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This dissertation, FACTORS THAT LEAD TOWARDS TEACHER RETENTION IN LUTHERAN SCHOOLS, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the School of Education, Concordia University Irvine.

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FACTORS THAT LEAD TOWARDS TEACHER RETENTION IN LUTHERAN SCHOOLS

by

Christy L. Wood

A Dissertation

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ABSTRACT

Retention of Called teachers within the Lutheran school system is becoming increasingly more difficult with each passing year. With the retirement of baby-boomer teachers and the limited amount of Called workers already in the field or qualified new graduates, the purpose of this study is to identify strategies that Lutheran schools are successfully utilizing to promote teacher retention within their schools. This study will highlight the interactions between factors such as compensation, development of relationships within the church and school community, teacher preparedness, and effects of mentoring on the retention of Called teachers in Lutheran schools. Utilizing Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, 298 current Lutheran school teachers were surveyed, and six former Lutheran school teachers were interviewed. This research is designed to provide Lutheran schools an understanding and utilize the information to retain their current teachers and attract new teachers to their campuses and promote future generations to become Lutheran teachers. This research intends to provide schools and churches with additional information that will help them with strategic planning for future teacher vacancies and to attract future Lutheran teachers. The key findings of this research found that a supportive principal was the number one factor for retaining teachers in Lutheran educators in all areas of education, Preschool through Grade 12, followed by church leadership that psychologically supported the teacher, cultivated positive community culture, and provided an adequate compensation package that provides for the basic living needs of the teacher and allows for work/life balance.

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I dedicate this work to Lutheran Churches and Schools. May the work included in this dissertation be the start of valuable conversations to help provide and sustain Lutheran education for many years to come.

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The demand for high-quality teachers and higher student achievement in education is more pressing with each academic year. Teachers are leaving at alarming rates, with recent data showing public-school teacher attrition at 13.8 % (Garcia & Wise, 2019). In 2016, it was reported that there was high teacher attrition in public schools following the Great Recession (2007-2009) and that enrollment in teacher preparation programs had fallen 35% between 2010-2015 – a decrease of nearly 240,000 teachers (Westervelt, 2016). In states that can offer higher pay for teachers, such as Massachusetts, the effects may not be as significant as they are in states of higher poverty. Teacher preparation programs are producing a lower number of candidates, but the candidates they have do not fill all of the needs of the schools.

The challenges found in Lutheran schools are even more compounded than in their public-school counterparts. Faced with high rates of teacher attrition and teacher retirements from the baby-boomer era, filling teacher positions with Called teachers within the Lutheran education system becomes more of a challenge with each passing year. The availability of qualified teachers is rapidly dwindling (B. Schranz, personal communication, December 1, 2020). Retention efforts are needed to support current teachers in Lutheran education. This study will examine how to better support new Lutheran teaching candidates as they accept their first call and promote teacher retention within Lutheran schools.

The decision to become a Called teacher in Lutheran education is intentional. An individual must complete a Lutheran teaching certificate program in addition to completing a state-endorsed credential program (Concordia University Irvine). The certificate program requires the individual to complete specific coursework and the elementary or secondary subject matter coursework necessary for a credential program. Upon completion of both the Lutheran

teaching certificate program and an elementary or secondary subject matter credential program, the candidate is eligible for placement into the teaching ministry of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS).

As a Called worker for over twenty years, the researcher has had the unique position of witnessing dozens of qualified Called teachers to enter the field and leave within the first five years. Although some of these individuals leave due to getting married, starting a family, or job relocations for a spouse, many make the difficult decision to leave due to financial reasons. The completion of a Lutheran teaching certificate places an additional economic impact on the overall college cost on the individual. An additional nineteen units of college coursework (Concordia University Irvine) can increase the amount of financial debt that will need to be repaid by the future teacher.

As with any new teacher, a Called teacher enters their new career full of optimism, excitement, and eager anticipation about setting up a classroom and designing and delivering curriculum. There is the added joy of sharing one's faith with students and families and developing relationships in a new faith community for a Called teacher. The desire is that these new relationships will uplift and sustain any future apprehension for the new teacher.

As a Lutheran trained educator, serving as a principal at a Lutheran elementary school, and as a board member for the Lutheran Education Association, the researcher has a vested interest in keeping Lutheran trained educators employed in Lutheran schools. Using Matthew 28:19-20 as a guide, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you," the researcher has been able to find purpose and direction. In the summer of 2008, the researcher graduated with a Master's in Curriculum and Instruction from Concordia

University Irvine. Throughout this program, the researcher understood curriculum development at a much deeper level than during undergraduate studies and as a student-teacher. This course of study also came with a more significant investment as the courses the researcher took applied to daily employment as an Assistant Principal at a large Lutheran School. When the researcher began to look for a master's program in Educational Leadership, the researcher chose to enroll in the program at Concordia University-Portland. The cohort the researcher was placed in was an international one with students from Canada and Southeast Asia, and all over the United States and gave the researcher a better insight into teachers' struggles and praises from a non-Lutheran perspective. In the year-long program, the researcher had the opportunity to test personal beliefs towards administration and develop programs that are still in use today, such as a teacher mentoring program. The researcher's desire at this point in her ministry to earn an Educational Doctorate and move towards working at the college level to help prepare future church workers and be able to help nurture and develop them, using some of my life adventures to help them gain a different perspective. The researcher, also, desires that the next chapter in her career will enable schools and congregations to have a better understanding better of their teachers' needs and to provide adequate support for their teachers.

Problem Statement

Teacher retention is vital to healthy schools and school systems as research has shown that stability in the classroom positively affects student achievement (Tamir & Magidin de Kramer, 2011). Quality teachers make a long-term impact on student learning (Chetty, Friedman, & Rockoff, 2012). This study will identify strategies that Lutheran schools are successfully utilizing to promote teacher retention within their schools. This is an effort to inform Lutheran school retention and recruitment practice and policy.

To be classified as a Called teacher within the LCMS, a teacher must undergo additional theological training and become certified to teach religion classes (G. Holzer, personal communication, January 28, 2021). With this extra preparation, the cost factor for the teacher, and the investment that Lutheran schools extend to teachers, it is beneficial for Lutheran schools to encourage stability and longevity in their teachers. Not only will the teacher feel supported and valued, but the school's reputation also will increase, and most importantly, there will be a positive effect on student achievement.

Based on conversations with fellow school administrators, there is the reality of a shortage of qualified Called teachers in Lutheran schools. In 2018, the LCMS began a Church Work Recruitment campaign to increase the number of church work candidates in the Synod. The goal continues to be to increase the engagement of youth and influencers in planned church work formation activities and increase the number of children answering the call to church work. With this campaign, it will be more vital than ever to raise the awareness of what is needed to keep Called workers in the teaching field and in Lutheran schools (M. Bergholt, personal communication, November 30, 2020). Since 2001, the number of available candidates has had a sharp decline for first-year educator placements. At its height in May 2001, there were 376 available candidates. For the academic school year 2019-2020, there were 389 requests for first-year teacher candidates from Lutheran schools, and there were only 92 candidates available. Out of the 92, only 67 candidates accepted a Call and began their teaching career in a Lutheran School (B. Schranz, personal communication, December 1, 2020).

Purpose of the Study

Because of the impact of teacher attrition on student learning, achievement, and success, this study examined the essential factors that lead to teacher retention. The purpose of this study

was to identify strategies that Lutheran schools are successfully utilizing to promote teacher retention within their schools. This study highlighted the interactions between factors such as compensation, development of relationships within the church and school community, teacher preparedness, and effects of mentoring on the retention of Called teachers in Lutheran schools. The researcher was interested in a description of characteristics that define Called teachers, but instead looked to create inferential, potentially causal, links between attrition and the factors that lead to it.

This mixed-methods sequential explanatory predictive study was designed to reveal how to better support new Lutheran teaching candidates as they accept their first call. At this stage in the research, each cause of support was defined as a factor. Measuring the factors that have been identified to predict teacher retention (financial concerns, support from administration, classroom management, teacher competency, and teacher preparation), this study indicated how they influence teachers' long-term goals in their careers. Teachers are leaving the Lutheran education system due to increased classroom management issues, lack of support from the principal, and financial issues, including student loans and cost of living (Jones & Watson, 2017; O'Keefe, 2003). Not much is known from an empirical perspective about addressing the issue of Lutheran teacher retention, the closest body of work centers on Catholic educator retention (Cook, 2013; O'Keefe, 2013, 2003). Our research questions address potential solutions to these real-life problems and fill the gap in research-based knowledge concerning the effective strategies for Lutheran schools and teacher training programs.

Research Questions

Primary Research Question: What factors contribute to teacher retention in Lutheran schools?

Sub-Question 1- What strategies are Lutheran schools utilizing to support their teachers?

Sub-Question 2- How does the implementation of a mentoring program impact teacher retention?

Sub-Question 3- How does teacher training affect the teacher retention rate in Lutheran Schools?

Hypothesis

The hypothesis for this research was that when controlling for a comprehensive teacher preparation program, a mentoring program positively supports new teachers and maintains teacher retention in Lutheran schools. The researcher believed teachers are leaving the Lutheran education system due to increased classroom management issues, lack of support and understanding from the administration, feelings of inadequacy and lack of preparation (ability to transfer theory into practice) (Jones & Watson, 2017), and financial issues, which include student loans and the cost of living (O'Keefe, 2003). The researcher believed that a mentoring program will support new teachers who will turn into stability and teacher retention (Edwards & Nutall, 2015; Gray & Taie, 2015). Furthermore, the researcher believed that teachers who have completed a Lutheran teaching certificate at a Concordia University, instead of through a colloquy program, will have a higher retention rate in Lutheran Schools (Egalite et al., 2014; Dadley & Edwards, 2007).

Theoretical Framework

Maslow (1943) proposed the Hierarchy of Needs psychological theory to explain human behavioral motivation. The hierarchy moves from concrete needs of food and water to abstract

concepts of self-fulfillment. Once the basic level of needs has been met, other needs emerge. One cannot move to the next level of needs until the first level of needs has been successfully satisfied. Only when basic human needs are met can safety needs be met, and only when safety needs are met can belongingness and love needs be met. This continuum occurs through the following two levels of esteem needs and self-actualization needs.

The first level of the hierarchy (Maslow, 1943) is categorized as basic needs. Maslow believed that the basic needs of a human must be met before anything else can be achieved. These basic needs include food and water, shelter, clothing, and sleep. He believed that these needs are the minimum that an individual must meet to meet their psychological needs. He felt that it is hard for an individual to concentrate until all these basic needs have been met fully.

The second level involves meeting the security and safety needs of the individual. Security and safety needs include financial security, health and well-being, and personal safety against such things as accidents and injury. Finding a job, obtaining health insurance and health care, contributing money to a savings account, and moving into a safer neighborhood are all actions motivated by the security and safety needs. "Few things occupy as central a place in our lives as money. Money plays a special role in our personal and social lives, exerting more power over human lives than any other single commodity" (Oleson, 2004, pg. 83). When these needs have not been fully met, the individual can exhibit fear and anxiety.

Love and belongingness needs are the third level of the Hierarchy of Needs. Social needs that produce a sense of belonging and being loved are addressed at this level. Human beings have a desire to be loved and be able to love others. Socializing with friends and family is a need that occurs in both a personal and professional manner. Also included in this level is being connected with a religious organization and having one's faith acknowledged and nurtured.

When these needs are not met, loneliness and depression can set in, and the individual cannot move forward in meeting their needs (Ahn et al., 2016).

A feeling of accomplishment and making an impact in the world around them occurs during the esteem needs level, level four of the Hierarchy of Needs. The focus of this level is for the individual to feel good about themselves. Being respected and respecting others is an additional part of this need. Individuals need to accomplish things and to be recognized for their effort. When these needs are not acknowledged, individuals can develop feelings of inferiority to others and a lack of self-worth. Research has found that individuals who have self-worth can lead to higher levels of job satisfaction, leading to higher teacher retention in schools (Perrachione et al., 2008)

Maslow (1943) developed the fifth and final level as a culmination of his hierarchy of needs. At this level, an individual needs to achieve their fullest potential. Individuals can see and understand how their actions, thoughts, and feelings affect themselves and other individuals around them. Problem-solving and self-assessing, and self-reflecting occur at this stage. This level of need is rarely accomplished, according to the theory, and is an aspiration more than a reality for most. Students deserve a teacher who is passionate and committed to the learning of all students. Teaching can be a demanding occupation and can quickly deplete a teacher's sense of love and belonging (level three of Hierarchy of Needs). The initial excitement of teaching as a career must be supported in order to influence teacher retention. Without the financial resources to provide basic needs, a teacher cannot provide the emotional support students, parents, and colleagues need, let alone their own personal emotional self-care. In order to have a better understanding of the factors that cause teachers to leave their employment, it would be beneficial

to investigate the nature and cause of occurrences on campus and in their lives, especially within the first few years in the classroom.

While teachers are well prepared to deliver curriculum, research has identified five causes for teachers to leave the field of education: "a) teacher training issues; b) job requirements of teaching; c) teacher-competency issues; d) time and classroom management issues; and e) paperwork issues" (Bennett, et al., 2013). Student teachers would benefit with more opportunities to experience potential real-life situations during more extended teacher education programs (Lynch, 2014). Students enter the program to be prepared for life in the ministry of teaching (Selzer, 2008), yet after a short eight weeks, much nurturing and guidance is done by the master teacher, and not enough time is given for the student-teacher to experience teaching and modeling. Young teachers need to have their security and safety needs met (Hierarchy of Needs level two). Emphasis on preparation in religion and pedagogy impacts Lutheran teacher retention (Engel & Cook, 2006). Further instruction is also needed in understanding credit, budgeting, investing, and college debt, as these areas further affect first-year educators – these subsumed under Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Level One (1943).

The creation and implementation of a comprehensive mentoring program will support new teachers, provide a smoother transition into the classroom (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004), and help to meet the feeling of accomplishment for new teachers as well as helping them to make an impact on the lives of their students (level four Hierarchy of Needs). Research has found that 92% of teachers who had a mentor during the first year of employment as a teacher stayed in the teaching profession after the first year, compared to 84% of teachers who did not have a mentor and remained in the teaching profession (Gray & Taie, 2015). Further evidence shows that job satisfaction increases when teachers intertwine their faith lives and their school lives (Egalite et

al., 2014). Higher retention rates are found among teachers who teach religious education when their faith is supported and they have a sense of vocation (Dadley & Edwards, 2007).

Disciplinary problems have increased in public and charter schools resulting in teacher dissatisfaction and higher levels of turnover (Renzulli et al., 2011). Regarding increasing disciplinary issues, compared to public school teachers, Catholic school teachers who felt supported by their principals were more satisfied in their positions as educators (Renzulli et al., 2011). Dupriez et al. (2016) found that the younger the teachers were to enter the teaching profession, the longer they stayed, and that those holding a teacher credential had less attrition. However, it is essential to note that they did find master's degree holders were less stable, as they were more confident in their ability to find other work. Gilbert (2011) summarized the importance of better preparing our teachers on a specific subject matter level while at the same time preparing them for life within a school's culture while at the same allowing teachers to achieve at their fullest potential (Hierarchy of Needs, level five).

Significance of the Study

Based on the author's experience, Lutheran schools struggle to fill their classrooms with qualified Lutheran educators (B. Schranz, personal communication, December 1, 2020). One hallmark of quality education is quality educators. Without the availability of Lutheran trained teachers, and the ability to retain such teachers, Lutheran education as it has been known for may not last for long in the future. With a rapid decline in students completing a Lutheran teaching certificate or a colloquy program, Lutheran schools must understand the factors that contribute to teacher retention in Lutheran schools. In utilizing Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs, teacher stability within the Lutheran School must address teachers feeling adept at meeting their personal living needs, as well as their psychological needs to the point where they feel supported by the

school they are serving in and are willing and able to provide the proper education for student academic growth. Understanding those needs will help Lutheran Schools maintain teachers in their profession, thus improving students' achievement.

This study identified strategies that Lutheran schools are successfully utilizing to promote teacher retention within their schools. With a significant decline in qualified Lutheran educators, the identification of successful strategies will be helpful in not only Lutheran schools but also private schools in general (B. Schranz, personal communication, December 1, 2020). As the principal of a Lutheran school, the researcher knows firsthand the importance of hiring qualified Called workers in order to maintain theological, missional, and academic cohesiveness on campus and how difficult candidates can be to find. The cultivation of a culture on campus that promotes teachers' longevity is essential, as this impacts student academic learning and impacts the overall culture of the campus. Stability on campus increases a positive vibe on campus and lends towards more fellowship and relationship building.

Investigating the impact of a mentoring program will help schools and university teacher training programs understand the needs of newer teachers. Although candidates graduate knowing the basics in curriculum delivery, a mentoring program can help provide new teachers support with more of the realistic day-to-day struggles they will face in real-time (C. Chittick, personal communication, July 28, 2021). As a site administrator, the researcher will use this information firsthand to support new faculty members. As a Board member for the Lutheran Education Association, the researcher will share these findings and help develop programs to better support new teachers. This knowledge can help university programs better understand the needs of their recent graduates and adequately equip their students for a more successful first year of teaching.

In like manner, this study will provide insight on teacher retention of individuals who completed a Lutheran teaching certificate or colloquy program. This information will be beneficial to Concordia University church worker programs, colloquy programs, and the School Ministry department of the LCMS (M. Bergholt, personal communication, December 1, 2020). Knowledge about the retention of Lutheran teachers is vital to supporting future generations of Lutheran students.

Definition of Terms

Called Worker: Also known as Ministers of Religion – Commissioned. The individual has completed a course of studies at a Concordia University or via a colloquy program and has been commissioned and installed for employment. (The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, 2020)

Colloquy program: Colloquy programs "prepare men and women who are currently serving in ministry roles for membership in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod as Ministers of Religion–Commissioned. These programs ensure that those who seek to join the Synod have been educated in theology, have become oriented to service to the Synod and have demonstrated the professional and spiritual attributes that the Synod expects of its members." (The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, 2020)

Concordia University System: "The Concordia University System (CUS) is comprised of nine colleges and universities affiliated with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Located across the United States, the colleges and universities offer more than 160 undergraduate and 50 graduate programs." (The Lutheran Church- Missouri Synod, 2020)

Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod: "The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) is a denomination that confesses the historic, orthodox Christian faith, a faith built on "the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone" (Eph. 2:20).

The LCMS, headquartered in St. Louis, Mo., is mission-oriented and Bible-based. LCMS doctrine reflects the teachings of Dr. Martin Luther, as summarized in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*." (The Lutheran Church- Missouri Synod, 2020)

Lutheran education system: The Lutheran education system consists of over 1,900 early childhood programs through grade 12 schools in the United States and three international schools (Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Hanoi). Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod (2020).

Lutheran Teaching Candidate: A graduate of a Lutheran teaching program at one of the Concordia universities. An individual remains a candidate until commissioned and installed in a place of employment.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

A steady and reliable workforce is a crucial foundation for a business to remain integral. Employers want to keep their personnel stable for their company to grow and thrive. The definition of job retention can "vary by length of employment required and whether the participant is required to remain in the same job during the time period specified" (Gooden & Bailey, 2001, p 84). Companies that have a long history of retaining employees are known to have employees who are content with their positions and feel valued, and in return, have pride in their work and are more productive for the company. The assumption is that organizations will provide a positive work environment where all their needs will be met (Bake, 2019; Boxall & Macky, 2009). For an employee, job stability can lead to financial security and focus on developing and obtaining professional goals. Motivated employees are valued as they work harder and are more likely to become vested in the organization (Bake, 2019; Sadri & Bowen, 2011). When an employee is motivated, the employee is content and known to engage in fellowship with other employees.

Employee retention can impact the overall structure of an organization (Younge & Marx, 2016). "Employee retention is defined as the intent of an employee to continue with the organization" (Jena & Pradhan, 2018, p. 18). The effects of employee turnover in an organization include loss of money spent on recruiting and hiring, personnel reshuffling, education, and training of new personnel, decreased production, and long-term goals and objectives for the organization (Yamamoto, 2011; Smith et al., 2011). A stable workforce of committed employees can be one of the most valuable assets for an organization (Jena & Pradhan, 2018). Capable employees committed to longevity in their position and the organization provide stability to the organization.

Employment and Retention

We begin with an exploration of the issues that organizations face when it comes to employment and retention. From corporate to government, to small businesses, to public and private schools, retention is an issue that receives much attention from professionals and researchers alike.

Corporate Employment and Retention

Research on corporate employee retention in both the United States and internationally shifts focus from the individual employees in new companies to the need to survive in a competitive market for more giant corporations. There is a paradigm conflict that corporations must balance, including employees of the company, stakeholders, and the customers it serves (Botha, 2015). The balance of these needs can be vastly different, and corporate management must determine how to best address these demands and create balance in the company's best interest at large. This shift has shown that organizations more supportive of employees' personal and professional lives have lower turnover (de Leon & Fuertes, 2007; Bake, 2019; Choi, 2020). Human resource management policies can have an impact on employee retention. Policies that appear to reduce turnover include equitable compensation for the job performed, professional development opportunities, and employment security (Smith et al., 2011). Employers who commit to run an organization that values their employees with ethical and just practices are more likely to thrive and prevail in the distant future.

Pearce (1993) found that employees who are satisfied with their employment are less likely to leave. The relationship between the organization and the employee determines job satisfaction and work performance (Madanoglu, 2018; Yamamoto, 2011). Research has shown that leadership can motivate employees to become engaged and help create an environment that

feels valued and essential (Bake, 2019). Supportive supervisor communication influences job satisfaction and the intention of the employee to retain employment. Effective communication can minimize uncertainty in job performance which can lead to job dissatisfaction (Usadolo & Usadolo, 2019). Good interpersonal communication skills are vital to lead others effectively (Bang, 2011). Effective communication and job performance evaluations lead to confidence in job performance and further create a stable workforce.

Companies concerned with customers' perceptions about how the company and its management treats its employees and pays attention to their interests have a more substantial influence in the workforce (Walsh et al., 2009; de Leon & Fuertes, 2007). Companies that take an active interest in their workers' compensation, benefits, and overall working environments create employees who are more apt to be content workers and share with the general public about their positive work environments. The customers' perception of the company in terms of competence, solidity, and profitability thus, in turn, creates confidence in the customer to utilize that business because of their fair working conditions for their employees.

Government Employment and Retention

Retention of government employees is as necessary as retention of employees in the corporate realm. One factor that contributes to job retention or separation is that of compensation. Federal employees have a comprehensive benefits package that includes a monetary salary, medical and dental insurance, retirement benefits, and paid vacations. In addition, incentives for meeting job-related goals, flexible work schedules, and community involvement are supported.

As found concerning employee turnover in large corporations, government employee turnover endures similar financial burdens of training of employees, reshuffling, and loss of

productivity for the governmental agency. Likewise, employee engagement of governmental employees is vital. Job satisfaction increases with employee empowerment, teamwork, management leadership, and compensation (Chang et al., 2010). Traditionally, employee satisfaction has been viewed as an essential motivator for performance (de Leon & Fuertes, 2007; Mak & Sockel, 2001). Employee loyalty has been defined as an employee's feeling of belonging to the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Small Business Employment and Retention

As found in both the corporate and government realm of business, employees in small businesses need to feel valued, supported, and connected (Williamson, 1979; Dysvik, 2016; Bake, 2019). When an employer invests in the development of an employee, the employees' level of commitment and motivation increases. Individual and organizational goals become a priority as the employee realizes the vital part this investment has on the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization (Diah et al., 2020). The more proactively an employer strives to meet the needs of the employees, the more reciprocal the employee will be to be productive and supportive for the company. The employer may not be able to meet all the desires of the employees due to the limited resources of a small business; however, the ability to address the issues and having the employees feel their requests or concerns have not been ignored creates validation of the importance in the organization for employees.

Human capital is vital for small companies to achieve competitive advantages, economic advancement, and employee stability (Yamamoto, 2011; Barney & Wright, 1998). Education, training, and employee skills can be invaluable for companies. Successful small businesses emphasize value-added per employee (Wang et al., 2018; Barney & Wright, 1998). A value-added employee targets the skills the employee wants to develop and employers most desire. In

this win-win situation, the employee becomes more knowledgeable in the industry, and the employer can increase productivity because of the added skills. Due to the limited resources of small businesses, these companies often need to overcome resource management constraints to operate. The retention rate for small businesses is a bigger problem than hiring (Hannan & Freeman, 1989). With fewer employees, employee turnover can place a considerable hindrance on productivity. Investing in the human capital of a small business will allow the company more stability in their workforce and the ability for a more consistent flow of income and advance in their field.

Work engagement is "a positive, fulfilling, and work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor and dedication" (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, p. 295). Employee job satisfaction affects both short and long-term company goals (Trottier et al., 2008). Employee engagement has been linked to a range of positive individual and organizational outcomes, such as job stability and advancement for the employee. For businesses, an increased customer base or more production of goods is possible (Alfres et al., 2015). Low absenteeism rates among employees are linked to high retention rates (de Leon & Fuertes, 2007; Griffith et al., 2000). Low turnover rates among employees positively impact small businesses and nonprofit organizations (Lee, 2016). When employees display an immense level of engagement and motivation for solid job performance, a personal connection to the team and the overall organization develops (Marrelli, 2011).

Effective Leadership

Effective leadership is vital for employee retention, no matter the size or structure of a business. Strategies for effective leadership include the involvement of employees in decision-making, performance appraisal, employee effort recognition, and development opportunities

(Usadolo & Usadolo, 2019; Marrelli, 2011). Research has found that collaboration between the employees and leadership is one of the most influential factors for growth in small businesses (Hitt et al., 1999). The exchange of and development of personal and professional skills leads to an increase in employee job satisfaction. Employee satisfaction increases when leaders actively involve employees in decision-making (Kim, 2002).

Effective leadership is vital in government agencies. Effective leader communication includes being open, direct, honest, easily accessible, frequent dialogue, and clear direction. Effective and supportive communication strategies that allow high-quality supervisor-subordinate relationships to develop also have the opportunity to create positive working environments (Usadolo & Usadolo, 2019; Marrelli, 2011). Effective leadership for employee retention in the federal sector involves employees being actively engaged in decision making, fair and frequent performance appraisals, prompt recognition of employee effort, and implementation of employee and team development opportunities. Effective leadership provides for stability in the workforce allowing for government agencies to work more effectively and productively.

As business practices have evolved, so has the role of an effective leader. Old business leaders only needed to know how best to perform the job at hand and make products for the company to be consistent and profitable. In modern times, leaders must learn the technical skills of the job, but they must also be versed in managerial and relationship skills. Leaders must possess transformational competencies emphasizing mission articulation, vision, and inspirational motivation (Usadolo & Usadolo, 2019; Marrelli, 2011; Trottier et al., 2008). Thus, the leader must be knowledgeable in the overall operational process and the specific aspects of

each area of the organization and understand and be able to relate to the organization's human capital.

Employee Recognition in the Corporate World

The term “employee recognition” refers to practices an organization displays in its appreciation for its employee contributions. Companies may recognize employees for achievements, exhibiting desired behaviors, going above and beyond expectations, and for reaching milestones such as tenure. Large corporations have been known to shower their employees with recognition when the company is making a profit. Vacations, public acknowledgements, safety bonuses, profit sharing, and employee activities are some of the recognition tactics that have taken place (Robinson, 2021).

Social needs that produce a sense of belonging and being loved are addressed in Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (1943). Human beings have a desire to be loved and be able to love others. Public recognition and acknowledgment of employee contributions in the workplace has shown that employees who are publicly recognized are more engaged in their work and feel their work is more meaningful, which in turn improves employee engagement in in-role performance (Montani et al., 2020).

In a survey conducted by Hastwell (2021), 37% of respondents said that more personal recognition would encourage them to produce better work more often. The study further showed that affirmation, feedback and reward are most effective for motivating employees to do their best work. In contrast, Bradler et al. (2016) discovered that although public recognition is important, it does not increase performance substantially. The researcher found that employees enjoy the momentary praise that public recognition brings, but overall, employees strive for conformity and working together on the same level.

Teacher Employment and Retention

Public School Teacher Employment and Retention

Staff turnover is a significant concern at all levels of education, from the university level to early childhood learning centers. According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020), there was a 29.3% turnover rate of educational employees [teachers] in the year 2019 alone. An estimated 25% of teachers entering the public-school system will leave teaching within the first three years. (Marvel et al., 2006). The five-year average of employee separation (leaving the education field in its entirety) stands at 29.4%. Teacher retention is vital to healthy schools and school systems as research has shown that stability in the classroom has a positive effect on student achievement (Gilbert, 2011; Henry et al., 2011; Tamir & Magidin de Kramer, 2011). The teachers who make a long-term impact on student learning are most likely to be those individuals who have longevity in the profession. They have more experience and training and can produce better quality instruction for the student (Chett et al., 2012).

A shortage of teachers in single-subject areas in secondary education, in disciplines such as math and science, can adversely affect a student's overall educational experience. These subjects generally require educators to have more concentrated coursework and an increased training protocol to maintain licensing. To fill these classrooms with teachers, districts have been known to lower hiring standards.

Additional approaches have been to divert money spent on classroom materials to cover incentives to recruit qualified specialty teachers or to hire teachers certified in other curricular areas to fill these positions. Other viable solutions districts have resorted to cover specialty teacher shortage in high schools have been to enroll a higher number of students in a qualified teacher's classroom or increasing the number of classes each teacher provides instruction. These

solutions have led to teacher dissatisfaction and attrition within the high school level, affecting teaching effectiveness and impacting student learning

Starting salaries for teachers, in general, are considered low by societal standards, and for the qualified high school teacher, the wages largely lack enticement when recruiting new teachers (Ingersoll et al., 2011; Przygocki, 2004). Mont and Rees (1996) found that to provide attractive salaries for qualified educators, and school districts need to balance the cost of recruiting and training new teachers with potential increases in labor costs. The estimated cost to a school district is close to $20,000 in separation, recruitment, hiring, and training a new teacher. This type of investment can take years for a district to recover.

Classroom management issues at the high school level also led to teacher attrition. New teachers lack the proper techniques needed to run a classroom that an experienced teacher possesses effectively. This lack of readiness can contribute to the high rate of teacher stress and subsequent burnout in [high] schools (Back et al., 2016). Effective classroom management procedures lead to a more organized classroom that promotes individual student learning, an environment where the teacher and students feel valued, and teachers can manage their workload more efficiently (Mee & Haverback, 2014; Bennett et al., 2013; Pearman & Lefever-Davis, 2012). Strengthening teacher preparation programs with realistic job situations and strengthening the skills of future educations would provide more balance to the home-work scenario for new educators.

Difficult-to-staff urban and high-poverty schools find difficulty in maintaining quality, qualified teachers (Westervelt, 2016; Hill & Barth, 2004). The demands placed on the teachers in these institutions, such as learning to understand and relate to students in high poverty areas, students with high dropout rates, and lower-achieving students, are excellent. Not only are these

teachers expected to meet the students' academic goals, they often must help the students complete their basic needs of food and emotional support in the classroom. Students may face challenges of dysfunctional families where the teacher is the only stable force in their lives. Further challenges include making the curriculum culturally relevant and addressing students' emotional securities. Meeting these challenging needs may not have been part of the teacher preparation program, leading the teacher to feel unprepared and dissatisfied.

Teachers are drawn to the challenges of working with children, and they value the significant role they play in the development of the whole child. Financial and emotional stresses over low wages, diminished benefit packages, and lower professional value lead to higher than usual employee turnover (Schumann, 2011). Long-term employment can be found in individuals who have other sources of income, including second jobs, spouses that have steady high-paying jobs, or governmental subsidies (Gould, 2015).

Catholic School Teacher Employment and Retention

An active faith life in the organization can promote attraction and retention for employees (Jena & Pradhan, 2018; Przygocki, 2004). Research has shown that community support and faith development are critical factors in teachers remaining employed at religiously affiliated schools (Cook & Engel, 2006). To be held up by one another is a gift given by God. "So, we, though many, are one in Christ, and individually members of one another" (The Lutheran Study Bible: English Standard Version Bible, 2009, Romans 12:5). There is personal fulfillment and belonging when active in a faith-based community.

Although there is great personal fulfillment, research shows that Catholic school teachers were "more likely to leave their positions than teachers in public schools. This condition is found at every age level; however, the greatest rate of attrition takes place before age 40." (Przygocki,

2004). Around age 40, individuals begin to look into financial planning and preparing for eventual retirement. A critical factor in teacher attrition was the lower salary received than the public-school counterparts, and this has a direct link to the fact that Catholic schools rely heavily on tuition to cover the cost of wages for the higher, the higher for the teacher, the higher the tuition must be, and that makes it harder to fill the classroom seats. Research has shown that teachers who are paid more will stay in the profession longer and that this impact of higher salaries was most significant during the first years on the job. The findings of this study show that "Catholic schools must be attentive to the issue of low salaries especially when public schools are facing teacher shortages and offering higher salaries" (Przygocki, 2004).

Additional findings support that effective induction and mentoring programs can promote higher expectations for new teachers, increase quality standards, and have a more significant potential for teacher retention. A sense of community and sharing one's faith were strong indicators of why teachers do remain in the Catholic school system. In addition, teachers felt a strong calling to the mission of Christ as the primary motivator for working in a Catholic school (Przygocki, 2004). Research also shows a positive correlation between a teachers' perception of their principal's level of servant leadership and the teachers' overall job satisfaction level (Shaw & Newton, 2014; Przygocki, 2004). Servant leadership is commonly defined as leaders who share the common characteristics of love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service. The research found a significant positive correlation that when teachers believed their principals were influential servant leaders, teachers' intended retention at their current school increased (Shaw & Newton, 2014). Furthermore, employees are also looking for a strong correlation between employers and the community in which they serve. Wood (1991) defined corporate social performance as "a business organization's configuration of principles of social

responsibility, processes of social responsiveness, and policies, programs, and observable outcomes as they relate to the firm's societal relationships" (p. 693). Active interaction between a corporation and the surrounding community creates a more attractive company for the prospective employee. When the manager personally shares the impact that volunteering through the new company has made on their life, the prospective employee can make stronger connections and make the company more attractive for accepting employees and employee longevity within the company. Once the individual becomes an employee of the company, the manager and the company must continue investing in the community. Further connecting the employee to the company may also maintain the employee's employment with the company.

Teacher Retention Factors

Teacher Preparation Programs

A critical factor in quality teaching includes completing a teacher preparation program where the teacher candidate is provided with a mixture of coursework in subject matter knowledge and pedagogical skills, combined with hands-on teaching experience directly with students. Ingersoll, Merrill, and May (2012) state that the more extensive and deliberate the focus is on these two factors, the longer a teacher will stay in the field of education. Teachers who have received formal training in education are more stable in their field than their peers who are not formally trained (Duprez et al., 2016; Hochstetler, 2011). University-prepared teachers have longer retention rates than those individuals who complete alternative pathways for teacher licensing (Duprez et al., 2016; Zhang & Zeller, 2016). Teacher preparation programs need to present the realities of life in the classroom to teacher candidates. Novice teachers can be overwhelmed when they begin teaching their teaching careers. Candidates must enter the field with a realistic view of teaching. If not, they are bound to find their work more challenging and

be more resolute to leave the teaching profession (Hochstetler, 2011). Gilbert (2011) summarized the importance of better preparing our teachers on a specific subject matter while at the same time preparing them for life within a school's culture. Martin and Mulvihill (2016) found that one of the problems in teacher education programs is that they focus more on national and global issues than on professional practice, assessment, and standards. In addition, further emphasis is needed in middle school teacher preparation programs (Mee & Haverback, 2014) and behaviors regarding classroom behaviors and student dispositions (Pearman & Lefever-Davis, 2012)

The goal of the educational system in the United States is to provide a quality education for all students. One vital component of the plan involves teacher recruitment. The aspect of teacher recruitment has been a focus in the United States for decades. As far back as 1945, Beu stated that it was detrimental and dangerous to allow individuals to enter the classroom who did not have the proper training "to mold, direct, and educate the young people of our nation." This endeavor is often compounded by the fiscal realities facing the educational system (Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006). Teacher recruitment affects all academic levels and subjects in the United States and internationally (O'Doherty & Harford, 2018; Ulferts, 2016; Bulger et al., 2015; Ruecker & Ives, 2015; Miller et al., 2008). Further adding to the dilemma is recruiting more minority individuals into the teaching field and, conversely, the lack of retention of minority educators (Ingersoll et al., 2019; Piercynski et al., 1997). Sass et al. (2012) found that the younger a teacher entered the teaching profession, the higher the attrition rates due to limited training and confidence in the field.

Teacher Mentoring Programs

Teacher mentoring programs have proven as an advantage in retaining quality educators. These programs acknowledge the struggles faced by beginning teachers in their day-to-day life in the classroom.

This awareness is essential to understand the high attrition rates of beginning teachers (Edwards & Nutall, 2015; Sass et al., 2012). There can be a distinguishable difference for educators between students teaching under a master teacher and teaching independently in a classroom. Induction and mentoring programs allow teachers to be continually nurtured as proficient professionals by collaborating (Ahn, 2014). Mentoring allows a veteran teacher to guide and support a new teacher throughout the first few years of teaching. The veteran teacher helps the new teacher navigate the school culture, curriculum development, delivery, and any student-related issues that arise. In positive teacher-to-teacher relationships, genuine caring for the well-being of the other teacher is a natural outcome. Schaefer et al., (2014) found that teachers left teaching due to an imbalance of their personal and professional lives. These researchers have also acknowledged the importance of allowing teachers to tell their stories in their own words. The reports that include the teachers' lives both on and off school campuses increase the understanding between the transition and the gap between personal and professional knowledge landscapes. A healthy balance between the individual and the professional life of a teacher is needed to provide stability for the educator. The student's academic experience as a more stable educator can offer more consistency in the classroom, thus providing more academic learning and achievement.

Gray et al. (2015) found that new educators who were assigned a mentor their first year had a retention rate of 92% (pg. 3). Research has determined that when a beginning teacher is

allowed to develop a relationship with a mentor, the beginning teacher can cope with these issues better (Dupriez et al., 2016; Latifoglu, 2016). Henry et al. (2011) researched the effectiveness of teachers in their first five years of teaching. Their research found that teacher effectiveness regarding student academic achievement and growth surged during the second year of teaching. Yet, for teachers who remained in the classroom after five years, their efficacy flattened after the third year. Long-term mentoring can also lead to more positive student-teacher interactions as the teacher will learn how to relate better and navigate relationships within the classroom. This will further increase teacher efficacy and impact student learning.

Research has shown that employees satisfied with their employees are less likely to leave (Pearce, 1993). Effective school leadership and organizational stability have a tremendous impact on teacher retention (de Leon & Fuertes, 2007). Good interpersonal communication skills are vital to lead others effectively (Bang, 2011). Effective and supportive supervisor communication minimizes ambiguity, leading to job dissatisfaction (Choi, 2020; Bake, 2019; Usadolo & Usadolo, 2019). Thus, supportive supervisor communication influences job satisfaction and the intention to retain employment.

Lack of administrative support is one of the most frequently cited causes of attrition (Cancio et al., 2013). A lack of emotional support from school leadership can lead a teacher to feel isolated, frustrated, and discouraged (Gallant & Riley, 2014). Administrators need to understand the importance of developing relationships with their employees. "The pursuit of a commitment to learning, shared vision, and open-mindedness are critical for ensuring both a short-term reduction in turnover and a long-term increase in employee retention" (Smith et al., 2011, p. 404-405). Relationships create a working environment on a school campus that encourages the teacher's personal and professional growth and student academic achievement.

Effective Leadership

Effective leadership is vital for employee retention, no matter the size or structure of a business. Strategies for effective leadership include the involvement of employees in decision-making, performance appraisal, employee effort recognition, and development opportunities (Usadolo & Usadolo, 2019; Marrelli, 2011). Research has found that collaboration between the employees and leadership is one of the most influential factors for growth in small businesses (Hitt et al., 1999). The exchange of and development of personal and professional skills leads to an increase in employee job satisfaction. Employee satisfaction increases when leaders actively involve employees in decision-making (Kim, 2002).

Effective leadership is vital in government agencies. Effective leader communication includes being open, direct, honest, easily accessible, frequent dialogue, and clear direction. Effective and supportive communication strategies that allow high-quality supervisor-subordinate relationships to develop also have the opportunity to create positive working environments (Usadolo & Usadolo, 2019; Marrelli, 2011). Effective leadership for employee retention in the federal sector involves employees being actively engaged in decision making, fair and frequent performance appraisals, prompt recognition of employee effort, and implementation of employee and team development opportunities. Effective leadership provides for stability in the workforce allowing for government agencies to work more effectively and productively.

As business practices have evolved, so has the role of an effective leader. Old business leaders only needed to know how best to perform the job at hand and make products for the company to be consistent and profitable. In modern times, leaders must understand the technical skills of the job at hand, but they must also be versed in managerial and relationship skills.

Leaders must possess transformational competencies emphasizing mission articulation, vision, and inspirational motivation (Usadolo & Usadolo, 2019; Marrelli, 2011; Trottier et al., 2008). Thus, the leader must be knowledgeable in the overall operational process and the specific aspects of each area of the organization and understand and be able to relate to the organization's human capital.

Relationship Building

A school environment that fosters relationship building has proven effective in teacher retention. The development of relationships is essential in the life of the teacher and the life of the student. Positive relationships allow individuals to feel accepted and for trust to develop between the group members. Communication and active listening are integral parts of a positive relationship. Mutual respect is the outcome of positive relationships. Supporting teachers through the development of professional learning communities and mentoring programs has increased teacher retention as the teachers felt valued and necessary (Jena & Pradhan, 2018; Waddell, 2010). Professional learning communities bring teachers together regularly to share and grow professionally. Individuals come together to improve their teaching strategies and increase academic learning in students. This collaboration allows teachers to creatively plan and develop curriculum, thus creating a more unified culture on campus and promoting teacher retention.

Teachers' relationships with their students appear to be related to job satisfaction in both positive and negative ways (Admiraal et al., 2019). Relationship building between teachers and students can increase teacher satisfaction, thus positively affecting teacher retention (Jena & Pradhan, 2018; Shiller, 2009). Research has shown that there is a strong connection between a teacher and a student (O'Connor et al., 2008). Strong relationships aid in the development of children's self-regulatory skills as well as social skill acquisition. High-quality teacher-student

relationships can foster a bond of acceptance that transfers to more minor classroom management issues within the classroom. Hamre and Pianta (2001) found that children may also be more motivated to engage in age-appropriate behaviors when they have high-quality relationships with their teachers. Fewer classroom interruptions allow for more academic learning and further positive development of teacher and student relationships.

The relationship development between teachers and parents can foster positive impacts on teacher retention. The adage "It takes a village to raise a child" is no more accurate than on a school campus. For a child to be educated academically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually, it is vital for the teacher, parental units, and the school community to work together for the student's best interest. O'Connor et al. (2008) found that when mutual respect is shown between the teacher and the parent, the student understands that they are working together for their betterment. Not only do parents feel supported, but also meaningful collaboration can lead to sustained student academic gain.

Although research has shown that employee training is essential, it is not as impactful as preparation. Continued training and development are imperative. Training and development are a systematic approach to develop and expand an employee's skills and abilities to further the organization's work. (Kalyanamitra et al., 2020; Schumann, 2011; Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009) Ongoing training via webinars, virtual conferences, or on-site seminars is beneficial to student achievement and teacher personal and professional development. Perceived personal growth is essential to encourage personal growth and mastery for the teacher, leading to teacher retention (Fletcher et al., 2018).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction to Methodology

For information to generalize Lutheran education, this study sampled graduates of the Concordia University system. The research included surveying current Lutheran educators and interviewing former Lutheran school educators in one-on-one interviews. The survey instrument was developed and grouped around five topics: a) teacher training experiences (Hierarchy of Needs – level two); b) job requirements of teaching and preparation (Hierarchy of Needs – level two); c) teacher-competency issues (Hierarchy of Needs – level five); d) time and classroom management issues (Hierarchy of Needs – level three); (Bennett, Brown, Kirby-Smith, & Severson., 2013) and e) financial wellness (Hierarchy of Needs – level one) (O'Keefe, 2003), with sub-topics to include, but are not limited to ministerial job satisfaction and mentor relationship, based on Ministerial Job Satisfaction Scale (Hierarchy of Needs – level four) (Selzer, 2008). Refer to Appendix A – Survey and Interview Questions.

Research Approach

This two-stage mixed-methods sequential explanatory study was designed to better support new Lutheran Teaching candidates as they accept their first call. In this research design, "the inquirer generates a general explanation (a theory) of a process shaped by the views of a large number of participants" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 82). This study focused on the process of supporting teachers within the Lutheran education system. Phase 1 utilized Lutheran educators currently working in the field, and Phase 2 incorporated workers who have left the Lutheran school system.

Figure 1. 1

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

(McLeod, 2007)

In this study, the researcher developed a hypothesis explaining the best practices identified that support Lutheran educators and promote the stability and longevity of teachers in Lutheran schools and thus improve student achievement. The hypothesis for this research was that when controlling for a comprehensive teacher preparation program, a mentoring program positively supports new teachers and maintains teacher retention in Lutheran schools. The researcher believed teachers are leaving the Lutheran education system due to increased classroom management issues, lack of support and understanding from the administration, feelings of inadequacy and lack of preparation (ability to transfer theory into practice) (Jones & Watson, 2017), and financial issues, which include student loans and the cost of living (O'Keefe, 2003). The researcher believed that a mentoring program will support new teachers who will turn into stability and teacher retention (Edwards & Nutall, 2015; Gray & Taie, 2015). Furthermore, the researcher believed that teachers who have completed a Lutheran teaching certificate at a Concordia University, instead of through a colloquy program, will have a higher retention rate in

Lutheran Schools (Egalite et al., 2014; Dadley & Edwards, 2007). Questions used in the survey and one-on-one interviews identified factors Lutheran schools are employing to support their teachers successfully.

Phase 1: First in the sequential method was survey research with both quantitative and qualitative data collected at this stage. The questions on the survey related to factors that have been identified to predict teacher retention (financial concerns, support from administration, classroom management, teacher competency, and teacher preparation). The questions were utilized to determine how the factors influence teachers' long-term goals in their careers.

Phase 2: Next in the sequential method were one-on-one interviews, where primarily qualitative data was collected. The participants of the interviews were drawn from the survey participants or recommendations from survey participants, with a focus on subjects who represent both high retention and high attrition characteristics. These teachers had been employed as teachers in Lutheran schools for different time intervals: under five years, six to fifteen years, and 25 plus years before leaving the Lutheran education system. The interview questions designed by the researcher and drawn from the literature, centered on what kept them initially employed in Lutheran schools, what went well, and why the individual left the field. The questions were peer reviewed by fourteen colleagues of the researcher and field tested by five colleagues of the researcher.

Participants

This mixed-methods study utilized convenience sampling for the quantitative portion of the research and purposeful sampling for the qualitative piece. Purposeful sampling and convenience sampling were used to gather participants and obtain basic information from the participants with the desire to determine trends regarding teacher retention in Lutheran schools.

Purposeful sampling occurred in order to have a representative sample of individuals who have graduated from the Concordia University system or obtained a colloquy (Lutheran teachers who graduated from another private or public university and then took colloquy classes to become Lutheran certified) and are currently serving in an LCMS early childhood center, elementary school, or secondary school. This sample helped the researcher identify factors contributing to teacher retention of Lutheran educators in all areas of education, Preschool through Grade 12. Convenience sampling for the qualitative research was utilized as the participants from the survey provided conveniently available pool of respondents.

Sampling Procedures

This study primarily utilized Concordia University system graduates. In doing so, concern arose that the results may not generalize to teachers who graduated from another private or public university and are currently serving in Lutheran schools. The prerequisite to be considered a participant in this study was that the individual must have completed their student teaching at one of the nine Concordia Universities or have obtained a colloquy. The 298 participants came from various settings, urban and rural, large (defined in this study as over 300 students) and small (defined in this study as under 100 students) schools. Although purposeful sampling occurred, there was a concern over the possible limitation of volunteers and that the motive behind the participants' desire to participate in the study was not known.

The researcher did a pilot survey collection from personal networks. Thirteen pilot surveys were conducted. The researcher made a call for volunteers via the Facebook pages #LuthEd and #LuthEd-Innovators for Early Childhood Educators, Elementary, and Secondary Teachers. By using both Facebook pages, approximately 6,700 teachers had the opportunity to participate in this study. The benefit of utilizing the Facebook pages as a way to obtain

participants is that more teachers have the notification that this study was occurring in a concise time frame than sending out individual emails to the approximately 1,100 early childhood centers, 750 elementary schools, 200 high schools, and three international schools that are currently in operation in the LCMS. When the call for volunteers did not fulfill the desired number of 300 participants for the survey or the 5-10 one-on-one interviews, the researcher asked for directory assistance from District Education Executives from the LCMS in finding participants for the study.

Although purposeful sampling occurred, there was a concern over the possible limitation of utilizing the Facebook pages and making a blanket call for volunteers that the motive behind the participant's desire to participate in the study was not known. A blanket call might have led to over-enthusiastic or under-enthusiastic attitudes towards teaching in general, or more specifically to teaching in a Lutheran school. A blanket call could have also led to the sample not being representative of the population. These types of responses could undermine the researcher's ability to generalize the population being studied from the sample used for the study. These volunteers may not have the same characteristics as the general population, thus raising concern that the findings may not be a true generalization to the population of Lutheran educators.

Voluntary participation had been a concern for this study. "Voluntary participation means that participants cannot be compelled, coerced, or required to participate" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 118). In addition, although a small token of appreciation (a $10 Starbucks gift card) was given to those who participated in the actual interview phase of this study, notification of the token was not done until all the interviews were completed to ascertain voluntary participation in this study further.

Role of the Researcher

Reliability

Reliability in any research study is essential. Quality recording of interviews occurred with the use of the Zoom platform. All recordings were downloaded to an external hard drive and transcribed, with the original recording destroyed to prevent issues with confidentiality. Consistency in the delivery of questions during the one-on-one interviews maintained reliability in the use of the instrumentation. Participants have been given pseudonyms in order to ensure confidentiality (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

A codebook was created to allow for transparency and comprehensibility of the results (Maxwell, 2013). The researcher was able to elaborate on the thinking that was utilized in the formation of the codes to assure that the methods used in this research can be replicated and used in additional research studies. The codebook, created during the researcher's doctoral mixed-method courses and validated by the professors leading the courses, has been applied to all the transcripts.

Validity

Validity was another critical issue that the researcher needed to be mindful of (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). The researcher disclosed any bias by openly admitting this bias in the call for participants, in the letter of consent, and before one-on-one interviews. The researcher disclosed that the researcher is a Lutheran school principal and a board member of the Lutheran Education Association. The focus of this research is the retention of teachers within Lutheran schools. The study engaged the participants by checking the transcripts for correct transcription of the one-on-one interviews. This ensured support from the participants.

The researcher conducted a pilot test on the instrument to determine its validity and

relatability (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). The pilot test of the instrument was executed on thirteen current teachers in Lutheran schools who were employed at one of three Lutheran Schools where the researcher previously served. Furthermore, the researcher had a peer review of the data before and during the formation of the theory phase of this research. Written accounts of these review sections have been added to the Appendix.

Validation was determined by the sources used for this research. Maslow (1943) proposed the Hierarchy of Needs psychological theory in 1943 to explain human behavioral motivation. Without each level effectively met, teacher attrition will develop, leading towards the loss of teacher retention. The content of the questions utilized in the sequential methods survey research, and one-on-one interviews are derived from researchers (Jones & Watson, 2017; Egalite et al., 2014; Lynch, 2014; Bennett et al., 2013; Selzer, 2008; O'Keefe, 2003).

Data Collection

The data collection for this research was in the form of surveys and interviews. Surveys were completed in Phase 1, followed by one-on-one interviews in Phase 2. When the researcher placed the call for volunteers, the researcher presented participants with a link to the survey. The informed consent was given to each respondent as part of the survey. The informed consent "provides subjects with an explanation of the research, an opportunity to terminate their participation at any time with no penalty, and full disclosure of any risks associated with the study" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 118). Informed consent for this study took place in the appearance of a question at the beginning of the survey, which needed to be signed and returned to the researcher before continuing the survey questionnaire. Included in the consent portion of the survey was a complete description of the "purpose of the study, description of the procedures, description of the benefits from the research, statement of the extent of

confidentiality, [researcher information], and a statement that participation is voluntary, and participants can refuse to participate at any time without penalty" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 118).

The qualitative portion of this study included one-on-one interviews. The Creswell and Poth (2018) method was followed. The interview participants were drawn from the broader sample of survey participants, and chosen by length of service in the Lutheran education service prior to resigning. The interviews were conducted online via Zoom. A recording of each session occurred for future transcription. Interviews lasted around one hour (minimum of 45 minutes to a maximum of 90 minutes). Participants were former teachers from the Lutheran education system (serving grades K-12). Individuals represented educators who left after different lengths of time serving a Lutheran school: under five years, six to fifteen years, and 25 plus years. Following a brief description of the research project and reminding the participants that this is a confidential process, the researcher followed a set of eleven created open-ended questions. In a structured interview format, each of the participants received the same question in the same order. The goal was to conduct four interviews. Nine interviews were started. Six interviews were completed, as three participants withdrew in the interview process.

Following the one-on-one interviews, the recordings were transcribed. Next, the transcripts were returned to the participants for member checking. This practice "rule[d] out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do and the perspectives they have on what is going on" (Maxwell, 2013, p.126-127). All recorded interview data collected was downloaded, transcribed, member checked and data recordings were destroyed. Full transcripts of the one-on-one interviews have been included in the appendix.

Data Analysis

A Likert scale was utilized for the survey: 5-completely agree, and 1- completely disagree (Jones & Watson, 2017). The interviews have been transcribed and analyzed using a domain analysis process for the oral interviews to gain a better understanding of the relationships identified in the discussions (Bennett et al., 2013).

Once the data was collected, the researcher addressed the reliability coefficient of agreement. This is "established by determining the extent to which two or more persons agree about what they have seen, heard, or rated" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 182). A discrepancy between the raters on the rating of the measures is plausible. The disparity in measuring could be due to a lack of unifying the measurements and inconsistent measurements. Any error in data collection could make results challenging to interrupt. To address the threat of interrater agreement, the researcher conducted proper training to ensure a higher level of understanding with the raters on the scoring of the measure. The researcher conducted this training by having the raters rate a mock survey before receiving the results from this research.

For the survey, answers have been given numerical coding (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The coding system used in the below survey questions will be present in parentheses following the solution provided. See Appendix A. Under the heading "Teacher Preparation Program," the data helped determine the level to which a teacher felt prepared and confident upon completing a teacher preparation program at a Concordia University. The section "Employment Support Structure" provided data on the level of support offered to the teacher by their current place of employment. "Support" included financial and psychological support from the employer.

When calculating the coding for this study, "1" served as low, and "5" did as high for answers utilizing a Likert Scale response. The number associated with the answer has been used

to group the answers for reporting purposes for all other questions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Although using a web-based questionnaire can lead to faster responses, a limitation is that of the researcher's lack of ability to control where and when the participant will answer the questionnaire. The researcher must be mindful of this as there is no correction to be made for this limitation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). One control measure instituted by the researcher is that participants must fill out the questionnaire in the same chronological order.

Following the Creswell and Poth (2018) method, once the data had been collected and transcribed, member checking occurred, and the data were analyzed via a QDA software program (NVivo). Then, the researcher began the coding process of the study. The researcher first analyzed any field notes that were taken regarding recurring items stated during the one-on-one interviews. Primary themes identified were placed as headings on a paper. Next, the interview transcriptions were read, and more detailed notes were taken and placed under each heading identified, paying particular attention to any new themes that emerged. The identified themes were then organized into a table for further analysis and consolidation, as needed. Then, the researcher finally looked at the results of NVivo analysis to further confirm the themes prior identified.

Open coding was the next stage. "The researcher begins with coding the data for major categories of information" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 85). Identifying categories and the initial labeling and defining of themes occurred during this stage. The researcher anticipated that the major themes identified would be classroom management issues, support from the principal, financial matters, teacher competency, and teacher preparation. Axial coding followed. "Axial coding emerges in which the researcher identifies one open coding category to focus on and then

goes back to the data and creates categories around the core phenomenon" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 85). The researcher created a diagram of the categories within the axial coding stage and defined the relationships identified. Participant quotes were assigned to each identified theme. Repeating themes were combined into similar codes. The final step was selective coding, in which the predictive theory was uncovered. At this stage, the researcher added meaning to the text and presented the theory discovered and the benefits and ramifications of teacher retention at Lutheran Schools as identified in the research. The theory was developed on patterns and relationships identified during the investigation.

Ethical Issues

"The privacy of research participants must be protected. This means that access to participants' characteristics, responses, behavior, and other information is restricted to the researcher" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 121). Since one-on-one interviews were recorded, it is impossible for the researcher to maintain the anonymity of the participants. Thus, the researcher must keep the individual data confidential and assign a pseudonym to each participant.

Before the call for volunteers and to address any possible threat to construct validity, the researcher must make straightforward questions. In addition, it was essential to have an expert review the instrument before beginning the study and making any necessary revisions before the questionnaire was given to participants. In addition, conducting a pilot test on the instrument to see if it is reliable further addressed this threat (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Prior to conducting the study, the researcher needed to be mindful of recruiting volunteers and seeking collaboration with the District Executives of the LCMS. The use of a clearly defined consent letter helped obtain permission (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In

addition, the researcher needed to assure participants that their participation was voluntary.

When collecting data for the study, the researcher needed to be transparent with the participants by discussing the purpose and use of the study prior to the one-on-one interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Attention has been made to the interview questions to ensure that the participants are not asked leading questions. The use of a pilot test helped to avoid this as well.

The analysis of the data is an optimal time for ethical issues to arise. The researcher was mindful of respecting the privacy of the participants. Pseudonyms were assigned during the transcription phase (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Composite profiles have been developed to protect the privacy of the participants further. These composite profiles have been used when writing the findings of the study.

The researcher was mindful of identified biases while reporting the findings of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher has shared copies of the studies with all participants via email. In addition, the researcher shared the research results with District Education Executives from the LCMS and the School Ministry office of the LCMS.

Summary

The researcher anticipated that the outcomes of this study would conclude that although the spiritual needs of beginning Lutheran teachers are being met, these teacher participants are struggling with feeling competent in the classroom, time and classroom management issues, lack of support from their administrator, and being adequately trained to deliver an adequate educational program. Furthermore, beginning teachers encounter financial stresses due to lower monetary compensation than their public-school counterparts. For many first-year teachers, the financial aspects of living on their own for the first time in conjunction with having to start to repay their college loans can be overwhelming.

The researcher anticipated that the findings of this study will indicate that the implementation of a well-rounded mentoring program during the first two years of teaching, which includes emotional and spiritual support, as well as practical application into the classroom, will be a benefit for new teachers and help them feel included in the learning community. A well-rounded mentoring program would have new teachers allowed to observe mentor teachers as well as be observed and receive feedback on their own practices. A well-rounded mentoring program would help the new teacher develop an honest relationship with the administration which will allow for the opportunity to have transparent conversations regarding the financial pressures felt by the beginning teacher.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The purpose of this study is to identify strategies that Lutheran schools are successfully utilizing to promote teacher retention within their schools. Teacher retention is vital to healthy schools and school systems, as research has shown that stability in the classroom positively affects student achievement (Tamir & Magidin de Kramer, 2011). Furthermore, research has shown that quality teachers make a long-term impact on student learning (Chetty et al., 2012). This study will identify strategies that Lutheran schools are successfully utilizing to promote teacher retention within their schools. This chapter presents findings from the data collection process and analysis of that data.

The teachers in the study discussed a range of influences that positively and negatively affected their experiences in Lutheran Schools. This study employed two phases of data collection. Phase 1 utilized Lutheran educators currently working in the field, and Phase 2 incorporated workers who have left the Lutheran School system. This chapter reveals the data collection analyses of factors such as compensation, development of relationships within the church and school community, teacher preparedness, and effects of mentoring on the retention of Called teachers in Lutheran schools.

This mixed-methods study utilized convenience sampling for the quantitative portion of the research and purposeful sampling for the qualitative piece. Purposeful sampling and convenience sampling were used to gather participants and obtain basic information from the participants with the desire to determine trends regarding teacher retention in Lutheran schools. This study intentionally sampled groups of individuals who have graduated from the Concordia University system or obtained a colloquy (Lutheran teachers who graduated from another private or public university and then took colloquy classes to become Lutheran certified) and are

currently serving in an LCMS early childhood center, elementary school, or secondary school. This sample helped the researcher identify factors contributing to teacher retention of Lutheran educators in all areas of education, Preschool through Grade 12. The research questions for this study are:

Primary Research Question-What factors contribute to teacher retention in Lutheran schools?

Sub-Question 1- What strategies are Lutheran schools utilizing to support their teachers?

Sub-Question 2- How does the implementation of a mentoring program impact teacher retention?

Sub-Question 3- How does teacher training affect the teacher retention rate in Lutheran Schools?

Descriptive Analysis of the Participants – Quantitative

Participants in this teacher retention study were from Lutheran early childhood centers, elementary schools, and high schools serving in schools across the United States and internationally. To protect the confidentiality of participants, the name of the teacher or school where serving was not collected.

The sample consisted of a total of 298 participants for the survey. Participants ages ranged from 22 to 83 years (M = 44.5, SD = 3.58) with 89% identified as female, 78% married, and 99% White. Participants were required to have graduated from a Concordia University (90.2%) or obtain their Lutheran Teaching Diploma by completing the Colloquy program (9.8%). The majority of the Concordia University graduates are alumnae from Concordia University Nebraska (25.3%) and Concordia University-Chicago (23.9%).

Table 1. 1

Baseline Characteristics of Survey Participant vs. Active Commissioned Teachers on the Roster

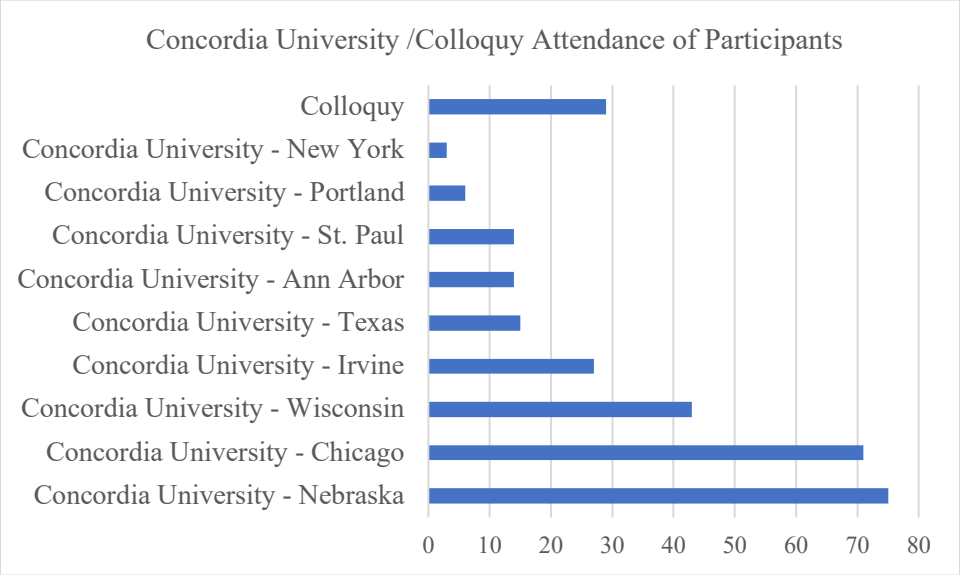
Baseline Characteristic	Survey Participants	Rostered Teachers
	%	%
Gender		
Female	88.4	70.5
Male	11.6	29.5
Age		
Under 35	26.8	17.5
35-44	24.5	22.1
45-54	21.1	26.3
55-64	19.9	24.6
65+	7.6	9.5
Marital Status		
Married	78.4	79.3
Single- Divorced	2.7	3.5
Single- Never Married	16.9	16.3
Single – Widowed	2	0.9
Race/Ethnicity		
African American	0.3	0.4
Asian	0.3	0.3
Caucasian	98.7	98.9
Hispanic	0.7	0.2
Native American	0	0
Other	0	0.2

Note. * Based on 5,216 Active Commissioned Teachers on the Roster as of September 8, 2021. Information provided by the LCMS Department of Rosters and Statistics.

The participants of this study represented each of the Concordia Universities, as well as graduates of the Colloquy program offered by Teacher Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod through Concordia University Education Network.

Figure 2. 1

Concordia University /Colloquy Attendance of Participants (N=298)



Quantitative Research Analysis

To investigate the research questions, the researcher designed a 30-question survey to determine factors that have been identified to predict teacher retention (financial concerns, support from administration, classroom management, teacher competency, and teacher preparation). The questions were utilized to determine how the factors influence teachers' long-term goals in their careers. A five-point Likert scale response format was required. The high rating was "completely agree," and the lowest rating was "completely disagree."

Teacher Preparation Program

Under the heading "Teacher Preparation Program," the data helped determine the level to which a teacher felt prepared and confident upon completing a teacher preparation program at a

Concordia University. The majority of participants felt competent to enter into full-time teaching after completing the teacher preparation program at Concordia University (44% completely agree and 47.7% agree). In addition, participants felt prepared to deliver the curriculum for students after completing the teacher preparation program at Concordia University (39.9% completely agree and 47.3% agree). When asked about being prepared for the expectations of being a Called worker, participants were well prepared with results of 41.4% completely agree, and 35% agree.

Although the majority of participants felt prepared to handle classroom management in your teacher preparation program at Concordia University, there was a higher level of neutrality with 26.5% neither agree nor disagree, 40.6% agree, and 22.8% completely agree. Similar results occurred about feeling prepared to handle to the job requirements of a teacher, with 28.3% neither agree nor disagree, 40% agree, and 22.8% completely agreeing. Comparable results materialized for participants prepared for the realities of living on their own, with 26.1% neither agree nor disagree, 39.2% agree, and 20.9% completely agreeing.

Table 2. 1

Preparation by Concordia University System Teacher Preparation programs (N=268).

Upon graduation from a Concordia University, participants felt,	*M*
Competent to enter full-time teaching	4.36
Prepared to deliver curriculum	4.24
Prepared for the expectations of being a Called worker	4.09
Prepared to handle classroom management	3.76
Prepared to handle the job requirements of a teacher	3.74
Prepared for the realities of living on your own	3.65

Note: 1- Completely Disagree, 5 – Completely Agree

The teacher preparation programs at each of the Concordia Universities prepared their students for classrooms. When comparing each campus to another one, Concordia University Nebraska and Concordia University-Portland each received the highest overall score of 4.2 out of 5, with Concordia University - Irvine next with a score of 4.1 out of 5. The lowest overall score was earned by Concordia University Ann Arbor, with a rating of 3 out of 5.

Table 3. 1

Preparation by Concordia University Teacher Preparation program (N=268).

University Attended	*N*	TP #3	TP #4	TP #5	TP #6	TP #7	TP #8	Overall *M*
Concordia University-Nebraska	75	4.4	4.4	4	4	4.4	3.9	4.2
Concordia University-Portland	6	4.7	4.5	4.5	4	4	3.5	4.2
Concordia University-Irvine	27	4.4	4.3	4.1	4	4.1	3.7	4.1
Concordia University-Chicago	71	4.4	4.2	3.8	3.7	4	3.6	4
Concordia University-New York	3	4.3	4.3	4	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.9
Concordia University-Texas	15	4.2	4.3	3.5	3.7	4.3	3.4	3.9
Concordia University-St. Paul	14	4.3	3.8	3.3	6.6	3.6	3.6	3.7
Concordia University-Wisconsin	43	4.2	4	3.4	3.5	3.9	3.5	3.7
Concordia University-Ann Arbor	14	4.2	4	2.9	3	3.8	3.3	3.5

Note: Regarding graduates of Concordia University teacher preparation programs, TP #3 = competent for full-time teaching position; TP #4 = prepared to deliver curriculum; TP #5 = prepared to handle classroom management; TP #6 = prepared to handle teaching requirements such as parent-teacher conferences; TP #7 = prepared as a Called worker; TP #8 = prepared to live independently.

The results of the Pearson correlation regarding the teacher preparation program at a Concordia University indicated that feeling competent to enter into full-time teaching after completing the teacher preparation program at a Concordia University and feeling prepared to handle classroom management had a moderate positive relationship, r (268) = .65, $p < 0.1$. Weaker positive relationships with feeling competent to enter full-time teaching after completing the teacher preparation program were feeling prepared to handle classroom management r (268) = .50, $p < 0.1$, feeling prepared to handle the job requirements of a teacher (i.e., parent-teacher relationships r (268) = .47, $p < 0.1$, feeling prepared for the expectations of being a Called

worker r (268) = .45, $p < 0.1$, and feeling prepared for the realities of living on one's own r (268) = .43, $p < 0.1$.

The two variables, feeling prepared to deliver the curriculum to students after completing the teacher preparation program at a Concordia University and feeling ready to handle the job requirements of a teacher (i.e., parent-teacher relationships), had a weak positive correlation r (268) = .49, $p < 0.1$. A slightly weaker positive correlation was found between feeling prepared to deliver the curriculum to students and handling classroom management r (268) = .47, $p < 0.1$.

The results of the Pearson correlation indicated that feeling prepared to handle the job requirements of a teacher (i.e., parent-teacher relationships) after completing the teacher preparation program at a Concordia University and feeling prepared to handle classroom management had a moderate positive relationship, r (268) = .53, $p < 0.1$. A slightly weaker positive relationship was found between feeling prepared to handle the job requirements of a teacher and feeling prepared for the expectations of being a Called worker r (268) = .46, $p < 0.1$. The most significant positive correlation relationship to feeling prepared for the expectations of being a Called worker after completing the teacher preparation program at a Concordia University was feeling ready for the realities of living on one's own r (268) = .48, $p < 0.1$.

A teacher mentoring program designed to support new teachers during their first year in the classroom was available to 14.6% of the participants, with 85.4% not being offered the opportunity to participate in such a program. Of those who participated in a teacher mentoring program, the overall impact of the mentoring program on teaching was neither positive nor negative, scoring an average of 3 out of 5 on the Likert scale.

Employment Support Structure

The section "Employment Support Structure" provided data on the level of support, financial and psychological, delivered to the teacher by their current place of employment, the church, and the school they are serving. Participants were asked to reflect on their level of feeling financially and psychologically support by the church and school and the principal at their school. The majority of participants felt supported financially (38.8% agree and 23.7% agree completely) by the church and school they are currently serving.

The results of the Pearson correlation indicated that the strongest positive correlation under Employment Structure Support was the support of the current principal and feeling psychologically supported from current congregation r (295) = .67, $p < 0.1$. The variable feeling financially supported by the church/school currently serving had near-identical positive correlations with feeling the church/school currently serving at could provide assistance during a financial crisis r (297) = .51, $p < 0.1$ and feeling psychologically supported by the church/school currently serving at r (297) = .51, $p < 0.1$.

The results of the Pearson correlation indicated that feeling psychologically supported by the church/school currently serving at had a weak positive relationship with feeling the church/school currently serving at could provide assistance during a financial crisis r (297) = .46, $p < 0.1$.

Basic Needs Assessment

During the Basic Needs Assessment, participants were asked to determine their personal level of agreement on various issues such as being rested to working with supportive coworkers, students, and parents to classroom management topics.

Table 4. 1

Basic Needs Assessment Results (N= 298)

Reflective Statement	Average score
I have a good idea of where I want my class to proceed each school year.	4.5
I work with supportive teachers.	4.4
I feel satisfied with my teaching most of the time.	4.1
I work with supportive parents.	4
I am as excited today to be a teacher as I was during my student teaching.	3.8
I feel comfortable bringing issues and concerns to my administration.	3.8
I work with students who are well-behaved and eager to learn.	3.8
I am able to provide for my living expenses, professional desires, and engage in social activities.	3.6
I had a realistic understanding of what my "teacher life" would be when I entered teaching.	3.5
I get an adequate amount of rest.	3.3

Note: 1- Completely Disagree, 5 – Completely Agree

The results of the Pearson correlation indicated that there was a significant positive correlation between having an idea of where the class should proceed each year and feeling satisfied with teaching, r (297) = 0.52, $p < .01$. Additional significant positive correlations are having the teacher as excited today to be a teacher as during my student teaching and feeling satisfied with his/her teaching most of the time r (297) = 0.47, $p < .01$ and working with well-behaved students and eager to learn and working with supportive parents r (298) = 0.46, $p < .01$.

The results of the Pearson correlation indicated that there was a weak positive correlation between working with supportive teachers and getting an adequate amount of rest r (298) = 0.11, $p < 0.05$.

Factors Related to Staying at Current School and in Teaching

The results of the Pearson correlation indicated that the overall highest positive correlation with staying at the current school was being comfortable bringing concerns to principal r (298) = 0.44, $p < .01$. Additional significant positive correlations were being psychologically support by the church/school r (298) = 0.39, $p < .01$, being supported by the principal r (298) = 0.37, $p < .01$, being as excited to be a today teacher as was during student teaching r (298) = 0.34, $p < .01$, and working with supportive teachers r (298) = 0.31, $p < .01$.

Table 5. 1

Factors Related to Staying at Current School (N=298)

Factors Related to Staying at Current School	*R*
Comfortable bringing concerns to principal	0.44**
Psychologically supported by the church/school	0.39**
Supported by principal	0.37**
As excited to be a teacher today as I was during my student teaching.	0.34**
Working with supportive teachers	0.31**
Working with supportive parents	0.28**
Feeling financially supported by church/school	0.24**
Feeling satisfied with teaching most of the time.	0.23**
Know where I want class to proceed each year.	0.23**
Able to provide for my basic living expenses	0.15*
Working with students who are well-behaved and eager to learn.	0.13*
Getting an adequate amount of rest.	0.12*

*p <0.05, **p <0.01, ***p <0.001

The results of the Pearson correlation indicated that the overall highest positive correlation with staying in teaching was being comfortable bringing concerns to principal r (298) = 0.37, p < .01. Additional significant positive correlations were being psychologically support by the church/school r (298) = 0.32, p < .01, being as excited to be a today teacher as was during student teaching r (298) = 0.31, p < .01, being supported by the principal r (298) = 0.29, p < .01, and working with supportive teachers r (298) = 0.26, p < .01.

Table 6. 1

Staying in Teaching (N=298)

Factors	*R*
Comfortable bringing concerns to principal	0.37**
Psychologically supported by the church/school	0.32**
As excited to be a teacher today as I was during my student teaching.	0.31**
Supported by the principal	0.29**
Working with supportive teachers	0.26**
Working with supportive parents	0.25**
Feeling financially supported by church/school	0.23**
Feeling satisfied with teaching most of the time.	0.21**
Know where I want class to proceed each year.	0.21**
Able to provide for my basic living expenses	0.12*

*$p<0.05$, **$p<0.01$, ***$p<0.001$

The top two factors for both staying at the current school and for staying in teaching were comfortable bringing concerns to the principal and being psychologically supported by the church/school currently serving. It should be noted that the third and fourth factors for staying at current school were being supported by the principal and being as excited to be a teacher today as was during student teaching, respectively, were flipped for factors relating to staying in education with the third factor being as excited to be a teacher today as was during student teaching and the fourth factor being supported by the principal. The fifth factor, working with supportive teachers, was the same for staying at the current school and teaching. Feeling supported and valued are the main factors that teachers who were surveyed identified with regarding staying at the current school and in teaching.

Summary of Quantitative Data

The results of the Pearson correlation indicated that the overall highest positive correlation in this study was between the current teaching position and the current school, r (298) = 0.88, $p < .01$. Additional significant positive correlations are feeling supported by the principal and being able to communicate issues and concerns to principal r (298) = 0.79, $p < .01$.

Table 7. 1

Top Ten Correlation of Factors (N=298)

Correlation	R
continue teaching X continue at current school	0.88*
supported by principal X communicate issues and concerns to principal	0.79*
supported by principal X supported by church/school	0.66*
communicate issues and concerns to principal X supported by church/school	0.65*
prepared to deliver curriculum X competent to teach full-time	0.65*
prepared for teaching requirements X prepared for classroom management	0.53*
goal setting X satisfied with my teaching	0.52*
sufficient compensation X able to provide for basic needs	0.52*
sufficient compensation X church/school provide financial assistance in need	0.51*
sufficient compensation X supported by church/school	0.50*

*Note. *p < 0.01*

Using a one-way ANOVA, there were no statistically significant categorical effects between the factors of ethnicity, gender, marital status, and which Concordia/Colloquy the participant attended and the responses of Teacher Preparation program, Employment Structure, and Basic Needs Assessment.

Findings of Qualitative Research

The qualitative portion of this study included one-on-one interviews. The interview participants were drawn from the broader sample of survey participants. The interviews were conducted online via Zoom. A recording of each session occurred for future transcription. Interviews lasted approximately one hour. Participants were former teachers from the Lutheran education system (serving grades K-12). Individuals represented educators who left after different lengths of time serving a Lutheran school: under five years, six to fifteen years, and 25 plus years. Following a brief description of the research project and reminding the participants that this is a confidential process, the researcher followed a set of eleven created open-ended questions. In a structured interview format, each of the participants received the same question in the same order. The goal was to conduct four interviews. Six interviews were completed, with one participant who left and then returned to Lutheran education.

Table 8. 1

Profile of One-on-one Interview Subjects

	Concordia Attended	Years in Lutheran Education	Current Profession
LT 1	Chicago	5	Stay at Home mom
LT 2	Irvine	5	Public school teacher
LT 4	Wisconsin	13	Currently a Lutheran School teacher again
LT 3	Nebraska	16	Teacher at non-denominational school
LT 5	Nebraska	25	Manager for an educational company
LT 6	Nebraska	25	Currently employed in a non-educational field

Note. Lutheran Teacher #1 = LT1, Lutheran Teacher #2 = LT2, etc.

Following the one-on-one interviews, the recordings were transcribed. Next, the transcripts were returned to the participants for member checking. This practice "rule[d] out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do and the perspectives they have on what is going on" (Maxwell, 2013, p.126-127). All recorded interview data collected was downloaded onto an external storage device, transcribed, and destroyed the original recording. Full transcripts of the one-on-one interviews have been included in the Appendices.

Following the Creswell and Poth (2018) method, once the data had been collected and transcribed, member checking occurred, and the data were analyzed via a QDA software program (NVivo), and then the researcher began the coding process of the study. The researcher first analyzed any field notes that were taken regarding recurring items stated during the one-on-

one interviews. Primary themes identified were placed as headings on a paper. Next, the interview transcriptions were read, and more detailed notes were taken and placed under each heading identified, paying particular attention to any new themes that emerged. The identified themes were then organized into a table for further analysis and consolidation, as needed. Then, the researcher looked at the results of NVivo analysis to further confirm the themes prior identified.

Open coding was the next stage. "The researcher begins with coding the data for major categories of information" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 85). Identifying categories and the initial labeling and defining of themes occurred during this stage. The researcher anticipated that the major themes identified would be classroom management issues, support from the principal, financial matters, teacher competency, and teacher preparation. Axial coding followed. "Axial coding emerges in which the researcher identifies one open coding category to focus on and then goes back to the data and creates categories around the core phenomenon" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 85). The researcher created a diagram of the categories within the axial coding stage and defined the relationships identified. Participant quotes were assigned to each identified theme. Repeating themes were combined into similar codes. The final step was selective coding, in which the predictive theory was uncovered. At this stage, the researcher added meaning to the text and presented the idea discovered and the benefits and ramifications of teacher retention at Lutheran Schools as identified in the research. The theory was developed on patterns and relationships identified during the investigation. A full transcript of the codebook can be found in the Appendix.

Table 9. 1

Codes and Frequencies (N=6)

Codes	Frequency
Church Support	36
Administrative Support	34
Financially Valued	16
Sanctity of the Call	11
Transition into teaching	10
Mentoring Program	8
Relationships	7
Recognition	7
School Finances	3
Pastoral Support	2

Table 9. 1 lists the 10 most frequent codes about which teachers spoke during their interviews. The codes demonstrate how the teachers in this study view various aspects of their workplace.

For purposes of transparency and repetition, the researcher included examples of coded dialogue for the 11 codes from Table 9. 1 in Table 10. 1. All excerpts in Table 10. 1 are from participant interviews between August 11, 2021, and August 24, 2021. All of the final major themes based on coding and corresponding quotations from multiple teacher participants were included.

Table 10. 1

Code and Dialogue Example

Code	Dialogue Example
Administrative Support	"You know, there were so many final straws prior to me leaving, but I think that the fact that the administrator did not know what she was doing and then she would blame the teachers and then the church would come down and say it was our fault. "
Church Support	"I think the church community did a good job of reaching out to me when I first became a part of that community and making me feel welcome."
Sanctity of the Call	"I seriously believe in the call process."
Transition into teaching	"I think that it goes back to the community of people, and it was a smooth transition because I had a school where the community of people really rallied around me as much as they could."
Relationships	"I loved the camaraderie with my coworkers and the ability to care and nurture one another and the families that we served."
Recognition	"I was recognized for my years of service, but not for necessarily what I did in the classroom or for my work in the classroom."
School Finances	"If you are going to have a school, you need to support that school and give that teacher what they need. It is not 1950 anymore. We are in 2021 and we need to get with the times. [Sometimes] you have to put [forth] money."

School Administrative Support

School administrative support was the most referred to topic during the one-on-one interviews. The support of administration can be an essential ingredient for successful teaching. A supportive principal can add value to the teacher's instruction by assisting during difficult times and providing guidance when needed. When asked about the teacher's support from their Lutheran school administrator, the conversation took a momentary stall for each of the six interviews. Upon reflection, five of the six teachers were able to find a positive response to complementary administration support.

Lutheran Teacher 2 (LT 2) stated that her administrator showed support "by throwing me in and seeing if I would float or swim. But I also think it was throwing me in with a safety net."

She felt that her administrator was trying to push her to grow, which she was willing to do because she knew she could call on her administrator if she needed help and guidance. Lutheran Teacher 1 (LT 1) declared that her principal was barely visible, but "my assistant principal was constantly checking in with me and offering advice." Lutheran Teacher 5 (LT 5) felt, "I guess for the majority of my years I was supported." Lutheran Teacher 4 (LT 4) commented that "If it was really, really bad, yes." Lutheran Teacher 3 (LT 3) revealed, "We do, um, our Wednesday meetings and things like that, and she will open it up to conversation and after that, if you have more concerns then you can go and talk with her."

The subject of parent-pleasing principals was mentioned several times during the interviews. LT 4 commented that she had an "administrator who was trying to please the parents all of the time." LT 2 stated that Lutheran schools are "catering sometimes to parents. There is this element that we need to please parents, and sometimes therefore, things are said in one door and then done differently when the door is reopened."

Two of the teachers stated this phenomenon might occur for the benefit of financial security for the school. In regards to school finances, LT 4 notes that school decisions such as "how you are going to be handling certain types of behavioral problems, parent complaints, all of those things" are based on "parent buy-in." This view of administration was confirmed by Lutheran Teacher 6 (LT 6) who explains that "administration would take the side of the parents over the side of the teachers… and back up parents so the kids could get what they wanted. And that was not fun. I have actually had administration lie to me… change my grades. So, yeah, I guess I have trust issues."

Five out of the teachers felt unsupported by administration when a problem arose in their classrooms. LT 5 emphasized, "I was not supported at all, not in any way, shape, or form… I

received NO guidance or direction from my last administrator!! Zero. I had no contact with her. Zero! None whatsoever." In relation to support, LT 1 reported "from my principal no, but definitely from the assistant principal." LT 4 adds, "I have had to do everything by myself: discipline, email parents. I have had to deal with it all myself. I have yet to have a principal have my back 100%." For three teachers, the lack of administrative support played a part in their decisions to leave Lutheran education. LT 5 explained that she left Lutheran education due to

> …the ultimate lack of support and disdain for what was happening in that Lutheran school. The lack of leadership, the lack of support, the lack of knowledge even on education, let alone administration, let alone Lutheran values, doctrine even. I mean it was a severe lack of all of those things and I didn't want to be associated with something that was going a different direction then what I had known for 25 years. I just said it is time to leave, time to leave until something changes.

LT 2 echoed this sentiment when speaking of how her "new administrator didn't make me feel valued as a person. Actually, it was quite the opposite. I was made to feel as if I was doing something wrong and to see how our church was handling things was very hard as well."

Church Support

The support of the church the teacher was serving can be a source of spiritual guidance and renewal. The church community can provide fellowship and relational support for the teacher as well. LT 2 felt that "the church community did a good job of reaching out to me when I first became a part of that community and making me feel welcome." LT 5 commented on her first congregation that "the church was very supportive, and they were quick to get my needs accommodated and very supportive of me at that time." LT 4 valued positive church-school connections and perceived that she felt "supported in prayer" by her pastor and that "he is very

well seen, and he does a good job about that." LT 6 experienced a very positive relationship with the pastor of the church. She felt that is personable demeanor made it comfortable t approach him and that was established when they first met and he stated, "call me Pastor Don, we are on the same team." This sentiment was further acknowledged when he shared with the faculty, "I am a shepherd. That is what I am. The school. The church. It is a flock, but I am the shepherd." LT 6 felt that the support she received from this pastor and the connections that he made within the school led to cohesiveness between the church and school, especially among the teachers and the families who knew that this pastor was there to support them, whether they were members of the church or not. LT 3 found positive pastoral support where "Our pastors lead our Chapels. So, I guess there is a lot of support, but guidance, yes, I feel like we are always following the guidance of the church, as we are all one, but they are the spearhead of your ministry."

Unfortunately, that positive relationship was not consistently seen by all, all of the time. With changing church and school leadership, there can be a waxing and waning of support. LT 4 commented that she did not view her pastor as a strong leader, "Our pastor is not a leader. If I want to go and pray in his office for two hours, I feel very comfortable doing that, but as far as leadership goes, he is not that, and we just don't have it." Multiple teachers felt that they had at one point a pastor that did not provide them with guidance. LT 3 acknowledged that at "My first church I feel that we were supported, but guidance? I don't think so, and I just feel that we were always just supported. The guidance of we are one of the biggest ministries of all of the churches I have worked for." LT 6 commented with "Um, not so much guidance. Not so much the bigger churches." LT 5 commented that she once had a pastor that overly provided guidance. She

shared how one pastor that she worked with took Call assignments within the Church very important and expected each Called worker to provide extra service to the Church in the form of being a Sunday School teacher, directing Vacation Bible School, reading, or ushering. The level of scrutiny that this teacher and her co-workers felt led to uncomfortable interactions with this pastor. LT 4 shared the great length how a pastor's behavior displayed a lack of support between the pastor of a supporting congregation to an association school. This pastor did not encourage the members of his congregation to send their children to that school because he "wants to be the one to give them Confirmation instruction. This is an LC-MS pastor. That is a problem… the church was very much separated from the school." This lack of support greatly weakened the relationship between the church and school and ultimately the other churches in the association.

The relationship between the individual teacher and the church leadership and congregational members can have a positive or negative effect on the teacher as well. LT 2 articulated that she experienced a "definitely a separation of church and school, and there were times where I was made to feel like my opinion didn't matter within the church community." She felt that this was due to the fact that she was from a different generation than the majority of the congregational members and that "the church was kind of catering to a very specific type of person, which I was not a part of generational speaking." LT 4 felt that during her first Call, "the church was against the school, or you feel like you are no longer the team between the church and school." She further her comments with

> I know that within a school, there will always be tension with staff members or something like that, but that can be worked through. We are all called to do a job and to get along and to serve God this way, and if His ministry is what is being done, a little issue between coworkers will resolve itself. However, if you're having a battle between

> your church and your school about this or that, that is where is God in this situation and if you're not feeling that support from your church to continue the ministry in the school, that would drive a big question of is this really where we belong right now. Even though maybe your heart is there because you want to continue to succeed and try with God's grace back into that situation, sometimes it heals, but sometimes it breaks, and it is time to move on.

Further comment was received regarding the relationship between the church and the school when LT 3 shared that while working at a Lutheran childcare center, there was a lack of support for the center from older members of the congregation. There constant inspections of the classrooms and commentary on the destruction the children were causing on the building was disheartening to her. "All they saw: the destruction of what happens when you have kids around instead of the love and the joy and the sharing and the positive aspect." This caused for uncomfortable interactions between the teaching staff and the congregational members, despite the fact that the center was growing in enrollment and providing financial support for the church.

Frustration with working with the pastor and church leadership was a common thread that showed up in three of the six interviews. LT 5 commented that she felt the biggest challenge at her church and school was developing a relationship where each entity worked together towards a common purpose. She stressed that the importance of working towards a unified mission and that it would have been "meaningful and helpful to the school and to me as a teacher." LT 2 shared that "I also could not work for a church that did not really listen to what was being said and 100% supported the new administrator, [an administrator who did not support her teachers]." LT 6 contributed that "At my first church, nothing. In fact, the pastor was in my room saying,

‘you should not have Santa Clause in here’. He was trying to micromanage my classroom, so that was not okay.”

Financially Valued

Being a Called worker can be a financial struggle for some teachers. Lutheran educators do not traditionally go into the ministry for financial benefits, but it should be expected that the worker receives enough compensation to be able to cover one’s basic living expenses. The teachers interviewed shared their views on the compensation that they received at the Lutheran schools they were serving. Of the six teachers interviewed, three felt valued, three did not. LT 1 shared, “[The San Francisco Bay Area] is an expensive city to live in, and I feel that the salary that I received was generous. It was 85% of the public school system.” LT 3 explained, "At my first church, I was Called, so yes. Here, I am contracted to, yeah…You just want to be recognized in your Lutheran church for the work that you do with your school, but yes, financially, I think our church is doing that. They do provide our health insurance and things like that". LT 5 commented that,

> When I went to my last school, I didn’t feel valued coming in. So, I came in with not having all of my credits credited. I was only given half a credit for working at any other place. And then that was a big deal, and they listened to us. Then you get credit for all of your teaching experience. Which really put you up higher in the scale, which was needed to live in [the San Francisco Bay Area]. I do think that towards the end, they were willing to make accommodations. Overall, I do think that they are a little under what they need to be here in the city. I do think they were really trying to correct that, so I can’t fault them for that.

On the other hand, three teachers did not feel the congregation they served valued them financially. LT 6 stated that "One congregation said we wish we could pay you more. We wish we could pay you what you are really worth. The others were like, um, well this is what we pay." LT 4 shared that in her opinion, "[Lutheran schools] pay crap. My dad had to slip us $50 once and a while so we could buy food." The most vocal of these three teachers, LT 2 who shared her disappointment that "the church was not willing to acknowledge and fully work on the issue that the teachers could not afford to teach at the school, and afford to live here was disheartening."

Sanctity of the Call

The decision to become a Called worker within the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod is not made lightly. Besides completing additional coursework to obtain a Lutheran Teaching Diploma as part of an undergraduate program or colloquy program, a Called worker makes a pledge in front of the church congregation at installation. That pledge is reconfirmed annually when rededicated to serve as a teacher within a Lutheran school. Accepting a Call is viewed as working for the school and providing service to the church that is associated with the school. Due to the lack of available Called workers, three of the teachers shared their thoughts regarding their perceived lack of emphasis on a Call and the Call process.

Having grown up in a family of Called workers, LT1 strongly believes in the sanctity of the Call. She elaborates that during her time at the church and school she was serving, The Call was being valued less and less. With each passing year, the new teachers that were hired were not called. I worked under three principals in the four years that I was at my school. At that time, the last two principals didn't even try to find called workers. One claimed there were no called workers, and the last one did not even reach out to the Concordia's or complete a CMIF search. LT 5 shared how important it was to her that she was a Called teacher and how high she

valued the Call process. She added that when a principal vacancy occurred at the school that the church leadership openly declared that a called teacher wasn't necessary to be principal. She felt strongly that this was not appropriate and that "We are still a Lutheran school and we need to behave as a Lutheran school. I seriously believe in the call process." LT 4 felt that Call status was not being honored at her last Lutheran school. Other teachers on campus, who were not Called, were being given the classroom assignments they desired first as well as being called upon to make decisions. She went on to explain that "I was being given an assignment that was not sustainable. It was not conducive to the students, to their families, and to my family and me." LT 3 commented that her Call was currently not being honored, but she felt that it was because her husband was in the United States Air Force and her family did not need the housing benefits that the Called status would have given them.

Transition into Teaching

Transitioning from student teacher, where you are working closely with a mentor teacher, to full-time teaching where you primarily work on your own in a classroom can positively and negatively affect a new teacher. All six of the teachers interviewed completed their teacher preparation programs at a Concordia University (Concordia University - Chicago, Concordia University - Irvine, one at Concordia University - Wisconsin, and three at Concordia University Nebraska aka Seward). LT 2, LT 4, and LT 5 felt prepared and ready to begin their professional career in a classroom. LT 3 commented that she felt Concordia University Wisconsin prepared her well for the classroom and that "I learned my most from student teaching but also the book aspect and all that." LT 6 replied with "In my brain I was." In an elaborated response, LT 1 shared "I felt that I had a good understanding of how to deliver the curriculum and insert my own personality into the classroom, but I wish I had had more support and knowledge on how to deal

with parents and some of their crazy demands." LT 5 reminisced and shared that "Well, it was a pretty smooth transition, I must say. I did feel that Seward at that time really did prepare me for life in a Lutheran School." LT 2 added, "Again, I think that it goes back to the community of people, and it was a smooth transition because I had a school where the community of people really rallied around me as much as they could." In addition, LT 6 felt prepared and added that "I made mistakes all the way along."

LT 4 shared that she had a rough transition that has made a lasting imprint on her teaching career. Her student placement was in a third and fourth grade combination class and her first placement was in first and second grade. She commented that she would not go back to teaching in the primary grades as "I don't see myself leaving middle school. Ever."

Although LT 3 felt prepared to into the classroom, "I feel that setting up a classroom, like the time of year we are in right now, is highly stressful and overwhelming. I know that every teacher feels it, but I think that from student teaching to your first Call, your first classroom, this is yours, is stressful." She would have appreciated extra support from her mentor but understands that she had her own classroom to set up as well.

Mentoring Program

A mentoring program is designed to partner a new teacher at a school or in the profession with a veteran teacher on staff. This relationship will guide with respect to sharing professional skills, knowledge, and expertise. Of the teachers interviewed, three of them experienced a mentoring program, and three did not. LT 1 shared, "Yes. I was placed with a veteran fifth-grade teacher." LT 2 shared that her first school did have a mentoring program, and along with working with her mentor teacher on a regular basis, she valued the opportunity work through a binder filled with topics and scenarios that a teacher may face. As a brand-new teacher, LT 5

explained that the Texas District, the LCMS district of her first school, had their own mentoring program for new teachers. The district held a conference for all new teachers and their mentors.

> It was really good. I remember connecting with all of the other new teachers. So, we were all on the same page, and then the mentors got to connect, and they got good ideas from each other, and then they shared those ideas with us. There were other speakers and things, but I don't really remember much of that. But what I do remember is the collaboration and the comradery.

LT 5 further added that she had been a mentor teacher as well during her career in Lutheran education. "At my last school, we did for a couple of years under the old assistant principal. She set up the program, and when she left, no one continued it."

Support is not always formally organized for new teachers. LT 4 stated that "Unfortunately, when I got out my first year, it was in a country school, and I did not have a principal or a mentor teacher." LT 6 shared that "In theory [a mentoring program was present]. Did it ever get followed through? No. Not at any of the [schools]." LT 3 "One was not officially set up. I just kind of went to the other Kindergarten teacher. She was the lead teacher.""

Relationships

The third level of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is "Belongingness and Love Needs." As Benamati (2017) explains

> Relationships are imperative for many different reasons such as increasing our emotional well-being, creating stability, learning how to be a good friend or mate, having someone to count on and trust in times of need and someone to vent to when we face challenges, and friends and mates take away loneliness and make us feel included.

When a part of a church and school community, relationships are essential. These relationships can be supportive, but they can also have negative connotations. In the one-on-one interviews, the teachers shared many different impacts that relationships had on their teaching while serving in Lutheran schools.

LT 6 summed up her positive relationships with "I loved the kids, absolutely loved the kids. Watching things click, being able to easily share my faith in any circumstance." LT 4 happily explained that "I build really good relationships with my parents. I am a very relational person, so I have really good relationships with my parents and my students." LT 2 revealed that "I think the community of people [was important to me]." Likewise, LT 1 added, "I loved the camaraderie with my coworkers and the ability to care and nurture one another and the families that we served." And LT 5 echoed with, "The camaraderie you had with your coworkers, the students, the parents, the whole school community. That was my greatest joy - working with that community of people."

LT 3 was eager to share, "I love being able to insert teaching about Jesus and that caring family atmosphere that a Lutheran school brings to us." She went on to emphasize the importance of relationships and how after 15 years she is still in contact with her mentor teacher on a regular basis. "We still reach out to each other as a source of knowledge and guidance. You trust each other's judgment. And I think because we all have that base that God is there helping all of us".

Recognition

Recognition for one's work and accomplishments are part of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Level Four: Esteem. "Teachers are seldom given their awards, recognition, and promotions based on classroom teaching'' (Bodary, 2008, p. v). Bodary affirms that most faculty

desire recognition for their instructional efforts more than pay, and he asserts that recognition need not be expensive.

Parents have provided the teachers interviewed with recognition. LT 4 commented that she has received recognition "Only by the parents." LT 1 elaborated by stating, "Not from the school, but I have definitely received feedback from parents." LT 5 further commented, "Definitely from parents. I got a lot of positive feedback and recognition from parents in general. That kind of thing, yea, I did receive some. Not a lot, but some."

As for recognition from the church and/or school, the teacher was serving, and direct recognition was less abundant. LT 2 responded that "I don't know if I have been recognized for excellence, but I have been chosen to lead things like the school musical, academic competitions, and be a coach and a leader for those things, but not necessarily within an award thing or something like that." Likewise, LT 3 shared that "Other than just, I guess, those ships passing in the wind comments, no. I received a lot of recognition from parents is what I feel I have gotten." After a brief pause, LT 5 replied that she only received recognition from the district for years of service and from her fellow teachers. "I don't think that I was recognized for my excellence in the classroom by any of the churches, there were three, that I worked for."

School Finances

Running a school requires financial funding. As previously stated, parents are the main consumers of a Lutheran education, as they provide the tuition funding that is the primary source of school funding. As LT 4 explains, every school she worked at claimed that they had "no money to buy resources" and that the teachers provided all materials needed to deliver instruction except for textbooks and workbooks. She further went on to state that had she not resigned from her last Lutheran school, there would not have been the financial means to hire a

person for the principal vacancy that the school had. She stated that she feels that Lutheran schools have a reoccurring problem with finance mismanagement which causes results in the enrollment of "a lot of kids that have special needs, and we have no resources for them." LT 6 referred to lack of school finances when she commented under feeling financially valued that "One congregation said we wish we could pay you more. We wish we could pay you what you are really worth. The others were like, um, well, this is what we pay."

Summary of Qualitative Data

The results of the qualitative research showed that support from school and church leadership can play an instrumental part in a teaching deciding whether or not they will continue in the employment in the Lutheran education system. In addition, the participations shared a strong understanding in the Call process and acknowledged the sanctity of the Call. The participants felt that the Concordia University systems had prepared them well for the classroom and felt that a mentoring program would be beneficial for new teachers. Furthermore, the participants felt that relationship building with students, colleagues, parents, and the Church community was important.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Summary of the Study

The significance of the data presented in this study demonstrates the factors that contribute to teacher retention in Lutheran schools. This mixed-methods sequential explanatory predictive study was designed to reveal how to better support new Lutheran teaching candidates as they accept their first Call.

Teachers are leaving the Lutheran education system due to increased lack of support from the principal and financial issues, including the cost of living (Jones & Watson, 2017; O'Keefe, 2003). Research data showed that measuring the factors that have been identified to predict teacher retention (financial concerns, support from administration, classroom management, teacher competency, and teacher preparation), this study will indicate how they influence teachers' long-term goals in their careers. Our research questions address potential solutions to these real-life problems and fill the gap in research-based knowledge concerning the effective strategies for Lutheran schools and teacher training programs.

Primary Research Question-What factors contribute to teacher retention in Lutheran schools?

This research study showed that the primary factors that contribute to teacher retention in Lutheran schools include

- A supportive approach to leadership between the teachers and principal where the teacher feels the principal uplifts and protects the teacher.
- Church leadership (pastoral and laity) psychologically supports the teacher and strives to cultivate and maintain a community culture where quality relationships are created and nurtured.

- Providing adequate financial compensation for teachers to provide for their living expenses and engagement in social activities to maintain a healthy work/life balance.

The main factors identified in this research study for teacher retention in Lutheran schools are feeling supported and valued. The top two factors discovered for both staying at the current school and staying in teaching were being comfortable bringing concerns to the principal and being psychologically supported by the church/school currently serving.

The main factors found that contributes to teacher retention in Lutheran schools is that of supportive school administration. The literature review confirms that effective leadership is vital for employee retention. The guidance and support a teacher receive from a school administrator can have an immense impact on a teacher's ability to stay at their current school or even in the same educational system. A school environment that fosters relationship building has proven effective in teacher retention. The development of relationships is important in the life of the teacher. Positive relationships allow for individuals to feel accepted and for trust to develop between the members of the group. Communication and active listening are integral parts of a positive relationship. Mutual respect is the outcome of positive relationships (Jena & Pradhan, 2018; Waddell, 2010). The data for this study showed that the main factor for staying at the current school was being comfortable bringing concerns to principal r (298) = 0.44, $p < .01$. Additional significant positive correlations were being psychologically support by the church/school r (298) = 0.39, $p < .01$, being supported by the principal r (298) = 0.37, $p < .01$, being as excited to be a today teacher as was during student teaching r (298) = 0.34, $p < .01$, and working with supportive teachers r (298) = 0.31, $p < .01$. Confirmation occurred when school administrative support was the most referred to topic during the one-on-one interviews.

Teachers shared ways that their administration pushed them to grow professionally and provided guidance and support. Additionally, the qualitative data provided further feedback on behaviors exhibited by the administration that broke down support, such as principals pleasing parents and providing little to no support for the teacher.

Church leadership (both pastoral and laity) need to support the teacher psychologically to the point where the teacher feels supported by the school they are serving in and are willing and able to provide the proper education to the students they serve for student academic growth. A school environment that fosters relationship building has proven effective in teacher retention (Jena & Pradhan, 2018). The development of relationships is essential in the life of the teacher. Positive relationships allow individuals to feel accepted and for trust to develop between the group members. Communication and active listening are integral parts of a positive relationship. Mutual respect is the outcome of positive relationships. These types of connections on a church-school campus allow for the spiritual growth of individuals as well. The research gathered showed churches and schools' importance in cultivating and maintaining a community culture where quality relationships are created and nurtured. Relationships were mentioned as the most positive experience that teachers had at Lutheran school. In addition, 57.5% of those surveyed felt psychologically support by the church they were serving. An active faith life in the organization can promote attraction and retention for employees (Jena & Pradhan, 2018; Przygocki, 2004). Research has shown that community support and faith development are critical factors in teachers remaining employed at religiously affiliated schools (Cook & Engel, 2006). To be classified as a Called teacher within the LCMS, a teacher must undergo additional theological training and become certified to teach religion classes.

With this extra preparation, the cost factor for the teacher, and the investment that Lutheran schools extend to teachers, it is beneficial for Lutheran schools to encourage stability and longevity in their teachers. Not only will the teacher feel supported and valued, but the school's reputation also will increase, and most importantly, there will be a positive effect on student achievement. Upon completing a teaching preparation program at a Concordia University and accepting their first Call, 76.1% (41.4% completely agree and 35% agree) of the survey participants felt prepared for the expectations of being a Called worker.

This research also indicated that teachers are leaving the Lutheran school system due to financial issues, including the cost of living (O'Keefe, 2003). In utilizing Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs, teacher stability within the Lutheran School must address teachers feeling adept at meeting their personal living needs. As indicated in the quantitative research, 62.5% of the participants did agree or completely agree that they felt financially valued by the church they were serving, leaving 37.5% facing financial difficulties or hardships while employed in a Lutheran school. Data collected during the qualitative phase indicated that economic well-being did play an essential part in a teacher's ability to maintain at their current school.

Although none of the teachers indicated that they entered education for the income, they did indicate their need to be able to cover their living expenses and put food on the table. One teacher specifically expressed the hardship of covering rent, and another shared how her father helped provide money for her family. Financially providing for teachers' cost of living is an essential factor in retaining teachers in Lutheran schools. This is confirmed with Przygocki's (2004) research on Catholic schools where he found that one crucial factor in teacher attrition was the lower salary received than the public-school counterparts and that that had a direct link to the fact that Catholic schools rely heavily on tuition to cover the cost of wages for the teacher,

and that in order to have higher wages, higher tuition must be charged and that makes it harder to fill the classroom seats. Research has shown that teachers who are paid more will stay in the profession longer and that this impact of higher salaries was most significant during the first years on the job.

Sub-Question 1- What strategies are Lutheran schools utilizing to support their teachers?

Lutheran schools with approachable principals are the main elements utilized to support their teachers r (298) = 0.37, $p < .01$. The next part is creating a culture on campus where the teacher feels psychologically supported by the church and school community and members. Feeling supported and valued are the main factors teachers surveyed identified with staying at the current school and staying in teaching. This value and support led to additional significant positive correlations of having the teacher as excited today to be a teacher as during my student teaching and feeling satisfied with their teaching most of the time r (298) = 0.88, $p < .01$. As indicated in level four of the Hierarchy of Needs, the esteem needs level, the focus is for the individual to feel good about themselves. A feeling of accomplishment and making an impact in the world around them is valued. Being respected and respecting others is an additional part of this need. Individuals need to accomplish things and to be recognized for their effort. When these needs are not acknowledged, individuals can develop feelings of inferiority to others and a lack of self-worth. Research has found that individuals who have self-worth can lead to higher levels of job satisfaction, leading to higher teacher retention in schools (Perrachione, et al., 2008).

Sub-Question 2- How does the implementation of a mentoring program impact teacher retention?

Teacher mentoring programs have proven as an advantage in retaining quality educators. These programs acknowledge the struggles faced by beginning teachers. This awareness is

essential to understand the high attrition rates of beginning teachers (Edwards & Nutall, 2015; Sass et al., 2012). There can be a distinguishable difference for educators between student teaching under a master teacher and teaching independently in a classroom. Induction and mentoring programs allow teachers to be continually nurtured as proficient professionals by collaborating (Ahn, 2014). Mentoring allows a veteran teacher to guide and support a new teacher throughout the first few years of teaching. The veteran teacher helps the new teacher navigate the church/ school culture, curriculum development, delivery, and any student-related issues that arise. A mentoring program will support new teachers, which will turn into stability and teacher retention (Edwards & Nutall, 2015; Gray & Taie, 2015).

Of the 298 participants in the survey, the vast majority (85.4%) did not have the opportunity to participate in a mentoring program during their first year in the classroom. Of the 14.6% of participants that did participate in a mentoring program, 65.8% (31.6% completely agree and 34.2% agree) felt that the program had a positive impact on their teaching. Overall, the data collected in this research study did not find a significant correlation between the implementation of a mentoring program and teacher retention.

Sub-Question 3- How does teacher training affect the teacher retention rate in Lutheran Schools?

A critical factor in quality teaching includes completing a teacher preparation program where the teacher candidate is provided with a mixture of coursework in subject matter knowledge and pedagogical skills, combined with hands-on teaching experience directly with students. Ingersoll et al. (2012) state that the more extensive and deliberate the focus is on these two factors, the longer a teacher will stay in the field of education. Teachers who have received formal training in education are more stable in their field than their peers who are not formally

trained (Duprez et al., 2016; Hochstetler, 2011). University-prepared teachers have longer retention rates than those individuals who complete alternative pathways for teacher licensing (Duprez et al., 2016; Zhang & Zeller, 2016). Teacher preparation programs need to present the realities of life in the classroom to teacher candidates. This research found that attending a quality teacher preparation program that emphasized competence to enter into full-time teaching, ability to deliver the curriculum for students, knowledge to handle classroom management, trained to handle the job requirements of a teacher (i.e., parent-teacher relationships), equipped for the expectations of being a Called worker, and ready for the realities of living on one's own was most beneficial to teachers in Lutheran schools.

Further knowledge gained from this research indicated that the teacher preparation programs at a Concordia Universities prepared their students for classrooms. The majority of participants felt competent to enter into full-time teaching after completing the teacher preparation program at Concordia University (44% completely agree and 47.7% agree). In addition, participants felt prepared to deliver the curriculum for students after completing the teacher preparation program at Concordia University (39.9% completely agree and 47.3% agree). These results indicate that the Concordia University system is preparing well-qualified teachers for the Lutheran school system. The researcher hypothesized that teachers who have completed a Lutheran teaching certificate at a Concordia University, instead of through a colloquy program, will have a higher retention rate in Lutheran Schools (Egalite et al., 2014; Dadley & Edwards, 2007). The research confirmed this. Of the Concordia University graduates, 83.3% indicated that they would be serving at their current Lutheran school in a year, compared to 73.2% of those who completed the Colloquy program.

Implications for Practice

The top factor in retaining teachers in Lutheran schools was being comfortable bringing concerns to the principal. Being a leader in a Lutheran school requires a balance between the realities of the secular world and the Call. Leaders must possess transformational competencies emphasizing mission articulation, vision, and inspirational motivation (Usadolo & Usadolo, 2019; Marrelli, 2011; Trottier et al., 2008) and an understanding of the implications of the Call and how to create a work/life balance. Thus, the leader must be knowledgeable in the overall operational process and the specific aspects of each area of the organization and understand and be able to relate to the organization's human capital. This researcher feels that it would be beneficial for principal mentor groups to be established at the district level for administrators at the beginning of their careers. As literature has shown the importance of mentoring groups for teachers, principal mentoring groups could allow for new principals to be continually nurtured as proficient professionals by collaborating (Ahn, 2014). Mentoring would let a veteran administrator guide and support a new principal throughout the first few years of administration. Once a principal has completed the first few years of administrator, he would then mentor a new principal to continue the cycle at the district level. This cycle of mentoring could easily continue at the synodical level as well with mentoring occurring via online interactions nationally.

Although the data did not determine the effect that a mentoring program has on teaching, the small sample size that was part of the qualitative portion of this research study indicated that more of a concerted effort needs to be made to establish and maintain mentoring groups for new teachers within the Lutheran education system. This action could occur in two different directions: through the district, the teacher is employed in or through the Concordia University system for new teachers. If completed through the district, new teachers could be mentored at

their current school or neighboring schools. This type of partnership would allow for classroom observations to occur and the ability to physically get together to work out issues the new teacher may be facing. Another option would be to continue the student teaching groups at the Concordia University where the new teacher completed the teacher preparation program as trust has already been established between the new teacher and the mentor teacher assigned during student teaching. This option would most likely be completed virtually, as a new teacher would probably not receive the first Call in the vicinity of the university, making in-person observations and contact more challenging.

Regardless of how new teacher mentoring occurs, topics to be included are work/life balance, assimilating into life at one's first Call, how to file taxes, housing allowance, etc. Furthermore, support for seasoned teachers transferring into a new district is needed. Much focus is placed on recent graduates; however, a seasoned teacher changing schools and districts poses different challenges. A mentoring program at the school, or even at the district level, would help assimilate that teacher into the new Call.

Further implications for this research, as indicated from the small sample size of the qualitative portion of this research, is that pastoral leadership may not understand their place within the church/school culture and how to best minister to individuals on the school staff. Although this was not formally part of the quantitative data for this research, three individuals started the interview process and stopped partway through the eleven questions and were unable to continue due to the hurtful and traumatic feelings that surfaced with the lines of questions. This researcher believes that there are many more stories like this out there, and they need to be collected and further analyzed. As shown, the relationship between the individual teacher and the church leadership and congregational members can positively or negatively

affect the teacher. LT 2 articulated that "I think, however, there was a separation of church and school, and there were times where I was made to feel like my opinion didn't matter within the church community." LT 4 reflected pertaining the relationship between the church and the school that "I feel like we went through this a little bit in my first Call, where the church was against the school, or you feel like you are no longer the team between the church and school." It would be beneficial for the seminaries of the LCMS to develop a course on church-school relations with the LCMS Department of School Ministry and have it as part of their course requirements for all seminarians and deaconesses. Further, it would be advantageous for the district presidents to further educate pastors by providing monthly meetings for pastors with schools to meet and share and discuss issues relating to their setting. This type of intentionality could even be furthered with the establishment of mentor groups between new pastors of churches with a school and veteran pastors who have served numerous years at a church with a school. A church that has a school has a different culture than a church without a school. Understanding and knowledge on how to best serve the staff, school families, and congregational members are valuable.

Recommendations for Further Research

Several areas for further research emerged from this research. First, it would be valuable to replicate this study with only teachers who had graduated within the past two to five years from a Concordia University to get a more concise evaluation of the teacher preparation programs currently being executed. This research study included teachers who had graduated 25-40 years ago in teacher education programs. Through this replication, the research could determine if the findings from this study are generalizable to more teachers in a single generation compared to in multiple generations.

A second for further research is to extend this study to include principals and lead pastors, and possibly congregational leaders to compare their thoughts and attitudes regarding employment support structure. Comparing these new responses with Called workers could provide more insight into factors contributing to teacher retention in Lutheran Schools from a church leadership perspective.

The third area for further research would revolve around the sanctity of the Call. Although this topic was missed in the survey, all of the former Lutheran teachers interviewed mentioned the importance of recognizing a Call and filling vacancies at a Lutheran school (teacher or principal) with a Called worker. Further research is needed to focus questions on the importance of churches and schools recognizing the sanctity of the Call and the extent to maintain and implement hiring practices that strive to maintain Called workers on campus.

A final area for further research would be to extend this study to include professors in the teacher education programs at a Concordia University. Allowing for further insight in this area could determine if the course of study in these programs enhances teacher preparedness and what additional courses of instruction should be incorporated.

Limitations

There were several limitations within this study. Due to the depth of the data collection methods, only teachers in Lutheran schools who completed a teacher preparation program from a Concordia University or completed the Colloquy program were used in this study. Therefore, findings present views of only Called workers in the Lutheran education system and do not present the viewpoint of non-Called teachers and cannot be generalized overall teachers within the Lutheran education system. Also, this study required participants in the one-on-one interviews to have been employed as a teacher at a Lutheran school and then have left.

This study did not interview current teachers who are considering leaving their employment in a Lutheran school and the factors contributing to this possible occurrence. Another limitation of this study was that the survey participants did not capture an equal representation of the graduates of the individual teacher preparation programs of the Concordia University system. Of the 268 Concordia University teacher preparation program graduates, 25.3% graduated from Concordia University – Nebraska, and 23.9% graduated from Concordia University- Chicago, with the remaining 51.8% completing the teacher preparation program at one of the remaining seven Concordia Universities.

Conclusions

The challenges found in Lutheran Schools are even more compounded than in their public-school counterparts. Faced with high rates of teacher attrition and teacher retirements from the baby-boomer era, filling teacher positions with Called teachers within the Lutheran education system becomes more of a challenge with each passing year. The availability of qualified teachers is rapidly dwindling (B. Schranz, personal communication, December 1, 2020). Retention efforts are needed to support current teachers in Lutheran education. This study will examine how to better support new Lutheran teaching candidates as they accept their first Call and promote teacher retention within Lutheran schools.

Findings from this study indicate that to retain teachers in Lutheran School, influential church and school leaders should employ the following practices:

- A supportive approach to leadership between the teachers and principal where the teacher feels the principal uplifts and protects the teacher.

- Church leadership (pastoral and laity) psychologically supports the teacher and strives to cultivate and maintain a community culture where quality relationships are created and nurtured.
- Providing adequate financial compensation for teachers to provide for their living expenses and engagement in social activities to maintain a healthy work/life balance.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Survey and Interview Questions

Survey Questions

Teacher preparation program

1) Did you graduate from a Concordia University teacher preparation program or complete the colloquy program? (Bennett, et al., 2013)
    a. Yes (survey will continue)
    b. No (thank you for your participation in this survey. No answer does not match the qualifications to continue with the survey.)

2) Which Concordia University teacher preparation program did you attend? (Bennett, et al., 2013)
    a. Concordia College – New York (1)
    b. Concordia University – Ann Arbor (2)
    c. Concordia University Chicago (3)
    d. Concordia University Irvine (4)
    e. Concordia University Nebraska (5)
    f. Concordia University – Portland (6)
    g. Concordia University -St. Paul (7)
    h. Concordia University Texas (8)
    i. Concordia University – Wisconsin (9)
    j. Completed Colloquy – (10) – Please continue to "Employment support structure" section

3) Do you feel competent to enter into full-time teaching after completing your teacher preparation program at Concordia University? (Lynch, 2014)
    a. Completely disagree (1)
    b. Completely agree (5)

4) Do you feel you were prepared to deliver the curriculum for your students in your teacher preparation program at Concordia University? (Bennett, et al., 2013)
    a. Completely disagree (1)
    b. Completely agree (5)

5) Do you feel you were prepared to handle classroom management in your teacher preparation program at Concordia University? (Jones & Watson, 2017)

a. Completely disagree (1)
b. Completely agree (5)

6) Do you feel you were prepared to handle the job requirements of a teacher (i.e., parent teacher relationships) in your teacher preparation program at Concordia University? (Bennett, et al., 2013)
    a. Completely disagree (1)
    b. Completely agree (5)

7) Do you feel you were prepared for the expectations of being a Called worker in your teacher preparation program at Concordia University? (Selzer, 2008)
    a. Completely disagree (1)
    b. Completely agree (5)

8) Do you feel you were prepared for the realities of living on your own in your teacher preparation program at Concordia University? (Selzer, 2008)
    a. Completely disagree (1)
    b. Completely agree (5)

Employment support structure

1) Do you feel financially supported by the church/school you are serving at? (O'Keefe, 2003)
    a. Completely unsupported (1)
    b. Completely supported (5)

2) If you came into a financial crisis, do you feel the church/school you are serving at could provide assistance? (Egalite et al., 2014)
    a. Completely disagree (1)
    b. Completely agree (5)

3) Do you feel psychologically supported by the church/school you are serving at? (Egalite et al., 2014)
    a. Completely unsupported (1)
    b. Completely supported (5)

4) Do you feel supported by the principal you are serving under? (Gallant & Riley, 2014)

a. Completely unsupported (1)
b. Completely supported (5)

5) Did you participate in a mentoring program at the church/school you are serving at? (Smith and Ingersoll, 2004)
   a. Yes (2)
   b. No (1)

6) If yes, what impact did the mentoring program have on your teaching? (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004)
   a. Completely negative (1)
   b. Completely positive (5)

Basic Needs Assessment

1) I get an adequate amount of rest. (Maslow, 1943)
   a. Completely disagree (1)
   b. Completely agree (5)

2) I feel satisfied with my teaching most of the time. (Gallant & Riley, 2014)
   a. Completely disagree (1)
   b. Completely agree (5)

3) I have a good idea of where I want my class to proceed each school year. (Bennett, et al., 2013)
   a. Completely disagree (1)
   b. Completely agree (5)

4) I am as excited today to be a teacher as I was during my student teaching. (Egalite et al., 2014)
   a. Completely disagree (1)
   b. Completely agree (5)

5) I had a realistic understanding of what my "teacher life" would be when I entered teaching. (Selzer, 2008)
   a. Completely disagree (1)
   b. Completely agree (5)

6) I am able to provide for my living expenses, professional desires, and engage in social activities. (O'Keefe, 2003)
   a. Completely disagree (1)

b. Completely agree (5)

7) I work with supportive teachers. (Waddell, 2010)
   a. Completely disagree (1)
   b. Completely agree (5)

8) I work with supportive parents. (O'Connor, 2008)
   a. Completely disagree (1)
   b. Completely agree (5)
9) I work with students who are well-behaved and eager to learn. (Jones & Watson, 2017)
   a. Completely disagree (1)
   b. Completely agree (5)

10) I feel comfortable bringing issues and concerns to my administration. (de Leon & Fuertes, 2007)
   a. Completely disagree (1)
   b. Completely agree (5)

Future Plans

1) On a scale of 1-100, what is the chance that you will still be at your current school one year from now? (Egalite et al., 2014)

2) On a scale of 1-100, what is the chance that you will still be in your current teaching position one year from now? (Egalite et al., 2014)

3) Are you planning on retiring in the next year or two? (Egalite et al., 2014)
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Maybe

4) Are you planning on taking different position in Lutheran schools in the next year or two (Assistant Principal, Principal, Instructional Coach)? (Egalite et al., 2014)
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Maybe

Closing - Thank you so much for your participation! The next phase of this research involves interviewing Lutheran teachers who are no longer in the field. If you know of someone who is

no longer associated with Lutheran Schools and would be willing to share why they left Lutheran education, please leave their name, email address and/or phone number in the area below.

One-on-One Interview Questions

1) What is your greatest joy about serving in a Lutheran School? (Egalite et al., 2014)
2) What is your biggest challenge? (Bennett, et al., 2013)
3) Did you feel prepared to be a classroom teacher? (Bennett, et al., 2013)
4) How was your transition from being a student teacher to a full-time teacher? (Bennett, et al., 2013)
5) What kind of support or guidance do you receive from your administrator? (de Leon & Fuertes, 2007)

   Have you ever been recognized for excellence that contributed to your desire to continue to teach at your school?
6) When a problem arises in your classroom, did you feel supported by your administration? (Jones & Watson, 2017)
7) Does your school have a mentoring program for new teachers? Describe the structure of the mentor program at your school. (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004)
8) What kind of support or guidance do you receive from your Church? (Selzer, 2008)

   Have you had a meeting with the Pastor to discuss your role in the congregation?
9) Do you feel financially valued and support by the congregation you are serving? (Selzer, 2008)
10) Have you every seriously considered leaving teaching in a Lutheran School?

    What made you consider leaving? What made you stay? (Egalite et al., 2014)

11) From 1-100, what is the percent chance you will serving in your current school one year from now? Are you planning on retiring in the next year or two? Are you planning on taking a different position in Lutheran Schools in the next year or two (Assistant Principal, Principal, instructional coach)? (Egalite et al., 2014)

Ending thoughts - Do you have anything else you would like to share? (Provide my email address for further comments if participant would rather write it down.

Appendix B: Letter of Consent

Dear Participant,

Thank for your interest in participating in the research phase of my dissertation. This dissertation will determine the factors that support new Lutheran Teaching candidates as they accept their first call and lend to long-term teacher retention within Lutheran schools. Your participation may provide a long-term benefit to Lutheran schools by determining best practices for teacher recruitment and retention for many years to come. This research is being conducted by an elementary principal in a Lutheran school who is also a current Board member of the Lutheran Education Association.

Your voluntary participation will involve participating in a one-on-one interview or in a focus group. You will be asked questions regarding the support you may have received by the church and school you are currently serving in or have retired from. There are no costs for participating in this study only your time when participating in the interview or focus group and when you will be reading the transcript to ensure authenticity of the reporting.

Your answers will remain strictly confidential. Your individual answers will not be shared. Aliases will be assigned. The findings of this study may be shared at conferences and in articles, but your name will never be used.

Your participation is voluntary and can refuse to participate at any time without penalty. No questions will be asked should you choose to withdrawal from the study.

If you have any questions or concerns about your participation in this study, please so not hesitate to contact:

Dr. Eugene Kim

Professor of Education

Concordia University Irvine

Eugene.kim@cui.edu

CONSENT

I have been given the opportunity to read this letter of consent and I understand the information about the study. My signature below confirms that I am willing to participate in this study.

_____	_____	_____
Participant Name printed	Participant Signature	Date

_____	_____
Researcher Signature	Date

Appendix C: Transcript of Interviews

LT 1 and CW (Researcher)

August 15, 2021

One-on-One Interview Questions

1) What was your greatest joy about serving in a Lutheran School? (Egalite et al., 2014)

Sharing Jesus with all that I could. I loved the comradery with my coworkers and the ability to care and nurture one another and the families that we served.

2) What was your biggest challenge? (Bennett, et al., 2013)

Professionally, the biggest challenge was working at a school and church where the call was being valued less and less. With each passing year, the new teachers that were hired were not called. I worked under three principals in the four years that I was at my school. In that time, the last two principals didn't even try to find called workers. One claimed there were no called workers and the last one did not even reach out to the Concordia's or complete a CMIF search. I believe in the Call process and I am proud to be a Called worker. It made me so sad to see this happen.

Personally, the commute. My husband is also in the ministry and we decided that it would be best to live closer to his church and as they provided housing, which is a huge blessing in [the San Francisco Bay Area]. Unfortunately, that meant that I had an hour commute each way.

3) Did you feel prepared to be a classroom teacher? (Bennett, et al., 2013)

Yes and no. I felt that I had a good understanding on how to deliver the curriculum and insert my own personality into the classroom, but I wish I would have had more support and knowledge on how to deal with parents and some of their crazy demands.

4) How was your transition from being a student teacher to a full-time teacher? (Bennett, et al., 2013)

It was good. I felt ready to be on my own and I had a good support system at the school. The school had a mentoring program that the assistant principal ran. I had a good mentor who helped me through and my assistant principal checked in on me weekly and helped me with curriculum issues, etc. She had taught that class two years before so she knew the curriculum and the age of the parents and having been at the school for a long time, she knew the parents really well.

5) What kind of support or guidance did you receive from your administrator? (de Leon and Fuertes, 2007)

It went well. I had an amazing support system of co-workers to help me my first year. My assistant principal was constantly checking in with me and offering advice on everything I asked of her such as how to deliver curriculum to handle a sticky situation between students or parents. She even sat in on a few parent teacher conferences and helped plan and attend our outdoor education.

Have you ever been recognized for excellence that contributed to your desire to continue to teach at your Lutheran school?

Not from the school, but I have definitely received feedback from parents.

6) When a problem arose in your classroom, did you feel supported by your administration? (Jones and Watson, 2017)

From my principal no, but definitely from the assistant principal.

7) Did your school have a mentoring program for new teachers? Describe the structure of the mentor program at your school. (Smith and Ingersoll, 2004)

Yes. I was placed with a veteran fifth grade teacher. We had monthly check-ins and a list of questions to work through each month. She was available to me whenever I had a question. I was fortunate to have a grade level partner and that is who I planned the curriculum with, so I did not usually bring up curriculum related problems to my mentor.

8) What kind of support or guidance did you receive from your Church? (Selzer, 2008)

Not much. I received so much more support from the pastor at my husband's church. He and his wife took us under their wing so to speak and we had monthly dinners with them. During these meetings we talked about our relationship as a couple and how it is to live and serve in a congregation.

Have you had a meeting with the Pastor to discuss your role in the congregation?

No, not from the congregation I was serving.

9) Did you feel financially valued and supported by the congregation you are serving? (Selzer, 2008)

Yes. [The San Francisco Bay Area]is an expensive city to live in and I feel that the salary that I received was generous. It was 85% of the public school system.

10) What factors caused you to seriously consider leaving teaching in a Lutheran School?

Motherhood and the ability to raise my child. Child care is so expensive and I did not want to leave my baby for 12+ hours each day.

What made you consider leaving? (Egalite et al., 2014)

Honestly, it was the child care. God has blessed us with this beautiful baby and I could

not imagine someone else raising her. Staying at home is definitely going to have its challenges, but we have an amazing support system with my husband's church, well now our family church, and I know God will provide.

11) From 1-100, what is the percent chance you will consider serving in a Lutheran school one year from now? Are you planning on retiring in the next year or two? Are you planning on taking a different position in Lutheran Schools in the next year or two (Assistant Principal, Principal, instructional coach)? (Egalite et al., 2014)

0% I want to be able to stay home until our daughter, or any other children God blesses us with, starts Kindergarten. At that time, I plan on returning to teaching in a Lutheran school. Eventually I would like to obtain a master's in reading, but I do not plan on taking a position outside of the classroom.

CW: Thank you so much for your help. I truly appreciate you given your time and sharing your experiences in Lutheran School. Many Blessings!

College went to: Chicago

How many years teaching in Lutheran school? 5

How many years out? This is my first year

Current profession: Stay at home mom

LT 2 and CW (Researcher)

August 24, 2021

One-on-One Interview Questions

1) What was your greatest joy about serving in a Lutheran School? (Egalite et al., 2014)

I think the community of people.

2) What was your biggest challenge? (Bennett, et al., 2013)

Finances. Honestly, being able to afford to live and feed myself and all of the essential needs. It wasn't just [at my first Lutheran School], it was also [at my second school] as well. So, it didn't matter were. To be honest, I struggled even more financially [at my second school], because [at my first Lutheran school], I have a support system. The struggle finally to be able to afford rent and food.

3) Did you feel prepared to be a classroom teacher? (Bennett, et al., 2013)

Yes, I did.

4) How was your transition from being a student teacher to a full-time teacher? (Bennett, et al., 2013)

Again, I think that it goes back to the community of people, and it was a smooth transition because I had a school where the community of people really rallied around me as much as they could. Also, I had a great mentor teacher as a student teacher who just handed over the rings really smoothly and then we actually became co-teachers. I think that really helped a lot. She had one second grade class and I took over the other. Even things that I wasn't used to teaching, I was given a very good roadmap of where to start. And then from there I changed things because I found my own way of doing things, but I think it was a good solid foundation to have.

5) What kind of support or guidance did you receive from your administrator? (de Leon and Fuertes, 2007)

I got a lot of support in many different ways. I think one way was by throwing me in and seeing if I would float or swim. But I also think it was throwing me in with a safety net. Helping me plan a field trip, especially in a big city, was a big one, and walking through the steps of planning for a field trip. I had never done that so that was a big one. I also think allowing me, even as a student teacher, to be allowed by administration to attend faculty meetings was a big one. I know of a lot of student teachers that didn't have that opportunity as this is a big proponent of how a school works. Allowing me that space to come in made me very grateful. I think starting as a teacher, the ministry part was a big thing for me, introducing me to community members, not just within the school and with the parents within the school, but also community members within the church community as well and allowing me to find my own space and way, yet at the same time constantly bringing me in and introducing me and helping me to finds way to bridge the gap between the school and the church. I could be involved with the church in a variety of ways, handbell choir, volunteering for dinners, and things and I felt that that was a big thing and I felt that our administration did a good job with that as well starting out. Have you ever been recognized for excellence that contributed to your desire to continue to teach at a Lutheran school?

I don't know if I have been recognized for excellence, but I have been chosen to lead things like the school musical, academic competitions, and be a coach and a leader for those things, but not necessarily within an award or something like that.

6) When a problem arose in your classroom, did you feel supported by your administration? (Jones and Watson, 2017)

At times, I did feel supported. I think there were times when I felt supported but I think that there were times when I felt like it wasn't my burden to bear. When that happened, it made my relationships with my parents very hard. It is a good rule of thumb that some things don't require the classroom teacher to know and it is for the administration to handle, but sometimes it is nice to have the heads up on. I think that there is this kind of system within the Lutheran school because we are a private school, there is catering sometimes to parents. This can make it hard for the teachers because, at times I have found that administration will say one thing to the teacher and then we learn later as the teacher that a completely different thing was said to the parent. And that is frustrating. I think that most teachers that I know, and I have even had this conversation with administration and with other teachers that I know, is that just tell us like it is, because that is an easier way to go about it, and if the administrator says we have to do this this way because we need the finances from this family whatever it is, we understand that and there is an understanding that happens. We are not as teachers disengaged from that like I think our administrators think we are. Yes, it can be frustrating, but I think that when you have trust, mutual trust between your staff and administration you can have those conversations of what is really happening, you get more from your teachers in that sense and you get more understanding and more trust in the long run. So, I think, I would say, that is the common thread I have felt as a teacher in Lutheran schools. There is this element that we need to please parents, and sometimes therefore, things are said in one door and then done differently when the door is reopened.

7) Did your school have a mentoring program for new teachers? Describe the structure of the mentor program at your school. (Smith and Ingersoll, 2004)

My first school had a great mentoring program. I had the opportunity to have my first

teaching position be at the school that I did my student teaching at. My student teaching mentor became my co-teacher- we each had a second-grade classroom. My mentor teacher was a Kindergarten teacher. She was the lead teacher for our team. We had a binder to work through that our assistant principal put together. Each time we met, every other week, we had a set of questions to work through. She helped me with classroom management issues, parent items, and things like that. My assistant principal would teach a lesson for me so I could observe my mentor teacher and then a few weeks later she would teach a lesson in kindergarten and my mentor teacher would come and observe me. These observations could be something as simple as tracking if I had contact with every student during a lesson, or how I was managing small group instruction on my own. This observation time occurred every few weeks throughout the school year. In addition, my mentor teacher was available to just take a walk after school to help me with an immediate problem. That support was amazing.

8) What kind of support or guidance did you receive from your Church? (Selzer, 2008)

I think the church community did a good job of reaching out to me when I first became a part of that community and making me feel welcome. I think however, there was definitely a separation of church and school and there were times where I was made to feel like my opinion didn't matter within the church community. I think sometimes too I felt disengaged because the church was kind of catering to a very specific type of person which I was not a part of generational speaking. I didn't feel that a lot of times when I went to services that I could relate to the messages and that they did not relate to me as a young person. So, I tried with all of my might to stay engaged, but it was hard to go every week and I started to find myself seeking church elsewhere. Had I not been a singer in the choir or in the band, I don't know if I would have continued to attend services just because it was not faith fulfilling. I wasn't gaining

something to start my week off with- a message or something that I could take with me. If anything, I felt more talked down to or made to feel as if I wasn't enough in my faith.

Have you had a meeting with the Pastor to discuss your role in the congregation?

I did, yeah. I wouldn't say a formal meeting. I initiated it. At times when I did talk to the pastor about my role in the church and what I wanted it to be, and why I felt that it couldn't be that. I initiated the conversation every time.

9) Did you feel financially valued and supported by the congregation you are serving? (Selzer, 2008)

No, I did not.

10) What factors caused you to seriously consider leaving teaching in a Lutheran School?

To be honest, one of the biggest factors was the finances, but I also think that asking about housing that the church owned for its workers and being told that I did not qualify was a big factor. I wasn't even potentially considered for the available housing. Seeing that I wasn't even going to be provided or offered an available place to live or those opportunities, was disheartening. This was not done by the school administration, but by the church - the pastors and the Board of Directors. The church was not willing to acknowledge and fully work on the issue that the teachers could not afford to teach at the school and afford to live here was disheartening. Part of it is you can only do what you can do, but then seeing salary schedules change after you have already passed the mark for years and then not having it be retroactive after I had been there for five year and little things like that made it harder and it made it harder to stay and justify. But also, just feeling like, I think I got to a point where a new administration was coming in and the new administrator didn't make me feel valued as a person. Actually, it was quite the

opposite. I was made to feel as if I was doing something wrong and to see how our church was handling things was very hard as well.

What made you leave? (Egalite et al., 2014)

I couldn't work for an administrator who belittled her teachers and made them on edge as if everything they did was wrong. I also could not work for a church that did not really listen to what was being said and 100% supported the new administrator.

11) From 1-100, what is the percent chance you will consider serving in a Lutheran school again? Are you planning on retiring in the next year or two? Are you planning on taking a different position in Lutheran Schools in the next year or two (Assistant Principal, Principal, instructional coach)? (Egalite et al., 2014)

Well, that is a hard one. I would say that if finances were taken out of the equation, I would say 100%. Yes, I would. However, because of the finances, I think it would be 50-50. I know that I would love to go back and teach in a Lutheran school because of the people, because of the community of people, but I think that the finances are also where I see a lot of the bulk of issues happening with the school system itself. Even with decisions administration makes, decisions as a school of how you are going to be handling certain types of behavioral problems, parent complaints, all of those things do stem from financial gain. Because our finances sometimes do depend on parent buy-in that is a big issue because that informs all of the other decisions around it. I could take the pay cut if I was to advance in my degrees, or if I was able to have some housing given to me that was more affordable, or whatever else. I think that I know I will go back to Lutheran education at some point in my career but I would have to be financially stable enough to be able to make that happen.

If I would come back, I would like to be in a leadership role, while I am also teaching in the classroom in some capacity. Somewhere where I can make change happen. I would love to see Lutheran schools come into the 21st century and adopt some of the great things public schools are doing but with that Lutheran school twist that they have with caring and forgiveness and community spirit, and yet embracing the common core a little bit, more flexibility with how we run our classrooms and so on.

CW: Thank you so much for your help. I truly appreciate you given your time and sharing your experiences in Lutheran School. Many Blessings!

College went to: Irvine

How many years teaching in Lutheran school? 5

How many years out? 2

Current profession: teacher at a public-school Montessori, grade ½ combo

LT 3. and CW (Researcher)

August 13, 2021

One-on-One Interview Questions

1) What was your greatest joy about serving in a Lutheran School? (Egalite et al., 2014)

I love being able to insert teaching about Jesus and that caring family atmosphere that a Lutheran school brings to us. After experiencing going from a public child care back to a Lutheran school even a Lutheran child care setting, walking back through those doors always felt like home. I always felt like I was coming home. So, stepping outside of the Lutheran school system and then coming back in has been a joy. And now that I get to bring my two sons into it, it is a joy. When we moved from Abilene to San Antonio, I only looked at Lutheran schools. I just love that feeling of family. I grew up in it, I never went to public school, always went to a Lutheran school from PreK all the way through graduating college.

2) What was your biggest challenge? (Bennett, et al., 2013)

Support. The support of the knowledge in other areas that the public-school teachers have those special education teachers or just that bigger pool of teachers to pull in for that support. Like sometimes you can feel like a lone island. Let's say you have only one third grade well sometimes you like to have those ideas to bounce off of one another and I know that always try to create that community within our small Lutheran schools but just broadening your ideas and the support of those ideas sometimes you can feel not stunted, but a little bit short in that area. I mean that is the biggest thing coming back into the Lutheran school system is just all of those support areas that you kind of have to fill

in with all the other teachers. Some schools are more blessed that they can have more support and then there are those schools that are not.

CW: Is your school set up with one class per grade?

LT 3: Currently we are growing. So, we have three preschooler PreK rooms, two Kindergarten classrooms, and this year two first grade and then one class second through eighth grade. It is fun to be a part of this growth.

3) Did you feel prepared to be a classroom teacher? (Bennett, et al., 2013)

I really did feel like I was. Um, I had a good, Concordia Wisconsin picked really good schools for us student teachers to go into and those teachers really felt, um, I learned my most from student teaching but also the book aspect and all that. I did enjoy quite a few of my professors and felt like they really did prepare you and then stepping into a small Lutheran School, connecting with a veteran teacher right away, really also solidified that you kind of just went into your classroom and went with it. I got complimented my first that with "Wait, you're really a first-year teacher? Wow! I didn't realize that." You know stuff like that that builds your confidence a lot in yourself so that your second year, I always say that that was my favorite year teaching because you kind of worked through all of those kinks of the first year, you understand the curriculum, you understand how the school works, and so I really enjoyed my second year of teaching. I try to keep enjoying every year after that as well and learn from each year.

4) How was your transition from being a student teacher to a full-time teacher? (Bennett, et al., 2013)

Transition from a student teacher to a full-time teacher. Wow! You are making me think back a few years. I feel that setting up a classroom, like the time of year we are in right

now, is highly stressful and overwhelming. I know that every teacher feels it, but I think that from student teaching to your first call, your first classroom, this is yours, is stressful. Sometimes you do not get hired until two weeks before the students arrive on campus. This aspect of the life of a teacher, I think, was the most overwhelming and I guess every year I still feel this way. I don't know if it is just a bad memory, but each year I just feel I get over stressed and now I try to prepare a week or two before I really have to get in the room. As a student teacher going into your first Call, you just kind of run with it. I think that that would be my biggest area because you don't really have, everybody has their rooms and you can always model after them, but I feel that practice how your time management and things like that, and the stress of learning and going from teacher meeting to setting up your room to teacher meeting, and I guess that type of thing would be a help.

5) What kind of support or guidance did you receive from your administrator? (de Leon and Fuertes, 2007)

We do, um, our Wednesday meetings and things like that and she will open it up to conversation and after that if you have more concerns then you can go and talk with her. This year we have changed how our structure of our school is going. So what is kind of very interesting and I am very happy with how the school is going with it, so like down here in PreK to Kindergarten we have one teacher that has administrative roles so they are over us as an administrator and we can go to them and then she will go up to the principal so it tiered so that if the principal is busy, as sometimes that is the life of a principal, you do feel like you have someone that can help you in an area like Hey I need help with this. I need a supply here or someone just to listen to you and your

ideas. Maybe we need to train more in this area. We are a team now instead of just funneling straight to the principal, which I am really excited to see how this is going to flow. I think this will help us grow as a community again and bring a smaller group together and your ideas will flourish more. We had to restructure because we had a lot of people retire or move on with their life. Our child director stepped down from directing childcare, but she still has a lot of that administration knowhow and roles and things like that. She is my team teacher in Kinder this year which is exciting. There is someone up in our junior high and he stepped into that role. Now all of those teachers in the junior high go to him and he will go to the principal. We still have our team leads so that we now have all of these avenues to reach out and get as much advice and not feel like you are left alone. I am super excited.

Have you ever been recognized for excellence that contributed to your desire to continue

Other than just, I guess, those ships passing in the wind comments, no. I received a lot of recognition from parents, which is what I feel I have gotten. Principals would make comments, but I do think it comes better from the parents, that it means more because that is why we are there. It is nice to get recognized amongst your peers, but that is sometimes harder to give to each other because we all want to be equal at the same time. Privately people would come and say you did a really good job, we like how you did that.

6) When a problem arose in your classroom, did you feel supported by your administration? (Jones and Watson, 2017)

Yes. We had a little tricky year last year. There were some larger behavioral problems within my classroom but our school structure, our vice principal had to step away for a

few weeks so that was just restructuring how you get communication back and then with her coming back into the workforce after her weeks away was just a difficult year. Because of that, things happened, things arose, and so it was a little difficult to manage and that was just last year. I felt supported with larger issues the year before that. And now with the restructuring, I think that will ease all of those tensions and issues where you are going to see less of those feelings between our teachers.

CW: Did the restructuring come about because of the absence last year?

LT 3: Um, I'm not 100% sure, but I'm sure of the desire of the vice principal to be able to help because she was our head of behavior stuff, but also teaching inside the classroom. They restructured so she could step away from the classroom and then with all of the teachers and stuff, it was a big restructuring. I feel that they did what was best and that it will grow the school together as a whole, too. It is all learned and I think that Every working part that kind of fell about last year will now be put together and I think that it is a better puzzle, a better fit. You know, you just learn through hard times and last year was a hard time.

7) Did your school have a mentoring program for new teachers? Describe the structure of the mentor program at your school. (Smith and Ingersoll, 2004)

One was not officially set up. I just kind of went to the other Kindergarten teacher. She was the lead. Because she had been the veteran teacher for so long, she said go here and do this, and like still to this day, the other kindergarten teacher that was in our little group and 1st grade teacher that was there and she and I are still really good friends and we have this really tight knit community between all of those little communities I built there and the friendships that I built there. I guess that is also a positive of Lutheran school is

that you create all of those tight feelings of family. We still reach out to each other as a source of knowledge and trust. That is one thing that I feel Lutheran schools give teachers. You trust each other's judgement; you trust each other's knowledge and guidance. And I think because we all have that base and knowledge that God is there helping all of us. In public schools there may be the back and forth that I did it better and stuff instead of that community together.

8) What kind of support or guidance did you receive from your Church? (Selzer, 2008)

My first church I feel that we were supported, but guidance? I don't think so, I just feel that we were always just supported. The guidance of we are one of the biggest ministries of all of the churches I have worked for. Sticky situation in the Lutheran childcare center I worked for, the older generation did not agree with having the child care only because what they saw was the kid's destroying and meddling with the church they built. So that was all they saw: the destruction of what happens when you have kids around instead of the love and the joy and the sharing and the positive aspect. So, it was a big tip-toeing on eggshell sometimes, but it was still growing and still flourishing and one of the best daycares in the area. So, from the church to the daycare side there was still that rift. Here at this church, we are really trying, we work really hard to keep the faces of the church at school. We just got a new DCE, she is one her third year now, and she is going to be coming into each classroom once a month so her face is known in our rooms. Even if it is just to read a story, or do whatever because she is like I know all of these other kids because I teach youth group, and I teach this and I teach that. So now she is really trying to grow our church school community that way, which is a really good thing. Our pastors lead our Chapels. So, I guess there is a lot of support, but guidance,

yes, I feel like we are always following the guidance of the church, as we are all one, but they are the spearhead of your ministry.

Have you had a meeting with the Pastor to discuss your role in the congregation?

No. At my first church, they asked us as part of being a called worker to be on a board within the church when I was there, so I was always a part of the Youth Group board. So that was for that church but for here, that responsibility is not placed on us. It is more like if you want to help and volunteer and do these things, these are the people to connect with. I guess because we are Called and we are under that ministry realm, your face should be seen in church. Basically, coming and being a member of the church is the role of the teacher for us.

9) Did you feel financially valued and supported by the congregation you are serving? (Selzer, 2008)

At my first church I was Called, so yes. Here, I am contracted so, yeah. I think that is more because I am a military spouse and we do not need the housing allowance. I have not had time to solidify this. You just want to be recognized in your Lutheran church for the work that you do with your school, but yes, financially I think our church is doing that. They do provide our health insurance and things like that.

10) What factors would cause you to seriously consider leaving teaching in a Lutheran School?

I feel like we went through this a little bit in my first Call, where the church was against the school, or you feel like you are no longer the team between the church and school. I know that within a school, there will always be tension with staff members or something like that but that can be worked through. We are all called to do a job and to get along and to serve God this way and if His ministry is what is being done, a little

issue between coworkers will resolve itself. However, if you're having a battle between your church and your school about this or that, then where is God in this situation and if you're not feeling that support from your church to continue the ministry in the school, that would drive a big question of is this really where we belong right now. Even though maybe your heart is there because you want to continue to succeed and try with God's grace back into that situation, sometimes it heals, but sometimes it breaks and it is time to move on.

What made you consider leaving? (Egalite et al., 2014)

I am currently back at a Lutheran School

11) From 1-100, what is the percent chance you will consider serving in a Lutheran school one year from now? Are you planning on retiring in the next year or two? Are you planning on taking a different position in Lutheran Schools in the next year or two (Assistant Principal, Principal, instructional coach)? (Egalite et al., 2014)

When we get a new station, I always research for Lutheran churches and then schools. So as soon as we get to our station place or base, that is how I navigate our move. And then where we can live and things like that. So, I guess it would be 100%, as long as there is one close to our Air Force base. My husband is in the Air Force so if we are transferred to a location without a Lutheran School, I can with my license work at a CDC center on base, which is what I have done in the past.

CW: Thank you so much for your help. I truly appreciate you given your time and sharing your experiences in Lutheran School. Many Blessings!

College went to: Wisconsin

How many years teaching in Lutheran school? 13

How many years out? 2

Current profession: Currently a Lutheran School teacher again

LT 4. and CW (Researcher)

August 14, 2021

One-on-One Interview Questions

1) What was your greatest joy about serving in a Lutheran School? (Egalite et al., 2014)

My greatest joy in teaching in a Lutheran school was the relationships with the parents and the students and having that family feel because I typically work in smaller schools. That was my greatest joy and that was about it.

2) What was your biggest challenge? (Bennett, et al., 2013)

Oh, the challenges. Well, there have been many. I have been at four different Lutheran schools during my career. Here is my frustration with Lutheran schools. It is never having any money to do anything good. They want a functional middle school but, I'll come back to that.

I don't feel that there is actual care about our mental health. If that was true then they wouldn't ask us to teach four different things for zero pay for the sake of ministry with no money to buy resources. Many churches it's their like "mission" it is their ministry, but yet their money goes to like, it goes to, like our church put in ten thousand dollars for a video system in our church through COVID, and I'm like, we are not going to need that forever and that money could have supplied a part time teacher over there to give a teacher a plan period. You see what I mean. I feel like funds are never allocated for the school even though the school is their ministry. The tuition for these families is really high. So, at my current, the school I currently left, is about $5500 a year. So, what we were getting were these very affluent families who weren't necessarily Lutheran. We had an administrator who was trying to please the parents all of the time, but then not giving

us the ability to then implement these things. And the other part that is frustrating is we want to be everything. We want to be STEM, we want to be this, we want to be that and I am like no. We can't be everything for everybody. What do we do well? We teach well, we have good academics, and we teach Jesus. That should be our thing. It is hard to retain families and we hire, I'm just going to say it, we hire garbage teachers out of desperation because Concordia won't send us any teachers because we pay crap. I'm sorry but that's a problem. My Call at the last school I was at was not honored. How you might ask? So, when I came on board, I was coming out of another toxic situation. I did take three years off when my oldest son was born and he is 18 now. I wasn't going to go back to teaching because my first three years I was already tired. I loved my school that I was at and I could have seen myself working there forever, but I didn't know how I was going to be able to afford having a child [where we were living]. I was making $22,000 a year and my husband had just gotten his first job and with a total of $40,00 a year, you can't live on that in [a big city], even in the early 2000s. We were like, my dad had to slip us $50 once and awhile so we could buy food. It was not good. So, my husband got transferred and we moved back for a little bit, for about a year. It was much cheaper to live there and I tried the stay-at-home mom stuff. Even that was really stressful because even though my husband was making more money it was still stressful. A position opened up in the local Lutheran School to do part time middle school and I took it and I loved it. I love middle school, but what happened at that school was poor administration. We had a principal without a backbone. He was a wonderful Jesus man, but zero backbone. We had these awful girls, I was doing all the discipline, and that is not okay. That is what the principal is for but he had zero disciplinary skills. We had a

teacher on staff who was Called and was awful, but they would never get rid of him. We had people say that we are leaving because of him and they would say 'Oh, we are so sorry." He was being investigated by [a government agency] and still they kept him. I am not making this up. And he was still in a classroom with children and that wasn't a reason enough to fire him. Because it was so toxic, by the time that I left there, school had dwindled so much that I went from teaching 7th and 8th grade to 2nd - 4th grade six kids. I had three kids in the second grade and three in the fourth, no third graders. I had six different learning needs. I couldn't even handle it. I had to call in a former student of mine who needed a purpose and she came and sat with one of my students so he would do things. So right before I was teaching 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade in one room. There I had twelve kids. There was no advertising, we can't put money into advertising, so I found another opportunity. If I did not leave, they would not have been able to afford to get a principal. That is where we were. I stepped out so they could get a principal. I was not going to do it. They asked me to do it and I was like "I don't even have my master's degree. I'm just going to step in and be principal?" I don't even have my master's degree. No, thank you. So, they are starting to grow, but it has been really slow. I have been out of there for six years and they did get a very strong administrator to come in and they have been supporting him, which is good and he is still there, thank God. So, they are doing better, but it is really slow. So, then I moved to my current school, which I just left, and when I came on board, we had a middle school team. We had a fully functioning 60 kid middle school. What a blessing! This is awesome! It was one grade per and one teacher per grade. The rest of the school had one class per grade and each class was full with like 20 kids. So, then again, we had an administrator who had no backbone and

whatever. Again, poor administration. Wonderful man, just not great. We had teachers on staff that did not have their Lutheran Teaching Degree and just didn't quite understand what it meant to be in a Lutheran school. So, I was doing like 7th grade, 7th and 8th grade Literature, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade, I don't even know. I was doing Literature and History. I have no, I have no reason to be teaching History. Whatever. It is not that hard because I am an English teacher, but it was just a weird set-up. And then, their 5th grade teacher was again so bad. And this guy, I can't, I can't even, anyway they asked me to take on the English part for 5th grade because he never did it. He didn't teach Reading or English and they knew this. And so, when I came on board, they were like so do you mind just taking on a 5th grade class. I was like 'alright.' So, then the next couple of years, when he left, our 8th grade teacher moved down to 5th grade, but then we kind of departmentalized 5th grade into middle school and it worked really well. So, I went down and did all of the ELA for 5th grade and we had different people doing different things and it worked really well. It was a great couple of years and it felt really good. And then all of a sudden, our principal retired. You would think that if you knew your principal was retiring a year in advance, you would think that they would start looking for another principal. No. So, they waited six months to start the search and then put all of their eggs in one lady's basket who denied the Call. So, then we had these interim "warm bodies" and it was really one of the teachers running the show and she should not have been running the show and things got really bad. Parents were very unhappy, nothing was happening, They moved me down to 5th grade full time. They hired these two teachers out of desperation, not Called. They were family members of members of our church. Both terrible. One was asked to resign, was fired in December

because of really inappropriate things with students and it was a nightmare. So, I watched my middle school that I helped build plummet in a year. So then, I'm getting to my Call not honored part. After my 5th grade, they were going to then because everyone was pulling out and going to the school I am now teaching at. I was told, so there were only three of us on staff at the time that had a legitimate Call. One was the early childhood director; one was our Kindergarten teacher and one was me. I have taught everything from 1st grade to 8th grade. I could have been put anywhere. I was told that they were going to start doubling the grades. It was K -1, 2-3, the worst way they could have doubled grades. And I said, "Hi. Hi. I am the only one on staff that has experience with double grades and the way you guys are doing it is really bad. It's not child development and it is really, really bad." They said, we don't have the numbers, we don't have the numbers, we don't have the numbers. So, you just put kids in a room? You put K and 1 together? No! And then 6th, 7th, and 8th? No! There is a big span between 6th graders and 8th graders. And so, I said this is not going to work. I was told 'Here is what we are offering you. We are offering you 6th, 7th, and 8th grade ELA, History, Bible, PE, again another thing I should not be teaching, and something like yearbook. Or nothing." I am a Called teacher. My Call was not being honored because the way I understand it, I should have been above the other two who were not Called teachers. That was not the case. And the teacher that had been running the show is also not a Called teacher. She has been teaching for 30+ years at the same school and never even did her Colloquy. So, I was upset. I took the job knowing that I need to find an exit strategy. So, I did it for a year. My friend said "don't you want to be a part of the change?" Because I still had such a heart for Lutheran schools. There is just something

about it. There is a reason why I did it. So, then my last year, so then COVID hit. That was fun. So now we're online with garbage technology because Heaven forbids, we put any money into actually keeping a server going or whatever. It always comes down to money doesn't it. I went in for my contract renewal and my choices were: I could teach full time and keep my healthcare, but I would do every subject for middle school with no plan periods for $36,000 a year or I could go part time for $18,000, teach English History, Bible, art or PE (I could have chosen both of which I do not like) for middle school and pay partial tuition for my children. And I looked at them and said, "These are my options? I am a Called teacher. These two teachers are not Called teachers you understand that. Like you understand that I should be getting the option of the classroom of my choice, of what I want to do." And they were like "Are you saying we should fire one of them?" And I said "Yes! Give them this option. Yes, I love middle school. Yes, I am really good at it, but I am actually an elementary degree teacher. That is my degree." And they are looking at me like I am speaking nonsense. And these are like educators who are on our school board. They are public school teachers. I asked them if they understood what middle school is. I can't just go in and teach Math and Science. They will go into high school and be like "I don't know what two times four is." I am not a middle school Math teacher. They need specialized. If we are going to have, and this is what I have been screaming. If we are going to have a functional middle school, we need the stuff because who is going to want to pay $6000 a year for a mediocre education, with teachers who shouldn't be teaching certain subjects. All this for the sake of because we don't have the numbers? Well, that is a problem. And for the other part, that is not taking part of my mental health. That is not taking care of me. So,

when this all hit, they were looking for subs at [the school I am currently at]. I told my principal I was going to just teach part time, two and a half days a week. I am not going to be there in five mornings. I will work two and a half days a week, two days I am going to sub at [the other school]. And then she goes, "I don't know if we can let you do that."

No, you don't get to dictate what I get to do on my days off. They didn't want me to go into one school and then our school because of COVID. I was like okay, but you don't get to tell me that. I get to make that decision. You have given me no options so I need to make up income. So, what I have seen over these years in Lutheran schools is that they cannot figure out crisis management. It is like they are constantly putting bandages on a hemorrhage. All the time. Hemorrhage, oh Band-Aid. Hemorrhage, oh Band-Aid. NO! You need to stop the hemorrhage. So, I said shut the middle school. Get rid of the middle school. Let's grow our elementary. Keep them one single grade. We would have had the numbers. We could have figured it out. We would have gotten rid of two salaries in the middle school. We could have figured out how to do single grades and have grown. But no, no. We had to honor the four people who had registered for middle school. FOUR!!

I ended up having fourteen, but I'm like at some point you have to make the hard decisions and it can't just be 'Oh, we are going to close the school.' There are several places, like Lincoln, NE, where the elementary schools are K-5 and then they feed into Lincoln Lutheran. What a wonderful model! What also helps is that in Nebraska, a lot of churches come together to support the Lutheran schools. We don't do that here. We have some many churches that do not encourage their members to send students to the

Lutheran school in the area. We actually had one pastor in our area tell the director that he does not encourage his kids to come to our school because he wants to be the one to give them Confirmation instruction. This is an LC-MS pastor. That is a problem. That's a big problem. When the LC-MS churches do not support the Lutheran school. So, when it comes to retention, one of my best friends is a principal in Illinois and her daughter is a sophomore at Seward doing her Lutheran teaching degree. She was trying to encourage her not to do it because our churches are not taking care of their teachers. That's a problem. They are not doing what they should be doing to get Called teachers. I am taking over the Confirmation at our church this year because we don't have it where they come and the Pastor does the Bible for 7th and 8th grade like I had. I think out of the 14 kids I had, two were Lutheran. I subbed in the last five weeks of Confirmation this year and was applaud. Absolutely applaud. We used to have the DCE (Director of Christian Education) do it, and then it has been whatever. They were not learning the catechism. They don't know anything. We are confirming them and they don't know anything. This is a problem. This is a train wreck waiting to happen. We are trying to hire a middle school and high school DCE and we are in that process. We desperately need one, and our Children's ministry one, who is amazing, absolutely amazing, asked me and we are working on a 5th/6th and a 7th/8th one. Both of us are like this is not acceptable for our kids. And you can't just have somebody come in who has zero experience teaching middle school students because they are not going to listen. And I am like I can do this. I can do this in my sleep. This is going to take me zero planning. It just means that I have to show up to church every Sunday to teach confirmation. I can do this for a year to get it back on track. It is too important to

me. It's not okay. I feel like I have abandoned my school, but I could not do it anymore. It was killing me. They are, the director of the early childhood has now become the principal of the entire school. She is amazing. She is the sole reason our preschool is as good as it is. They are going to kill her. You know what I mean. They don't take care of her mental health. They don't hire for her the people that she needs to do the jobs. There is no money, ever. I'm like "I'm pretty sure there is the money. Where is the $6000 these families are paying going?" If you are going to have a school, you need to support that school and give that teacher what they need. It is not 1950 anymore. We are in 2021 and we need to get with the times. You have to put money in. Another problem is that because we need the money, we get a lot of kids that have special needs and we have no resources for them. We take them anyway to the point that I am starting my Master's degree in Special Education because I have so many kids, even in our school, that just suffer from different learning disabilities. I am like we need intervention for these kids. If we are going to take them, we just can't put them in this class and set them up without any strategies. And that's a problem and we have to stop doing that. If we are going to take kids with special needs, we have to hire special education teachers. How about that? They use the cover they are here for Jesus, but that is not the truth. This is not doing them a Christian service. This is lying to the families and that is not okay. That is not Christ-like.

That is it. I think I covered it. Things have to change or we are not going to have Lutheran schools for our children. It is $43,000 to go to Concordia right now. That is a lot of money to spend for when you get out to make nothing. It has to be a priority or we are going to have no more Lutheran Schools and that is a shame. Look at where we are,

look at our nation. We are losing Christian teachers to the public schools left and right. These are teachers who have such a heart for kids. They want to teach in our schools because they are being asked to go against everything they believe. They are being faced with ethical dilemmas and they are leaving the public schools. Where are Christian families going to be able to have their children go? Why aren't Lutheran schools advertising more to say Hey we are here? It all comes down to the mighty dollar. If money really is a hardship, the Lutheran churches and schools in the area should come together. You would think that Lutheran churches would want their families to have a Lutheran education. Synod has got to get it together.

3) Did you feel prepared to be a classroom teacher? (Bennett, et al., 2013)

Yes. I felt prepared. They were very honest. I remember them saying that when you get out you will be asked to do things you have zero qualifications to do. I had one professor say 'Learn this word- no. And it's okay.' So, I knew what I was getting myself into. I knew that piece. What prepared me the best was my student teaching!

4) How was your transition from being a student teacher to a full-time teacher? (Bennett, et al., 2013)

I did first and second grade. My student teaching experience was in third and fourth grade. So, first graders were a whole new ballgame and I will never do it again. Never ever again. In fact, I don't see myself leaving middle school. Ever.

5) What kind of support or guidance did you receive from your administrator? (De Leon and Fuertes, 2007)

None. I have had to do everything by myself: discipline, email parents. I have had to deal with it all myself. I have yet to have a principal have my back 100%. I don't have

problems with my parents. That is the one thing, I build really good relationships with my parents. I am a very relational person so I have really good relationships with my parents and my students. Last year was the first year I felt I had an admin who had my back.

Have you ever been recognized for excellence that contributed to your desire to continue to teach at your Lutheran school?

Only by the parents. I had my 5th grade class, they nominated me for this crystal apple award and I got it and it was the best. I have never been told by an administrator that you are good at what you do. Never. Not even in passing.

6) When a problem arose in your classroom, did you feel supported by your administration? (Jones and Watson, 2017)

If it was really, really bad, yes. It has never gotten to that point because I have really, really good classroom management. So, I have only had to send a kid out of my classroom once in my entire career.

7) Did your school have a mentoring program for new teachers? Describe the structure of the mentor program at your school. (Smith and Ingersoll, 2004)

Unfortunately, when I got out my first year, it was in a country school and I did not have a principal or a mentor teacher. That is huge. You need a mentor teacher your first year. No school that I have been at has had one except for the Christian school I am currently at. Not one Lutheran School had a mentor program. If I wanted a mentor, I had to seek one myself. Every Lutheran school should have one.

8) What kind of support or guidance did you receive from your Church? (Selzer, 2008)

Just financial mainly. The first one I was at a country school and I never felt a part of that church because I wasn't related to anyone. Like they were all weirdly related somehow. It was interesting. A lot of the older people still had their German catechisms. They did support us financially to the point that that school is still tuition free. I felt supported in prayer and things like that. That was a hard year. It was my first year and I did not know what I was doing or who I could ask for help. In my next school, I did feel supported. That church was very much a part of the school. It was nice. The pastor over there was incredible. He is still there. I taught his second kiddo. They were great and that church and school really run well as a functional piece. My third school, the church was very much separated from the school. There was not a lot of support. In fact, the pastor there didn't even send his own kids to the Lutheran school. And then this one, our pastor like all of his kids went through the school. His wife is our music director and she does stuff with the students so it is pretty supportive. He is very well seen and he does a good job about that. I felt supported by the church just not in the way it should have been. Our pastor is not a leader. If I want to go and pray in his office for two hours, I feel very comfortable to do that, but as far as leadership goes, he is not that and we just don't have it. We need a good principal to come in and say this is how it is going to be. And we need a fighter. Good principals have to fight for everything, every last penny and that is not okay.

Have you had a meeting with the Pastor to discuss your role in the congregation?

No, not since my first year.

9) Did you feel financially valued and supported by the congregation you are serving? (Selzer, 2008)

No. It was a fight. The school is draining our money, the school, the school, the school. How dare we pay our teachers what they are worth. It wasn't even at district level which is why Concordia won't give us any names. They finally just voted to up the salary to finally being paid at district level out of how many years? I took a $10,000 a year raise when I left to work at the school I am at. When I get my master's degree, I will be making $68,000 a year. I have never seen that kind of money. I am not in it for the money; however, I do need to get paid for what I am doing. You need to pay people for what they are worth. How many things have I bought because my kids needed them and my school was like sorry, we don't have the funding?

10) What factors caused you to seriously consider leaving teaching in a Lutheran School? What made you consider leaving? (Egalite et al., 2014)

My Call was not being honored and I was being given an assignment that was not sustainable. It was not conducive to the students, to their families and to me and my family. You cannot have a teacher teaching every single subject full time without a plan period. That is a liability.

11) From 1-100, what is the percent chance you will consider serving in a Lutheran school again? Are you planning on retiring in the next year or two? Are you planning on taking a different position in Lutheran Schools in the next year or two (Assistant Principal, Principal, instructional coach)? (Egalite et al., 2014)

Here [where I am currently living], zero unless drastic changes were made. If an event came up where we were in a place to move and I had an incredible opportunity and it was

at a Lutheran school that was thriving, I would be at 100%. It just depends. I will not, zero percent, go back to a situation like I was in.

CW: Thank you so much for your help. I truly appreciate you given your time and sharing your experiences in Lutheran School. Many Blessings!

College went to: Seward

How many years teaching in Lutheran school? 16

How many years out? 2

Current profession non-denominational school 7th grade English teacher

LT 5 and CW (Researcher)

August 12, 2021

One-on-One Interview Questions

1) What was your greatest joy about serving in a Lutheran School? (Egalite et al., 2014)

The comradery you had with your coworkers, the students, the parents, the whole school community. That was my greatest joy - working with that community of people.

2) What was your biggest challenge? (Bennett, et al., 2013)

The biggest challenge was working with the Church and getting them on board with our mission and kind of our direction that we wanted to go to as a school and the church partner and support in a way that was meaningful and helpful to the school and to me as a teacher.

3) Did you feel prepared to be a classroom teacher? (Bennett, et al., 2013)

I did.

4) How was your transition from being a student teacher to a full-time teacher? (Bennett, et al., 2013)

Well, it was a pretty smooth transition, I must say. I did feel that Seward at that time really did prepare me for life in a Lutheran School. We did have classes that addressed some of the things that actually came up my first year of teaching, especially one class we had. I remember how important this one little class was. It was only a semester, and every two weeks it was a different kind of topic that comes up when you are a church

worker and you are getting into the life of the church. One was how to handle those congregational meetings and the negative things that actually come about and we had to role play and write papers on it and how you handled it. I still remember how the professor, Professor Moulde, he taught the class, and yeah. And then the next week we would have another issue. So, there were all of these quotes unquote issues that they had I guess thought that first year teachers would need to know and would need to address, and part of them dealt with the church and part of them didn't and those dealt with handling the workload, handling the whole workload and still being able to spend the time in your teaching and how to handle that workload. So, I felt that Seward at that time really prepared me really well and I was so grateful for it because I went to a school and they weren't really ready or prepared for me as a teacher so I was kind of thrown into some of those situations. But the church was very supportive and they were quick to get my needs accommodated and very supportive of me at that time.

CW: Do you know if that class is still being offered?

LT 5: I don't think that it is anymore.

5) What kind of support or guidance did you receive from your administrator? (de Leon and Fuertes, 2007)

I received NO guidance or direction from my last administrator!! Zero. I had no contact with her. Zero! None whatsoever.

Have you ever been recognized for excellence that contributed to your desire to continue to teach at any of the Lutheran schools you were at?

Well, yea. I guess just from the district and fellow teachers. Definitely from parents. I got a lot of positive feedback and recognition from parents in general. That kind of thing,

yes, I did receive some. Not a lot, but some. I don't think that I was recognized for my excellence in the classroom by any of the churches, there were three that I worked for. I was recognized for my years of service, but not for necessarily what I did in the classroom or for my work in the classroom.

6) When a problem arose in your classroom, did you feel supported by your administration? (Jones and Watson, 2017)

At times I did and at times I didn't. It depended on the situation and whether they were even available to be supportive. In general, after the fact and now that I can reflect, I guess for the majority of my years I was supported, but definitely not the last year. I was not supported at all, not in any way, shape, or form.

7) Did your school have a mentoring program for new teachers? Describe the structure of the mentor program at your school. (Smith and Ingersoll, 2004)

At my last school, we did for a couple of years under the old assistant principal. She set up the program and when she left, no one continued it. I was a mentor a few times. But I did not have a mentor coming in. I did have a mentor my first year of teaching in Texas. The Texas district did have a mentoring program at that time. We went, all the new teachers and their mentors, to a big convention thing in Texas. It was really good. I remember connecting with all of the other new teachers. So, we were all on the same page, and then the mentors got to connect and they got good ideas from each other and then they shared those ideas with us. There were other speakers and things, but I don't really remember much of that. But what I do remember is the collaboration and the comradery. This was before social media and all of that, so just getting together and

talking and sharing, and getting your email addresses - this was when emails were brand new and a big deal (1994-95)- so that was big. It was a good program.

8) What kind of support or guidance did you receive from your Church? (Selzer, 2008)

I didn't

Have you had a meeting with the Pastor to discuss your role in the congregation?

YES! I had a Pastor who would sit every called teacher down in his office once a year before school started and have a one-on-one with us. Now this was after a meeting where he called in all of the Called workers and outlined the different opportunities or packages that had been created. In this church, each called worker was expected to offer service to the church. It could be by being a Sunday School teacher, directing Vacation Bible School, reading, ushering, etc. Each package was composed to try to be about the same amount of extra work so no one person was doing more for the church than another. At the beginning there was a 10% additional bonus for being a church worker. By the time I left, that percentage had been lowered to I think like 2% difference between a called and a contracted worker. At this individual meeting, the pastor also brought out our personal contribution letter and shared with us how much we did or did not give to the church in our offerings. These were very uncomfortable meetings.

9) Did you feel financially valued and supported by the congregation you are serving? (Selzer, 2008)

At times I did and at times I didn't. So, it kind of depended on where I was and what I was doing and kind of where I was in life. I think there were ups and downs with that so, yeah. When I first started, they supported me. They had to change their entire payroll to even get me to come as a teacher so they quickly did that and built-in tiers. And they

didn't have any new teachers in like forever at that school so they did take care of me reactively. When I went to my last school, I didn't feel valued coming in. So, I came in with not having all of my credits credited. I was only given half a credit for working at any other place. And then that was a big deal and they listened to us. And then they changed it. Then you got credit for all of your teaching experience. Which really put you up higher in the scale, which was needed to live in [the San Francisco Bay Area]. I do think that towards the end, they were willing to make accommodations. Overall, I do think that they are a little under what they need to be here in the city. I do think they were really trying to correct that, so I can't fault them for that.

10) What factors caused you to seriously consider leaving teaching in a Lutheran School?

The ultimate lack of support and disdain for what was happening in that Lutheran school. The lack of leadership, the lack of support, the lack of knowledge even on education, let alone administration, let alone Lutheran values, doctrine even. I mean it was a severe lack of all of those things and I didn't want to be associated with something that was going a different direction then what I had known for 25 years. I just said it is time to leave, time to leave until something changes.

CW: Do you think the lack of was from the church leadership, from the lay church leadership, or from the school administration? Or from a combo of all three?

LT 5: Well, I think my reason for leaving was a severe lack of leadership from the school administration. But the church supported that administrator so therefore it was a lack of support from the church because the church was so supportive of that administrator that they didn't want to listen to anyone else or hear any other perspective than that one perspective so that I felt therefore we did not have the support from the church because

they did not want to hear me out. They were not interested at all in hearing another perspective. In fact, they really discouraged it. In fact, I was told to sit down and be quiet in a congregational voter's meeting. I have a master's in educational leadership. I know what I am talking about.

What made you consider leaving? (Egalite et al., 2014)

You know, there were so many final straws prior to me leaving, but I think that the fact that the administrator did not know what she was doing and then she would blame the teachers and then the church would come down and say it was our fault. We were like, 'what are you talking about? We have no idea what you are talking about.' Bottom line, it was not a sustainable environment for me any longer. You never knew what was going to fall and what you were going to be blamed for, accused of, and when I tried to explain what has worked, what your stakeholders want, I was told I was against her. Then the church thought I was against her and then I knew it was time for me to leave. Also, it was said by the church leadership that a called teacher wasn't necessary to be principal. They didn't want someone who was willing to stand up, to share what was really going on, and to say this is not okay and we need to educate these people, to do this, and we are above all a Lutheran school. We are still a Lutheran school and we need to behave as a Lutheran school. They didn't care that I have a master's in this area and I felt that they felt my master's was a threat to them. A threat to how I was doing things. So, I think they viewed me as a serious threat and I think they were seriously relieved when I was gone.

11) From 1-100, what is the percent chance you will consider serving in a Lutheran school again? (Egalite et al., 2014)

I don't like to say never, but I think there would be a 25% chance I would. I seriously believe in

the call process. I don't want to say zero because you never know, but it is really low.

CW: Thank you so much for your help. I truly appreciate you given your time and sharing your experiences in Lutheran School. Many Blessings!

College went to: Seward

How many years teaching in Lutheran school? 25 years, 2 schools

How many years out? 3 years

Current profession: Manager for an educational company

LT 6 and CW (Researcher)

August 11, 2021

One-on-One Interview Questions

1) What was your greatest joy about serving in a Lutheran School? (Egalite et al., 2014)

I loved the kids, absolutely loved the kids. Watching things click, being able to easily share my faith in any circumstance,

CW: It is pretty special.

2) What was your biggest challenge? (Bennett, et al., 2013)

So now that I am four years out, I can look back and reflect a little more**. In** a nutshell, I didn't trust the administration. And I know that you are an administrator, so I am trying really hard not to step on anyone's toes or anything.

CW: No, please be honest, brutally honest. Don't feel that way because I really feel this is a learning experience for me as well.

LT 6: Okay

CW: Don't hold back. I need you to be open and honest.

LT 6: Okay-

CW: How many schools did you serve at?

LT 6: six schools

CW: Thank you. So, trusting administration was your biggest challenge?

LT 6: Yes, for multiple reasons at multiple levels. I really felt like they, many times the administration, would take the side of the parents over the **side** of the teachers. Not that you are supposed to choose a side, but they would back up parents so the kids could get what they wanted instead of necessarily what the teachers are saying this is what the kids

really need. And that was not fun. I have actually had administration lie to me. I've had administrators change my grades. So, yeah, I guess I have trust issues.

3) Did you feel prepared to be a classroom teacher? (Bennett, et al., 2013)

CW: Thinking back to your first call, did you feel prepared to be a classroom teacher from Seward?

LT 6: In my brain I was, but it is kind of like being a parent. You think you are going to be a great parent, and reality hits and you're like 'Oh, my heavens. I don't know the first thing about this!' So, I had the book knowledge, the learning knowledge, but how to deal with weird parents, how to deal with the mother who says 'I am a nurse and I wasn't a good nurse until I had been in nursing for seven years, so you're not going to be a good teacher until you have been a teacher for seven years.' "Hello, administration, how do you handle this" and he is like "Uh, I don't know."

4) How was your transition from being a student teacher to a full-time teacher? (Bennett, et al., 2013)

I made mistakes all the way along. I made mistakes during student teaching, I made mistakes in the classroom. I said some things I should not have said. I spoke too much. I gave too much information, like oh I probably should not have said that. Yet, nobody said "Hey, you might not want to give that much information just give this much." So, then I continued to learn. I used to always tell my students that a smart person learns from their mistakes. A wise person learns from someone else's mistakes. I got pretty smart. I made a lot of mistakes.

5) What kind of support or guidance did you receive from your administrator? (de Leon and Fuertes, 2007)

LT 6: My first year?

CW: Any guidance that you received while in the classroom. Did you receive any guidance from an administrator?

LT 6: Um, not so much guidance. There was a time where I had a head pastor come into my classroom. His son was a student of mine and he said, "You know, I'm coming to you not only as a parent, but I'm also kind of wearing the hat that says, I am your boss." So, I am thinking which are you right now? But he says, 'You know, every time I walk by your room, it sounds like you are not happy." I'm thinking number one, I'm dealing with middle schoolers. And honestly, out of my 25 years in Lutheran education, 22, 23 of them were in middle school. I love middle school. Absolutely love it. They are just big monkeys. Their parents did not know how to handle them because they had not ever seen anything like this before. I was like, you know what, I've got this. At this point I had been about 20 years in middle school. I can't just say to him, 'You have to trust me on this one. I know your kid better than you think I do. You know your kid, but at school they are a completely different animal.' And he didn't want to hear that, so I believe in my heart, I believe that he reported back to my administration that I was a horrible teacher because I was not listening to him, didn't give him what he wanted, and all that he suggested was that I should go for counseling.

Now, there was one time when I had an administrator, now we had a teacher who had some mental health issues going on and she was dealing with them so we had a long-term sub. Now this was a very inner-city school, this long-term sub wanted to be friends with the kids. See would show the kids movies every Friday. I was like "Oh, we don't have time for this. These were inner city kids.' So, I'm seeing her show a very inappropriate

animated movie to the students. I walked straight out of the room and I walked down to the administrator's office. I said, 'Principal, I need to know how does this movie have any educational validation.' He said it doesn't and I said, 'You might want to go and tell that to the substitute.' And he was like 'WHAT?' And so, he, he wasn't in his office for more than three seconds. And he walked down to that room and had her turn off that movie. And I'm like 'Oh good. We have inner city kids who need every fighting chance they can get. They don't need edutainment.' This was really entertainment.

Have you ever been recognized for excellence that contributed to your desire to continue to teach at your Lutheran school?

There was this one time when we were asked "Who do you think should be the teacher of the month?" And it was really more like teacher of the year. And I recognized one of my colleagues, actually three of my colleagues because 'these people are amazing. My children are in their classes and this is what they tell me.' And I was singing their praises. I sent it **in to** my administrator, and she responded with 'thank you so much. We'll take this into consideration. I need you to know that you have also been nominated.' I was like, oh, thank you!

Honestly, when I first started teaching, one of my ultimate goals was to become teacher of the year. Somewhere along the line, I realized that that should not be my goal. My goal should be the kids. My goal should be my mission and my ministry. And it's the kids! And moving kids from point A to point B to point C. And helping to move them on down the line and grow and blossom and become the best person that they were created to be. That should be my goal- to help them get there.

And I love the stories of the kids that "Hey what are you doing? I'm a chiropractor. I'm an engineer. I'm a physical therapist." I love those. I love those.

6) When a problem arose in your classroom, did you feel supported by your administration? (Jones and Watson, 2017)

NO! **Emphatically** no.

7) Did your school have a mentoring program for new teachers? Describe the structure of the mentor program at your school. (Smith and Ingersoll, 2004)

In theory. Did it ever get followed through**?** no. Not at any of them.

Here is the most recent example: The last school I was at, they hired someone who had been a principal at another school and she was promised that she would be in administration within five years. And apparently what they said to her was to partner with me. And she took that as 'WW has been in the middle school department the longest, I'm going to be on the same grade level team with her so partner with WW to figure out how things work.' But that is not what they meant. Apparently at that point I was a horrible teacher and they wanted her to partner with me to mentor me to become a better teacher. But that is not what they ever told me and what they ever told her.

8) What kind of support or guidance did you receive from your Church? (Selzer, 2008)

CW: the churches that you've served under?

LT 6: At my first church, nothing. In fact, the pastor was in my room saying 'you should not have Santa Clause in here." He was trying to micromanage my classroom so that was not okay. Then I went to a very inner-city school. The church side was an absolute mess. The pastor resigned. We got a new pastor and he was amazing. He was very personable. He said 'call me Pastor Don, we are on the same team.' And he really took

upon himself to say "I am a shepherd. That is what I am. The school. The church. It is a flock, but I am the shepherd. That's what Pastor means." And he was incredibly supportive throughout my final three years there to the point that he and his wife are my son's godparents. He would make it a point to be seen in the school side. It was really nice.

Not so much the bigger churches. The bigger schools, not so much.

Have you had a meeting with the Pastor to discuss your role in the congregation?

No, no.

9) Did you feel financially valued and supported by the congregation you are serving? (Selzer, 2008)

One congregation said we wish we could pay you more. We wish we could pay you what you are really worth. The others were like, um, well this is what we pay. Was it worth it? Not worth the, well, that is another story.

10) What factors caused you to seriously consider leaving teaching in a Lutheran School? What made you consider leaving? (Egalite et al., 2014)

When on the last day of school, my principal and assistant principal called me into the office and said we're replacing the science curriculum and we're replacing the science teacher, it's a good time.

I had no clue it was coming. It was out of the blue, so I did not get the chance to say goodbye to any of my students. I just went 'Wow! Is there a reason for this?' And they Said 'Yes. We can't afford to lose any more students." I knew that we had had a serious outflow of students in middle school and I knew the reason why. And it was poor academics. And I said, 'I understand. I don't want to be associated with poor academics.'

And my principal looked at me and said 'Oh no. Your academics are great. In fact, you are some of the strongest that we have. You just don't build good relationships with students." Okay then. That's what I was told. In reality, the following year they kind of asked another teacher to resign, who was the one the students (**and parents)** had the bigger issue with.

So yes. And then she said 'Well, if you resign, then we'll make sure that we give you really high letters of recommendation and you can get a job anywhere.' But at the end of May, beginning of June, all of the really good teaching jobs have been filled and there's nothing left. And so, it was a pretty dark summer.

11) From 1-100, what is the percent chance you will consider serving in a Lutheran school one year from now? Are you planning on retiring in the next year or two? Are you planning on taking a different position in Lutheran Schools in the next year or two (Assistant Principal, Principal, instructional coach)? (Egalite et al., 2014)

Zero!

CW: Thank you so much for your help. I truly appreciate you given your time and sharing your experiences in Lutheran School. Many Blessings!

Taught 25 years in Lutheran Schools, **two** years at University of **Houston** (obtained Masters and supervised student teachers)

Concordia: Seward

Left Luth schools 4 years ago- currently employed in a different field

Appendix D: Codebook

Code	Definition	Purpose
Administrative Support	Support provided by the school principal	To identify professional guidance the principal provides to encourage and uplift the teacher.
Church Support	Support provided by the pastoral staff and lay leadership	To identify professional guidance the church leadership provides to encourage and uplift the teacher.
Sanctity of the Call	The sacred nature of a Call within the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod	To understand the requirements of being a Called worker within the LCMS
Transition into teaching	The adjustment from being a student-teacher to working full time in the classroom	To identify any successes or challenges a new teacher may have during the first year in the classroom following student teaching.
Relationships	The way in which two or more people are connected	To identify connections between teachers and others on campus. Strong relationships can enhance students' level of motivation and therefore promote learning. Teachers who have access to more strong relationships are more engaged, have stronger social skills, and experience more retention.

Recognition	Identification of someone's knowledge contribution	To identify teachers who go above and beyond for their classroom; to set the standard for performance, benefitting students and teachers alike.
School Finances	Funding is autonomous in nature and done through various sources like student tuition, private grants, and endowments.	To identify the annual sum of money that is donated to the school by constituents (parents, faculty, trustees, alumni, and friends).