be attributed to the fact that the 2022 Impact Survey is a statewide tool used as part of a school’s accountability measure. Qualitative data were limited by our access to teacher participants in the identified rural and urban schools. The protocol designed to disseminate the survey included one initial contact with each school principal to help them inform potential teacher participants about the goals and objectives of the study. After initial contact with the principal, we relied on the principal to forward the survey to their teachers on staff. There was no way for us to verify whether the principal sent the survey to all teachers, a specific group of

teachers, or the total number of teachers contacted. We could only verify the number of respondents. To further complicate the outreach protocol, some principals did not return calls and emails about the survey or simply refused to participate. These factors inhibited the ability to broadly reach out to teachers for their input as part of this study.

Another limitation involved possible bias of the source of the data. The data could be skewed based on the teachers who chose to respond to the survey. There was no way for us to know if the teachers who responded were unbiased toward their leadership, biased against leadership, or loyal to their leadership. To broaden the potential level of input, we used all participant responses rather than a random selection. Using all answers provided as much data as possible for the study. The total number of responses per school varied greatly. One urban school had as many as 15 responses, while one rural school only had two. Four rural and three urban schools were represented in the study; however, the total number of responses from rural and urban teachers was close to an equal representation of both. We used Atlas.ti to assist with coding data. Hand coding was also used to organize data in the appropriate categories. We worked together to complete this step and agree upon categories to eliminate as much bias as possible.

The format of the study could also be a limitation. We opted to use an online qualitative survey to generate authentic participant feedback, while making participation as convenient as possible for the respondents. However, lack of face-to-face interviews and could be a limitation. Question format may have also been a

limitation, as the expectation was for participants to respond to open-ended questions. This question type might have yielded more information if face-to-face interviews had been conducted and recorded.

### ***Delimitations***

One delimitation of this study was the focus on elementary schools, which narrowed the scope of the research. The decision to exclude middle and high schools from the study limited the scope of the findings. This study focused exclusively on job satisfaction of teachers at the elementary level, but it may have yielded different results at higher grade levels. Middle and high school teachers may have different perceptions of leadership and culture in their schools. Teachers at higher grade levels may also identify different characteristics about their schools that influence their job satisfaction and desire to continue teaching.

School selection is the second delimitation for this study. The top five rural and top five urban elementary schools were selected based on their 2022 Impact Survey results as having the highest perception of working conditions among elementary schools statewide. The data for these ten schools was identified and analyzed to provide a more thorough look at the workplace conditions of schools with a high perception of workplace satisfaction. Schools on the bottom of the spectrum were not surveyed or selected to participate in the qualitative research survey.

Another possible delimitation for this study was the focus on school leadership and culture. While the research questions seemed appropriate, a delimitation could have occurred because of the language and questions in the survey.

Finally, this research study could be difficult to replicate because other states may not use the instrument from Panorama to assess workplace satisfaction. To replicate this study in other states, they would have to administer the Panorama Working Conditions Survey and be able to access the data from the survey. The study sought to identify factors that influence job satisfaction in elementary schools in Kentucky, which made this study more manageable.

### ***Assumptions***

Like other studies that rely on a survey tool, an assumption built into this study was that the participants would answer the questions honestly. For the qualitative portion of the study, we guaranteed that the participants would remain anonymous. Additionally, we promised to protect the identity of the administrator(s) and the school name when reporting the results. Therefore, the respondents were believed to be honest when answering questions; and we trusted that the answers accurately depicted the leadership and culture in their school.

### **Recommendations**

District and school leaders throughout Kentucky would benefit from the results from this study. Knowing the factors that impact teacher job satisfaction could help administrative and school leaders transform schools into places where teachers are content, want to stay, and are interested in continuing to work in education. Leaders could apply the findings from this study to address factors that would improve the quality of the workplace(s) they oversee. Results from this study indicate that administrators would be most effective by identifying and implementing

improvements in school culture, leadership strategies, and resource planning.

Recommendations for district-level administration include addressing areas of need regarding the leadership and culture of individual schools and providing the support needed to improve working conditions.

All schools in Kentucky participate in the Impact Working Conditions Survey every other year and receive a report that can be used for quantitative analysis of conditions. As with this study, the qualitative survey could be used as a follow-up tool to the quantitative data analysis for a more in-depth look into teacher job satisfaction within each school. The qualitative survey could be administered in years alternating with the Impact Working Conditions Survey administered by Panorama.

The qualitative survey instrument from this study would yield results more specific to each school, providing school leaders with teacher perception of leadership and culture in their school. For this type of study to be beneficial, leaders must be open to seeking feedback from teachers on the factors that create workplace satisfaction. Self-reflection on current practices shows a leader's understanding of their role and its impact on teacher retention and school culture. We recommend having someone outside the school district facilitate this survey to optimize teacher participation, allowing them to feel safe when providing honest feedback.

In addition to efforts by leaders to improve a school work environment, teachers also have the ability to impact working conditions. For example, sharing results of the study with teachers would communicate that one of the top factors influencing job satisfaction was identified as collegial relationships. The importance



of feeling support from other teachers, working as a team, and being able to rely on colleagues for help builds a supportive work culture. One teacher working in schools with high workplace satisfaction reported “genuine respect and care among colleagues.” Teachers would benefit from knowing how they can improve working conditions and their impact on teacher attrition rates.

### **Future Actions**

The next steps for this survey would be to replicate the study with middle and high schools and explore whether those results find that the same factors significantly impact the working conditions and satisfaction of middle and high school teachers. This expanded information, in addition to data from the current study, could be used to create a toolkit to help administrators and school leaders cultivate environments that would increase workplace satisfaction.

Holding focus group interviews with teachers operating under top working conditions would expand detailed data about culture and leadership. These interviews would provide deeper insight into schools with high workplace satisfaction to see if there are additional factors identified by teachers that should be studied.

Finally, a survey for principals and assistant principals that gauges their job satisfaction and the factors that impact their level of satisfaction would be beneficial when trying to address school leadership turnover. Administrator turnover is an area that this study did not address, however we acknowledge it is another source of stress among public schools and school districts nationwide.

We plan to share the qualitative study results with the principals of the schools that participated in the study. Survey responses and data from the survey will also be shared with the principal whose school participated in the pilot study. All data will be provided to principals, and care will be used to remove all identifying information of participants.

**Reflection**

This study expanded the body of research on teacher retention related to job satisfaction in the workplace. Over the past several years, the narrative about education as a career has been incredibly damaging, leading to a mass exodus of high-quality teachers who felt they could no longer continue in education. Administrators and school leaders have an obligation to change that narrative by cultivating work environments that protect teachers and uphold the values of public education.

Administrators are critical when developing the culture of schools. School leaders have an obligation to set the stage for the culture in their schools in order to positively impact students and their achievement. For this, high quality, happy teachers are essential. Leaders can create the best offense by creating a school culture that puts relationships first. This includes relationships not only between teachers and students but, first and foremost, between administrators and teachers, and teachers and each other.

The answer is not to remove administrators that have not been able to impact the culture of their schools. The answer is to provide top-down support needed for

success. As teachers from the study stated numerous times, the support provided by their leader or administrator is one of the most important factors for job satisfaction, ultimately impacting culture and student achievement. Working together to create a culture of support, care, and collaboration is essential to improve the satisfaction of teachers, staff, parents, and stakeholders.

We learned that a positive perception of teacher job satisfaction is more likely in rural elementary schools than urban elementary schools. Urban teachers could be more likely to leave their school and district based on lower levels of reported teacher job satisfaction. The analysis of teacher turnover rates in rural and urban schools does not necessarily support this statement unless you look at all rural and urban elementary schools. The top five rural and top five urban elementary schools in terms of positive perception of teacher job satisfaction did not have significantly different turnover rates. The culture and leadership present in urban schools with high job satisfaction are attributed to the environment and the collaborative nature of the climate in which teachers work.

In rural schools, we know that teachers who associate a positive school climate and culture with a supportive administrator report high levels of job satisfaction. Like urban school teachers, rural teachers identify environments of collaboration that promote teamwork, respect, and understanding from the administration are all crucial to job satisfaction.

As a principal, I, Whitney Shannon Wilson, know that, based on this research, fiercely protecting, and promoting a culture of collaboration, shared leadership, and

support is essential for teacher job satisfaction. Teachers need to feel that their principal has their back and is willing to jump in and work side by side with them to help students succeed. Principals in rural schools need to know how to work collaboratively with staff to create great programs that are important to schools and communities that also promote respect for teachers and school staff. The study has confirmed for me that rural districts must do a better job of creating “grow-your-own” training opportunities that help students choose to become teachers. Homegrown teachers are essential to the success of rural schools that don’t have the competitive salary or perks of larger schools.

As a Recruitment Specialist, I, Edris Humphrey, have taken the research collected during this capstone project and applied it directly to my current role in an urban school district in Kentucky. The opportunity to share the factors that create job satisfaction for teachers with others on my team is an opportunity to help transform urban schools into places where teachers choose to work. We now know that key elements such as a school culture with a family-like atmosphere and principal support are essential to teacher job satisfaction in rural or urban settings. Talking about these factors with new teachers can help them select schools that fit them well, setting them up for success. Understanding these factors can help urban school leaders create environments similar to rural schools, where teachers experience higher levels of job satisfaction and want to remain in education. This research study can be applied to schools in other districts within or outside of Kentucky that face the challenges of recruiting and retaining qualified teachers.

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## Appendix A

### Urban and Rural School Districts in Kentucky

#### According to the Office of Budget and Management

#### Based on the 2010 U. S. Census Data and Definition of Core Counties

<b>Urban</b>	31. Warren	28. Gallatin	59. McCracken
1. Boone	32. Webster	29. Garrard	60. McCreary
2. Bourbon	33. Woodford	30. Graves	61. Menifee
3. Boyd	<b>Rural</b>	31. Grayson	62. Mercer
4. Bracken	1. Adair	32. Green	63. Metcalfe
5. Bullitt	2. Allen	33. Harlan	64. Monroe
6. Campbell	3. Anderson	34. Harrison	65. Montgomery
7. Christian	4. Ballard	35. Hart	66. Morgan
8. Clark	5. Barren	36. Hickman	67. Muhlenberg
9. Daviess	6. Bath	37. Hopkins	68. Nicholas
10. Edmonson	7. Bell	38. Jackson	69. Ohio
11. Fayette	8. Boyle	39. Jessamine	70. Owen
12. Grant	9. Breathitt	40. Johnson	71. Owsley
13. Greenup	10. Breckinridge	41. Knott	72. Perry
14. Hancock	11. Butler	42. Knox	73. Pike
15. Hardin	12. Caldwell	43. Laurel	74. Powell
16. Henderson	13. Calloway	44. Lawrence	75. Pulaski
17. Henry	14. Carlisle	45. Lee	76. Robertson
18. Jefferson	15. Carroll	46. Leslie	77. Rockcastle
19. Kenton	16. Carter	47. Letcher	78. Rowan
20. LaRue	17. Casey	48. Lewis	79. Russell
21. McLean	18. Clay	49. Lincoln	80. Simpson
22. Meade	19. Clinton	50. Livingston	81. Taylor
23. Nelson	20. Crittenden	51. Logan	82. Todd
24. Oldham	21. Cumberland	52. Lyon	83. Union
25. Pendleton	22. Elliott	53. Madison	84. Washington
26. Scott	23. Estill	54. Magoffin	85. Wayne
27. Shelby	24. Fleming	55. Marion	86. Whitley
28. Spencer	25. Floyd	56. Marshall	87. Wolfe
29. Trigg	26. Franklin	57. Martin	
30. Trimble	27. Fulton	58. Mason	

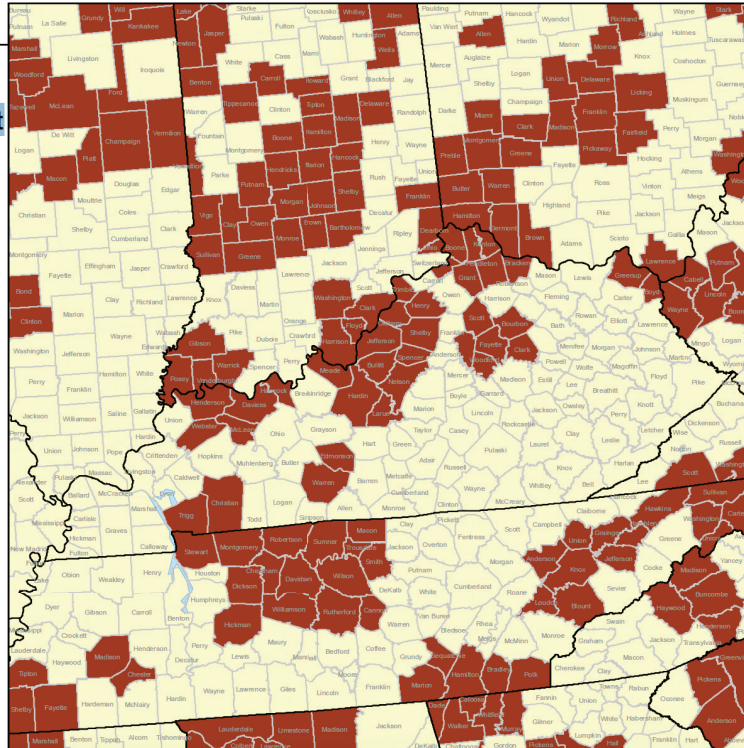
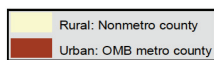
## Appendix B

### Kentucky Rural/Urban Map

Based on the Definition from the Office of Budget and Management

#### Kentucky

Rural definition based  
on Office of Management  
and Budget (OMB)  
metro counties



For more information on definitions,  
see documentation

*Note.* Economic Research Service, 2019

## Appendix C

## Kentucky District SEEK Allocation Sample

# KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## SEEK Calculations

District: 171 Fleming County - School Year: 2022 - 2023

Date Generated: September 27, 2022 12:57:00 PM

2022 - 2023 Tentative

SEEK INPUTS:					SEEK CALCULATION:			SEEK STATE CALCULATION:				
Assessment	\$	901,386,905	Prior Year End of Year AADA	2,075,153	Guaranteed Base *	\$	4,100	\$	8,508,127	Guaranteed Base *	\$	8,508,127
Per Pupil Assessment	\$	434,371	Growth	0.000	At Risk		400		829,633	At Risk		829,633
91-92 State Per Pupil Funding	\$	2,803.00	Prior Year AADA Plus Growth	2,075,153	Home & Hospital		7		15,324	Exceptional Child		1,600,517
Transportation (Unprorated)	\$	1,522,432	At Risk	1,348,996	Exceptional Child		771		1,600,517	Home & Hospital		15,324
Maximum Tier I Rate		43.9	Prior Year December 1 Child Count		Transportation		505		1,047,486	Limited English Proficiency		1,968
Levied Equivalent Rate		53.9	Low (Severe: Weight 2.35)	52	Limited English Proficiency		1		1,968	Hold Harmless		
Base Year Levied Equivalent Rate		55.0	Moderate (Moderate: Weight 1.17)	213	Calculated Base Funding	\$	5,784	\$	12,003,055	Prior Year Adjustment		0
Current Year Levied Equivalent Rate		53.9	High (Speech: Weight 0.24)	79	Less 30 Cent Local Effort		1,303		2,704,161	Adjustments **		0
Current Year Second Month Growth %		0.000	Prior Year Home & Hospital	3,831	Calculated State Portion	\$	4,481	\$	9,298,894	January Growth **		0
			Limited English Proficiency	5	Base Prorated Adjustment		0		0	4% Adjusted Assessment **		0
					Prior Year Adjustment		0		0	Negative Payment		0
					Adjusted State Portion	\$	4,481	\$	9,298,894	Less 30 Cent Local Effort		2,704,161
					State Tier I		516		1,071,491	Less Capital Outlay		207,515
					State Tier I Prorated Adjustment		0		0	Base Prorated Adjustment		0
					Adjusted Tier I	\$	516	\$	1,071,491	SEEK State Amount	\$	8,043,893
					Hold Harmless		0		0			
					January Growth **		0		0			
					4% Adjusted Assessment **		0		0			
					Adjustments **		0		0			
					Total State SEEK *	\$	4,997	\$	10,370,385			
					Unallocated Amount		0		0			
					Total State Funds		\$	10,370,385				
					Less Capital Outlay			207,515				
					Net General Fund SEEK		\$	10,162,870				

\* CAPITAL OUTLAY in the amount of \$207,515.00 is included in the total guaranteed base.

\*\* These line items are totaled in the "Adjustment to Appropriation" column on the SEEK Output spreadsheet.

Division of District Support  
4th Floor  
300 Sower Blvd  
Frankfort, KY 40601

Statewide Equalization is \$1,016,000.00.

Support Education Excellence in Kentucky

Page 58 of 171

*Note.* This is an example of the most up-to-date SEEK calculation for a Kentucky public school district, Fleming County. Districts may use the sample SEEK calculations to estimate allocations and prepare budgets.

## Appendix D

### 2022 Impact Kentucky Working Conditions Survey Questions

*The Impact Kentucky Teacher Survey, formerly the TELL Kentucky Working Conditions Survey, is your opportunity as a certified educator to anonymously elevate your voice. Please note that this survey is intended for all certified educators within your school building. Please note that these surveys are completely anonymous, and no one can trace your responses back to you.*

#### Teaching Environment

*In this first section, please give us your perceptions of your teaching environment, both inside your classroom and at your school more generally.*

1. On most days, how enthusiastic are the students about being at school?

Answer Choices:

- Not at all enthusiastic
- Slightly enthusiastic
- Somewhat enthusiastic
- Quite enthusiastic
- Extremely enthusiastic

2. When new initiatives to improve teaching are presented at your school, how supportive are your colleagues?

Answer Choices:

- Not at all supportive
- Slightly supportive
- Somewhat supportive
- Quite supportive
- Extremely supportive

3. How optimistic are you that your school will improve in the future?

Answer Choices:

- Not at all optimistic
- Slightly optimistic
- Somewhat optimistic
- Quite optimistic
- Extremely optimistic

4. How supportive are students in their interactions with each other?

Answer Choices:

- Not at all supportive
- Slightly supportive
- Somewhat supportive
- Quite supportive
- Extremely supportive

5. To what extent are teachers trusted to teach in the way they think is best?

Answer Choices:

- Not trusted at all
- Trusted a little bit
- Trusted somewhat
- Trusted quite a bit
- Trusted a tremendous amount

6. How positive are the attitudes of your colleagues?

Answer Choices:

- Not at all positive
- Slightly positive
- Somewhat positive
- Quite positive
- Extremely positive

7. How often do you see students helping each other without being prompted?

Answer Choices:

- Almost never
- Once in a while
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- Almost all the time

8. Overall, how positive is the working environment at your school?

Answer Choices:

- Not at all positive
- Slightly positive
- Somewhat positive
- Quite positive
- Extremely positive

### **Professional Learning**

*In this section, we would like to learn about your opportunities for learning and growth at your school.*

9. At your school, how valuable are the available professional development opportunities?

Answer Choices:

- Not at all valuable
- Slightly valuable
- Somewhat valuable
- Quite valuable
- Extremely valuable

10. How often do you receive feedback on your teaching?

Answer Choices:

- Almost never
- Once in a while
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- Almost always

11. How helpful are your colleagues' ideas for improving your teaching?

Answer Choices:

Not at all helpful  
Slightly helpful  
Somewhat helpful  
Quite helpful  
Extremely helpful

12. At your school, how thorough is the feedback you receive in covering all aspects of your role as a teacher?

Answer Choices:

Not at all thorough  
Slightly thorough  
Somewhat thorough  
Quite thorough  
Extremely thorough

13. How much input do you have into individualizing your own professional development opportunities?

Answer Choices:

Almost no input  
A little bit of input  
Some input  
Quite a bit of input  
A tremendous amount of input

14. Through working at your school, how many new teaching strategies have you learned?

Answer Choices:

Almost no strategies  
A few strategies  
Some strategies  
Many strategies  
A great number of strategies

15. How useful do you find the feedback you receive on your teaching?

Answer Choices:

Not at all useful  
Slightly useful  
Somewhat useful  
Quite useful  
Extremely useful

16. Overall, how much do you learn about teaching from the leaders at your school?

Answer Choices:

Learn almost nothing  
Learn a little bit  
Learn some  
Learn quite a bit  
Learn a tremendous amount

17. How much feedback do you receive on your teaching?

Answer Choices:

- No feedback at all
- A little bit of feedback
- Some feedback
- Quite a bit of feedback
- A tremendous amount of feedback

18. How often do your professional development opportunities help you explore new ideas?

Answer Choices:

- Almost never
- Once in a while
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- Almost all the time

19. How relevant have your professional development opportunities been to the content that you teach?

Answer Choices:

- Not at all relevant
- Slightly relevant
- Somewhat relevant
- Quite relevant
- Extremely relevant

20. How much do you learn from the teacher evaluation processes at your school?

Answer Choices:

- Learn almost nothing
- Learn a little bit
- Learn some
- Learn quite a bit
- Learn a tremendous amount

21. Overall, how supportive has the school been of your growth as a teacher?

Answer Choices:

- Not at all supportive
- Slightly supportive
- Somewhat supportive
- Quite supportive
- Extremely supportive

### **Leadership**

*In this section, we would like your feedback on the leadership at your school.*

22. How positive is the tone that school leaders set for the culture of the school?

Answer Choices:

- Not at all positive
- Slightly positive
- Somewhat positive
- Quite positive
- Extremely positive



23. How friendly are your school leaders toward you?

Answer Choices:

Not at all friendly

Slightly friendly

Somewhat friendly

Quite friendly

Extremely friendly

24. For your school leaders, how important is teacher satisfaction?

Answer Choices:

Not important at all

Slightly important

Somewhat important

Quite important

Extremely important

25. How confident are you that your school leaders have the best interests of the school in mind?

Answer Choices:

Not at all confident

Slightly confident

Somewhat confident

Quite confident

Extremely confident

26. Overall, how positive is the influence of the school leaders on the quality of your teaching?

Answer Choices:

Not at all positive

Slightly positive

Somewhat positive

Quite positive

Extremely positive

27. How much trust exists between school leaders and faculty?

Answer Choices:

Almost no trust

A little bit of trust

Some trust

Quite a bit of trust

A tremendous amount of trust

28. How effectively do school leaders communicate important information to teachers?

Answer Choices:

Not at all effectively

Slightly effectively

Somewhat effectively

Quite effectively

Extremely effectively

29. When you face challenges at work, how supportive are your school leaders?

Answer Choices:

- Not at all supportive
- Slightly supportive
- Somewhat supportive
- Quite supportive
- Extremely supportive

30. How knowledgeable are your school leaders about what is going on in teachers' classrooms?

Answer Choices:

- Not knowledgeable at all
- Slightly knowledgeable
- Somewhat knowledgeable
- Quite knowledgeable
- Extremely knowledgeable

31. At your school, how motivating do you find working with the leadership team?

Answer Choices:

- Not at all motivating
- Slightly motivating
- Somewhat motivating
- Quite motivating
- Extremely motivating

32. How responsive are school leaders to your feedback?

Answer Choices:

- Not at all responsive
- Slightly responsive
- Somewhat responsive
- Quite responsive
- Extremely responsive

33. How much do your school leaders care about you as an individual?

Answer Choices:

- Do not care at all
- Care a little bit
- Care somewhat
- Care quite a bit
- Care a tremendous amount

34. How respectful are your school leaders towards you?

Answer Choices:

- Not at all respectful
- Slightly respectful
- Somewhat respectful
- Quite respectful
- Extremely respectful

35. How clearly do your school leaders identify their goals for teachers?

Answer Choices:

- Not at all clearly
- Slightly clearly
- Somewhat clearly
- Quite clearly
- Extremely clearly

36. When challenges arise in your personal life, how understanding are your school leaders?

Answer Choices:

- Not at all understanding
- Slightly understanding
- Somewhat understanding
- Quite understanding
- Extremely understanding

37. When the school makes important decisions, how much input do teachers have?

Answer Choices:

- Almost no input
- A little bit of input
- Some input
- Quite a bit of input
- A tremendous amount of input

38. How fairly does the school leadership treat the faculty?

Answer Choices:

- Not fairly at all
- Slightly fairly
- Somewhat fairly
- Quite fairly
- Extremely fairly

### **Educating All Students**

*In this section, please give us your sense of working with different populations of students.*

39. How often do teachers use assessment data to inform their instruction?

Answer Choices:

- Almost never
- Once in a while
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- Almost all the time

40. How easy do you find interacting with students at your school who are from a different cultural background than your own?

Answer Choices:

Not at all easy

Slightly easy

Somewhat easy

Quite easy

Extremely easy

41. How comfortable would you be incorporating new material about people from different backgrounds into your curriculum?

Answer Choices:

Not at all comfortable

Slightly comfortable

Somewhat comfortable

Quite comfortable

Extremely comfortable

42. How knowledgeable are you regarding where to find resources for working with students who have unique learning needs?

Answer Choices:

Not knowledgeable at all

Slightly knowledgeable

Somewhat knowledgeable

Quite knowledgeable

Extremely knowledgeable

43. If students from different backgrounds struggled to get along in your class, how comfortable would you be intervening?

Not at all comfortable

Slightly comfortable

Somewhat comfortable

Quite comfortable

Extremely comfortable

44. How easy would it be for you to teach a class with groups of students from very different religions from each other?

Answer Choices:

Not at all easy

Slightly easy

Somewhat easy

Quite easy

Extremely easy

45. In response to events that might be occurring in the world, how comfortable would you be having conversations about race with your students?

Answer Choices:

Not at all comfortable

Slightly comfortable

Somewhat comfortable

Quite comfortable

Extremely comfortable

46. How comfortable would you be having a student who could not communicate well with anyone in class because his/her home language was unique?

Answer Choices:

Not at all comfortable

Slightly comfortable

Somewhat comfortable

Quite comfortable

Extremely comfortable

47. How often do adults at your school have important conversations about sensitive issues of diversity, even when they might be uncomfortable?

Answer Choices:

Almost never

Once in a while

Sometimes

Frequently

Almost always

48. When a sensitive issue of diversity arises in class, how easily can you think of strategies to address the situation?

Answer Choices:

Not at all easily

Slightly easily

Somewhat easily

Quite easily

Extremely easily

49. When it comes to promoting culturally responsive practices, how helpful are your colleagues' ideas for improving your practice?

Answer Choices:

Not at all helpful

Slightly helpful

Somewhat helpful

Quite helpful

Extremely

### **Resources**

*In this section, please let us know about the quantity and quality of your school's resources.*

50. To what extent does the quality of the resources at your school need to improve?

Answer Choices:

- Does not need to improve at all
- Needs to improve a little bit
- Needs to improve some
- Needs to improve quite a bit
- Needs to improve a tremendous amount

51. When students need help from an adult, how often do they have to wait to get that help?

Answer Choices:

- Almost never
- Once in a while
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- Almost all the time

52. At your school, how crowded do the learning spaces feel?

Answer Choices:

- Not at all crowded
- Slightly crowded
- Somewhat crowded
- Quite crowded
- Extremely crowded

53. How urgently does your school's technology need to be updated?

Answer Choices:

- Not at all urgently
- Slightly urgently
- Somewhat urgently
- Quite urgently
- Extremely urgently

54. How often do your school's facilities need repairs?

Answer Choices:

- Almost never
- Once in a while
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- Almost all the time

55. For students who need extra support, how difficult is it for them to get the support that they need?

Answer Choices:

- Not at all difficult
- Slightly difficult
- Somewhat difficult
- Quite difficult
- Extremely difficult

56. How much of your own money do you spend on your classroom?

Answer Choices:

Almost none

A little bit

Some

Quite a bit

A tremendous amount

57. How important is it for your school to hire more specialists to help students?

Answer Choices:

Not important at all

Slightly important

Somewhat important

Quite important

Extremely important

58. How many more resources do you need to adequately support your students' learning?

Answer Choices:

Almost no resources

A few more resources

Several more resources

Quite a few more resources

A lot more resources

59. Overall, how much does your school struggle due to a lack of resources?

Answer Choices:

Does not struggle at all

Struggles a little bit

Struggles some

Struggles quite a bit

Struggles a tremendous amount

60. To what extent does the access to instructional technology, including computers, printers, software and Internet access at your school need to improve?

Answer Choices:

Does not need to improve at all

Needs to improve a little bit

Needs to improve some

Needs to improve quite a bit

Needs to improve a tremendous amount

### **Managing Student Behavior**

*In this section, please share how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.*

61. How effective are the school leaders at developing rules for students that facilitate their learning?

Answer Choices:

Not at all effective

Slightly effective

Somewhat effective

Quite effective

Extremely effective

62. How respectful are the relationships between teachers and students?

Answer Choices:

Not at all respectful

Slightly respectful

Somewhat respectful

Quite respectful

Extremely respectful

63. How effective do you think you are at managing disruptive classes?

Answer Choices:

Not at all effective

Slightly effective

Somewhat effective

Quite effective

Extremely effective

64. How well do school administrators support teachers' classroom management efforts?

Answer Choices:

Not at all well

Slightly well

Somewhat well

Quite well

Extremely well

65. How often does student misconduct disrupt the learning environment at your school?

Answer Choices:

Almost never

Once in a while

Sometimes

Frequently

Almost all the time

66. Overall, how safe is the school environment?

Not at all safe

Slightly safe

Somewhat safe

Quite safe

Extremely safe



**Emotional Well-Being & Belonging**

*Please share your perspective about your emotional well-being and that of your colleagues as it relates to your work.*

67. How effective do you feel at your job right now?

Answer Choices:

Not at all effective

Slightly effective

Somewhat effective

Quite effective

Extremely effective

68. How concerned are you about the emotional well-being of your colleagues as a result of their work?

Answer Choices:

Not at all

A little

Some

Quite a bit

A great deal

69. How concerned are you about your own emotional well-being as a result of your work?

Answer Choices:

Not at all

A little

Some

Quite a bit

A great deal

70. Overall, how much do you feel like you belong at your school?

Answer Choices:

Do not belong at all

Belong a little bit

Belong somewhat

Belong quite a bit

Completely belong

**Background Information**

*For this section, we would like to know a bit of voluntary background information about you so that we can describe the types of educators who completed the survey. Please note that this remains anonymous and no one will be able to connect your responses back to you. These responses are combined with the responses of other educators and are only included in reports if a minimum of 10 responses in a group is received.*

71. What is your primary role?

Answer Choices:

Teacher

Principal

Assistant Principal

Other Education Professional (School Counselor, School Psychologist, Social Worker, etc.)

72. For how many years have you taught?

Answer Choices:

0-4 years

5-10 years

11-20 years

More than 20 years

73. How many years have you worked in this district?

Answer Choices:

0-4 years

5-10 years

11-20 years

More than 20 years

74. For how many years have you taught at your current school?

Answer Choices:

0-4 years

5-10 years

11-20 years

More than 20 years

75. What is your gender?

Answer Choices:

Female

Male

76. What is your race or ethnicity?

Answer Choices:

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian

Black or African American

Hispanic or Latino

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

White

Two or More Races/Ethnicities

Other

77. What grade span do you primarily teach?

Answer Choices:

Primary (Pre-K - Grade 3)

Intermediate (Grades 4-5)

Middle School (Grades 6-8)

Secondary (Grades 9-12)

78. What type of teacher preparation program did you complete?

Answer Choices:

Traditional

Alternative

Other

## **Appendix E**

### **Survey Questions**

1. Selecting "Agree to participate" below indicates that you have read the above information and you voluntarily agree to participate in the survey. If you do not wish to participate, please select "Decline participation."
2. Did you participate in the 2022 Impact Kentucky Working Conditions Survey administered in the Fall of 2021?
3. Were you employed at this school during the 2021-2022 school year?
4. How many years have you taught at your current school?
5. How many years have you been a teacher?
6. What factors have the most impact on your job satisfaction as a teacher?
7. What are the benefits and/or disadvantages of working in a rural/urban school?
8. Is compensation an issue for you as a teacher in a rural/urban school?
9. Is being homegrown (or transplanted) an issue for you as a teacher in a rural/urban school?
10. Does the culture of your school (philosophy, ideology, values, assumptions, beliefs, expectations, attitudes, and norms) have an impact on your job satisfaction?
11. As a teacher, does the leadership (principal/assistant principal) at your school impact your job satisfaction?
12. Do you plan to continue your career in education? Why or why not?

13. Are there any other issues you would like to discuss?
14. Would you consent to additional contact from one of the researchers conducting this study by phone, email, or virtually if they have further questions about your responses? (If the answer is yes, participants will be asked to provide their Name and Email Address)

## Appendix F

### Principal Email for Information Regarding the Study

Good morning \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for speaking with me this morning and congratulations to \_\_\_\_\_ Elementary School being the one of the top \_\_\_\_\_ elementary school for working conditions on the 2021 Kentucky Impact Survey.

This is a small snapshot of your results as a school:

Elementary School	District	Overall Impact Results Mean % Favorable	SD	Status

Impact Themes:

These themes include educating all students (EAS), emotional well-being and belonging (EWB), feedback and coaching (FC), managing student behavior (MSB), professional learning (PL), resources (R), school climate (SC), school leadership (SL), and staff-leadership relationships (SLR).

Schools	EAS	EWB	FC	MSB	PL	R	SC	SL	SLR	Mean (SD)

I am \_\_\_\_\_ (role) at a (Jefferson/Fleming) in (location, Kentucky. My research partner \_\_\_\_\_ and I are completing a Doctorate in P-12 Administrative Leadership at Morehead State University. Our study is a joint capstone that is focused on teacher job satisfaction and how leadership positively impacts school culture.

We are conducting a qualitative survey designed to take a closer look at the factors that create job satisfaction for teachers in rural and urban elementary schools in Kentucky. We would really like to learn what you do at \_\_\_\_\_ that has a positive impact on teacher working conditions. This data will be valuable to educators and leaders.

The survey is a basic Google Form that will take teachers approximately 30 minutes to complete, any certified staff member in your school can participate.

This is the link to the survey:

I can email the teachers at your school the survey, but I wanted to make sure they know that it is coming and to check their junk email box in case it would happen to be delivered there. Your help relaying to teachers' information about why they are being asked to participate would be great. I have also attached the informed consent for you to take a look at.

If it is ok with you, I can push the survey out on Monday, October 24<sup>th</sup>.

Thanks for your help!

## Appendix G

### Teacher Survey Participation Email

Subject: Teacher Job Satisfaction

Importance: High

Congratulations\_\_\_\_\_ Teachers:

You are receiving this email because your school is one of the top five rural or urban elementary schools in the state with the highest perception of job satisfaction based on the 2022 Impact Kentucky Workplace Conditions Survey. This is an amazing achievement and I hope to be able to help other schools throughout the state learn why your school has great working conditions.

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, I am \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ I. My research partner \_\_\_\_\_ and I are completing a Doctorate in P-12 Administrative Leadership at Morehead State University. Our capstone focuses on teacher job satisfaction and how leadership positively impacts school culture. The purpose of our survey is to take a closer look at the factors that create job satisfaction for teachers in rural and urban elementary schools in Kentucky.

We value your time and understand that everyone is busy, but we would greatly appreciate your help. The survey should take approximately 30 minutes. All survey information will be kept confidential, and your responses will remain anonymous. The link to the survey is below and will be open through November 11, 2022.

\_\_\_\_\_ Elementary School Google Survey:

Please feel free to reach out to me at school or using my personal email and phone below:

Thanks again,



## **Appendix H**

### **Informed Consent**

#### **Informed Consent for Teachers from Schools with High Perception of Workplace Satisfaction**

Research Study Title: Exploring the Relationships between Job Satisfaction and Teacher Retention Among Rural and Urban Kentucky Elementary School Teachers

About the Researchers:

Edris Barnette Humphrey is a doctoral candidate at Morehead State University and is employed as a Recruitment Specialist for Jefferson County Public Schools in Louisville, Kentucky.

Whitney Shannon Wilson is a doctoral candidate at Morehead State University and is the Principal at Simons Middle School in Flemingsburg, Kentucky.

The purpose of this research is to explore the relationship between teacher job satisfaction and retention in rural and urban elementary schools in Kentucky. The researchers will complete a mixed methods study to identify the reasons teachers remain employed in their schools. The research will be an in-depth study into the factors that impact teacher job satisfaction, how job satisfaction relates to school leadership and culture, and a summarization of the responses of rural and urban teachers to identify similarities and differences.

You are invited to participate in this research project because your school has one of the highest perceptions of workplace satisfaction in Kentucky, as determined by the 2022 Impact Kentucky Working Conditions Survey. Any certified staff member working at your school is eligible to participate. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose to participate, you can withdraw at any time.

The survey includes 14 items, eight of which are open-ended questions. The survey will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. You are free to skip any questions which you do not feel comfortable answering. If you agree to additional contact after you have completed the survey, the researchers may reach out to you through the provided email address.

All answers to the questions you provide to the researchers will be kept confidential. Care will be taken to ensure that your responses remain anonymous, and

that no personally identifiable information is used. You assume no risks in participating in the study. The study will benefit schools and school leaders by helping them understand your work environment and those things that positively impact your job satisfaction.

The results from this study will be used for scholarly purposes. The information from the survey may be shared with Morehead State Representatives and will be part of the capstone project for which the survey is being conducted. Information from the study will be stored on the researchers' personal computers and cloud technology.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Edris Barnette Humphrey at [edris.humphrey@gmail.com](mailto:edris.humphrey@gmail.com) or [whitneyshannonwilson@gmail.com](mailto:whitneyshannonwilson@gmail.com). The Morehead State University IRB Board has reviewed this research study. The MSU IRB procedures for research involving human subjects will be followed.


By proceeding with the survey, you agree that:

- you have read the above information;
- you voluntarily agree to participate;

If you do not wish to participate in the research study, please do not proceed with the survey.

## Appendix I

## Morehead State University IRB Approval Letter

MSU Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research NOTIFICATION OF EXEMPT PROTOCOL REVIEW			
<b>Principal Investigator/Researcher</b>			
First Name	Whitney	Last Name	Wilson
		Title:	Student-Doctoral
Campus Address			Campus Phone: (606) 782-0139
E-Mail:	whitneyshannonwilson@gmail.com		
Department:	Foundational & Grad Studies in Ed		
CITI Trainin	Yes	Date Completed	06/12/2020
Other Personnel		Other Personn	
<div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; padding: 2px;">Michael Kessinger</div>			
<div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; padding: 2px;">Edris Humphrey</div>			
<b>Purpose:</b>			
Title of Project/Course: EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB SATISFACTION AND TEACHER RETENTION AMONG RURAL AND URBAN KENTUCKY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS			
Funding Source/Agenc		NA	
Protocol Review Num		22-09-29	
The human subject use protocol described above has been reviewed by the MSU Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research with the following results:			
The IRB determined the project, as stated, is exempt based on federal regula 46.101 (4)			
Federal regulations require that the IRB be notified if anything in the research changes, as additional review may be necessary.			
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved, may proceed as write			
Begin Dat		9 /14/2022    End Dat    9 /13/2028	
In accordance with new procedures instituted by the IRB, and because your study is exempt, you are not required to complete continuation or final review reports. However, it is your responsibility to notify the IRB prior to making any changes to the study. Please note that changes made to an exempt protocol may disqualify it from exempt status and may require an expedited or convened review. Your exempt protocol is approved for six years. At the end of six years the protocol will close and interaction with human subjects must cease. If you would like to continue your project, you must submit a new exemption application and have it approved before the project can continue.			
N/A		Regulatory requirements have been met for the waiver of documentation of cons	
N/A		Regulatory requirements have been met for the waiver of informed consent	
N/A		Criteria for use of children has been met	
Signed: 		Date: 09/14/22	
Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Resear			
Please refer to the protocol review number in any future references to this protocol. If any revisions are made to a project or if any unforeseen risks arise during an investigation, the principal investigator must submit Form H to the IRB, fully explaining all changes or unexpected risks.			

**MSU Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research  
NOTIFICATION OF EXEMPT PROTOCOL REVIEW**

pc: Protocol Fi

**Appendix J****Follow-Up Email for Teacher Survey Participation**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I want to extend my sincere thanks to you for helping with my study. I appreciate you sharing our survey and hope you will extend my appreciation to your amazing staff. As we approach Thanksgiving Break, I want you to know that I plan to leave the study open through next week, November 26<sup>th</sup>. I would love to hear from any other certified staff in your school if they haven't already responded. The link is below.

I know that you have great things going on at your school from the responses that I have received, and I cannot wait to showcase them. Upon the defense and approval of our study, I will share staff responses with you so you can enjoy the amazing things that your staff have said about you and your school.

I hope you have a great week. Thank you again for being a rockstar principal! If there is ever anything I can do to help you, I would be honored.

Best,

Edris Humphrey  
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## Appendix K

### Top 30 Rural Elementary Schools with the Highest Perception Data from the 2022 Impact Survey & 2020 KSRC Turnover Percentage

Elementary School	District	N	M % Favorable	SD	Turnover
Bowen Elementary School	Powell County	20	94.33	7.35	21.40
Whitley County East Elementary School	Whitley County	26	93.44	4.98	15.00
Porter Elementary School	Johnson County	25	92.89	9.37	0
Gamaliel Elementary School	Monroe County	19	91.44	9.26	0
Phelps Elementary School	Pike County	25	91.22	8.03	12.00
Boston Elementary School	Whitley County	16	90.89	4.43	23.50
South Magoffin Elementary School	Magoffin County	12	89.56	11.84	15.40
Cub Run Elementary School	Hart County	19	89.33	3.46	12.50
Mckee Elementary School	Jackson County	32	89.33	10.74	4.20
Sublimity Elementary School	Laurel County	26	88.89	9.31	10.00
Feds Creek Elementary School	Pike County	13	88.67	11.06	0
Pride Elementary School	Hopkins County	33	88.33	9.84	8.00
Grapevine Elementary School	Hopkins County	30	88.00	6.87	12.00
Tygart Creek Elementary School	Carter County	18	87.89	5.95	8.00
Auburn Elementary School	Logan County	36	87.89	7.84	5.60
Hacker Elementary School	Clay County	24	87.56	8.95	4.50
G R Hampton Elementary School	Knox County	22	87.44	13.11	23.80
Oak Hill Elementary School	Pulaski County	38	87.11	7.91	2.90
Legrande Elementary School	Hart County	25	86.22	9.24	11.10
Stanton Elementary School	Powell County	15	86.00	11.88	26.90
Southern Elementary School	Pulaski County	52	85.56	6.46	13.60
Dewitt Elementary School	Knox County	14	85.33	16.00	26.70
Salem Elementary School	Russell County	33	85.00	8.51	6.70
Bevins Elementary School	Pike County	13	84.67	15.97	14.30
Central Elementary School	Johnson County	22	84.44	9.34	10.30
Wrigley Elementary School	Morgan County	27	84.44	12.29	50.00
Robert W Combs Elementary School	Perry County	27	84.33	5.98	4.30
Corbin Elementary School	Whitley County	25	83.89	9.89	19.20

Farmington Elementary School	Graves County	18	83.89	10.56	17.40
Hiseville Elementary School	Barren County	25	83.67	9.75	16.70
		<b>N</b>	<b>M % Favorable</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Turnover</b>
<b>Top 30 Rural Elementary Schools</b>		<b>730</b>	<b>87.72</b>	<b>3.01</b>	<b>13.20</b>
<b>Rural Elementary Schools*</b>		<b>7467</b>	<b>67.17</b>	<b>12.60</b>	<b>12.11</b>
<b>Kentucky Elementary Schools*</b>		<b>17026</b>	<b>65.16</b>	<b>12.02</b>	<b>13.61</b>

\* Data only included for schools that met minimum reporting requirements

## Appendix L

### Top 30 Urban Elementary Schools with the Highest Perception

#### Data from the 2022 Impact Survey & 2020 KSRC Turnover Percentage

Elementary School	District	N	M % Favorable	SD	Turnover
Ft. Wright Elementary School	Kenton County	29	91.44	8.11	17.10
Meadowthorpe Elementary School	Fayette County	40	89.44	4.25	2.90
Whitesville Elementary School	Daviess County	26	88.44	11.35	14.30
Eastern Elementary School	Henry County	15	87.44	11.02	21.40
Calhoun Elementary School	McLean County	26	86.78	9.05	4.80
Johnsontown Road Elementary School	Jefferson County	25	86.22	9.48	8.00
Sinking Fork Elementary School	Christian County	35	86.11	9.61	17.90
Spottsville Elementary School	Henderson County	39	85.33	7.47	14.30
South Heights Elementary School	Henderson County	37	81.78	10.54	16.70
Greysbranch Elementary School	Greenup County	24	81.22	17.01	48.40
Farmer Elementary School	Jefferson County	45	80.89	9.05	4.10
Kenwood Elementary School	Jefferson County	41	80.44	12.85	8.80
Greenwood Elementary School	Jefferson County	22	80.33	14.39	13.30
Donald E. Cline Elementary School	Campbell County	29	80.22	13.11	8.30
Country Heights Elementary School	Daviess County	29	79.11	10.04	12.90
Dishman McGinnis Elementary School	Warren County	28	78.78	12.97	18.40
Bowen Elementary School	Jefferson County	34	78.56	10.91	12.20
Chenoweth Elementary School	Jefferson County	35	78.33	15.94	14.70
Athens-Chilesburg Elementary School	Fayette County	43	77.67	10.69	23.10
North Middletown Elementary School	Bourbon County	16	77.11	13.91	12.50
Piner Elementary School	Kenton County	22	77.00	15.01	12.50
Creekside Elementary School	Scott County	39	76.78	12.26	9.10
Wurtland Elementary School	Greenup County	17	76.78	11.65	20.00
Charles H. Kelly Elementary School	Boone County	26	76.67	13.98	12.00
Garrett Morgan Elementary School	Fayette County	31	76.67	10.45	7.80
Highland Elementary School	Daviess County	24	76.56	11.63	9.40
Gutermuth Elementary School	Jefferson County	24	76.44	6.62	3.80
Hodgenville Elementary School	LaRue County	39	76.44	15.53	8.30

William G. Conkwright Elementary School	Clark County	35	76.44	14.09	15.60
Argillite Elementary School	Greenup County	24	76.22	12.39	35.00
		<b>N</b>	<b>M % Favorable</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Turnover</b>
<b>Top 30 Urban Elementary Schools</b>		<b>899</b>	<b>80.72</b>	<b>4.64</b>	<b>14.25</b>
<b>Urban Elementary Schools*</b>		<b>9559</b>	<b>63.40</b>	<b>11.18</b>	<b>15.17</b>
<b>Kentucky Elementary Schools*</b>		<b>17026</b>	<b>65.16</b>	<b>12.02</b>	<b>13.61</b>

\* Data only included for schools that met minimum reporting requirement



## Appendix M

## 2022 Impact Survey by Themes for Selected Schools

Schools	EAS	EWB	FC	MSB	PL	R	SC	SL	SLR	Mean (SD)
<b>Rural Schools:</b>										
<b>Bowen</b>	92	88	100	96	97	78	98	100	100	94.33(7.32)
<b>Whitley East</b>	88	86	99	95	96	88	93	97	99	93.44(4.98)
<b>Porter</b>	89	77	98	96	98	78	100	100	100	92.89(9.37)
<b>Gamaliel</b>	86	75	99	97	92	79	98	99	98	91.44(9.26)
<b>Phelps</b>	87	80	99	97	94	77	95	98	94	91.22(8.03)
<b>Selected Rural Schools (SD)</b>	<b>88.40(2.30)</b>	<b>81.20(5.63)</b>	<b>99.00(0.71)</b>	<b>96.20(0.84)</b>	<b>95.40(2.41)</b>	<b>80.00(4.53)</b>	<b>96.80(2.77)</b>	<b>98.80(1.30)</b>	<b>98.20(2.49)</b>	<b>92.67(1.32)</b>
<b>All Rural (SD)</b>	<b>68.00(9.34)</b>	<b>55.30(13.74)</b>	<b>64.74(18.18)</b>	<b>74.96(12.21)</b>	<b>64.52(15.32)</b>	<b>52.91(12.99)</b>	<b>72.69(14.54)</b>	<b>71.63(18.14)</b>	<b>79.82(14.65)</b>	<b>67.17(12.60)</b>
<b>Urban Schools:</b>										
<b>Ft. Wright</b>	87	79	92	93	96	79	98	99	100	91.44(8.11)
<b>Meadowthorpe</b>	86	88	88	93	87	82	94	93	94	89.44(4.25)
<b>Whitesville</b>	81	74	96	88	92	69	97	99	100	88.44(11.35)
<b>Eastern</b>	82	79	90	97	84	65	96	98	96	87.44(11.02)
<b>Calhoun</b>	75	75	91	95	86	76	83	94	96	86.78(9.05)
<b>Top Five Urban Schools (SD)</b>	<b>82.20(4.76)</b>	<b>79.00(5.52)</b>	<b>91.40(2.97)</b>	<b>93.20(3.35)</b>	<b>89.00(4.90)</b>	<b>74.20(7.05)</b>	<b>95.60(2.07)</b>	<b>96.60(2.88)</b>	<b>97.20(2.68)</b>	<b>88.71(1.83)</b>
<b>All Urban (SD)</b>	<b>71.41(8.20)</b>	<b>48.30(12.01)</b>	<b>58.53(58.43)</b>	<b>68.72(14.18)</b>	<b>62.02(12.68)</b>	<b>47.48(12.51)</b>	<b>68.21(15.02)</b>	<b>68.21(16.97)</b>	<b>77.81(14.78)</b>	<b>63.40(11.20)</b>
<b>Top Five Rural and Urban (SD)</b>	<b>85.30(4.81)</b>	<b>80.10(5.38)</b>	<b>95.20(4.49)</b>	<b>94.70(2.79)</b>	<b>92.20(4.96)</b>	<b>77.10(6.37)</b>	<b>96.20(2.39)</b>	<b>97.70(2.41)</b>	<b>97.70(2.50)</b>	<b>90.69(2.57)</b>
<b>All Elementary Schools (SD)</b>	<b>69.83 (8.91)</b>	<b>51.58 (13.32)</b>	<b>61.36 (17.17)</b>	<b>71.64(13.66)</b>	<b>63.17 (14.02)</b>	<b>50.03 (13.02)</b>	<b>70.31 (14.96)</b>	<b>69.79 (17.60)</b>	<b>78.73(14.74)</b>	<b>65.16(12.02)</b>

## VITA

WHITNEY SHANNON WILSON

EDUCATION

May 2007	Bachelor of Arts Morehead State University Morehead, Kentucky
December 2008	Master of Science Western Kentucky University Bowling Green, Kentucky
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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

2018 - Present	Principal Simons Middle School Flemingsburg, Kentucky
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2022 - Present	Recruitment Specialist Jefferson County Public Schools Louisville, Kentucky
2020 - 2022	Program Director Teach Kentucky Louisville, Kentucky
2016 - 2020	Client Success Manager-Education and Engagement PSST Louisville, Kentucky
2007 - 2016	Director of Finance and Federal Programs Lawrence County Schools Louisa, Kentucky

2000 – 2007	Instructional Supervisor Lawrence County Schools Louisa, Kentucky
1999 - 2000	Primary Consultant-Region 7 Kentucky Department of Education Morehead, Kentucky
1997 – 1999	Principal Louisa Elementary School Louisa, Kentucky
1995 – 1997	Assistant Principal Louisa Elementary School Louisa, Kentucky
1989 – 1995	Elementary Teacher Louisa Elementary School Louisa, Kentucky

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