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## **SELF-EFFICACY AND BURNOUT AMONG MISSISSIPPI MILD/ MODERATE SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS**

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SELF-EFFICACY AND BURNOUT AMONG MISSISSIPPI MILD/MODERATE  
SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

by

Stacey Anne Price Frye

A Dissertation  
Submitted to the Graduate School,  
the College of Education and Human Sciences  
and the School of Education  
at The University of Southern Mississippi  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## ABSTRACT

This study sought to determine if there was a relationship between Mississippi mild/moderate (certification endorsement number 221) special education teachers' levels of self-efficacy and burnout, as well as to determine which factors influenced self-efficacy and burnout. Teachers from across the state of Mississippi responded to an online questionnaire that collected demographic data, the Teachers' Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale, and the Teacher Burnout Scale.

The results of the correlation research showed that subscales of Student Engagement and Instructional Strategies are positively correlated. Subscales of Student Engagement and Classroom Management are positively correlated. The Teacher Burnout survey subscale of Coping had a negative correlation with two variables, including Student Engagement and Classroom Management. Student Engagement had a negative correlation with Coping Skills. Coping and Administrative Support are positively correlated.

A multiple regression analysis showed no statistically significant relationship between the independent factors of years of experience, caseload size, and type of degree earned and the independent factors of the Teacher's Sense of Self-Efficacy subscales. A multiple linear regression analysis showed no statistically significant relationship between the same independent factors and the dependent variable of each of the Teacher Burnout Scale subscales.

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Thank you to the Research Support Center graduate students. Your guidance, support, and encouragement were vital in helping me complete this goal. I am also forever grateful to all of the instructors throughout my time at the University of Southern Mississippi.

## DEDICATION

To Sarah Kate and Henry, nothing I have done or will ever do can compare to the happiness you two bring me. That's super cheesy, but true. I hope to inspire you to always do your best, make good choices, and surround yourself with people who encourage you to be your best.

To Andrew, your love of Hootie and the Blowfish and dislike of Mexican food bring me down, but your encouragement and support lifts me up. Congratulations on becoming a doctor's husband. In all seriousness, I couldn't have done it without you.

To my mother, Debbie, thank you for the encouragement/nagging for me to finish my degree. Thank you for babysitting frequently so I could finish up this little paper. I hope it continues. To my dad, I'm excited to be graduating from your alma mater. You'll still always be the "most-smartest" person I know.

To Nanny and Dad, I'm sorry for not finishing this while you were here with us. It is my biggest regret. I'm so grateful for you both.

And finally, thanks be to God. You are the writer, I'm merely the pen.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>FAPE</i>	Free Appropriate Public Education
<i>IDEA</i>	Individuals with Disabilities Act
<i>IEP</i>	Individualized Education Plan
<i>K-12</i>	Kindergarten through grade twelve
<i>NCLB</i>	No Child Left Behind
<i>TBS</i>	Teacher Burnout Scale
<i>TSSSES</i>	Teachers' Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale

## CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

Teacher burnout has become a societal crisis for school districts across the country, and around the world. The field of teaching can be physically and emotionally draining, which means teachers are more prone to burnout than those in other professions (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). According to the Mississippi Department of Education, there were between 1,500-2,000 licensed teacher vacancies during the 2018-2019 school year (Mississippi Department of Education, 2019).

There are several initiatives taking place within the state to address the issue of teacher shortage, including forgiveness of student loans in exchange for teaching in high needs areas; Teach for America, which primarily focuses on schools located in the Mississippi Delta area; and support and training offered by the state department of education. According to a report by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future in 2007 (now known as Learning Forward), it is estimated that the cost of teacher turnover across the nation is over \$7 billion. The cost of recruiting and training new teachers is reportedly more than \$2 billion a year (Hughes, 2012). Although states are pouring millions of dollars into the teacher recruiting process, what are school districts doing to retain teachers once they are hired?

Researchers Ingersoll and Merrill (2010) reviewed the history of teacher attrition and noticed that a common strategy districts used to deal with teacher shortage was to recruit more teachers. This tactic, they found, was not addressing the real issue at hand when it comes to teacher shortages. The problem is not only in recruiting qualified teachers but losing qualified teachers due to burnout and attrition. Although teacher attrition dates back to the 1970s, the extent to which it is happening in today's schools is

cause for concern. Teacher burnout is causing major issues within school districts across the country (Leung, Chui, Lee, & Mak, 2011). Maslach and Leiter (1997) note that burnout among American workers has reached epidemic proportions.

The concept of job burnout has been studied since the 1970s. Researchers Maslach and Freudenberger are largely credited as the originators of the notion that employees experience frustration and fatigue in the workplace. Freudenberger (1977) defined burnout as a state of emotional exhaustion regarding one's occupation. Burnout has been studied across the globe and within various career fields including medical professionals, police officers, lawyers, and teachers (Aloe, Amo, & Shanahan, 2013). Burnout is not a sudden occurrence. It happens over time and has varying degrees of severity (Austin, Fernet, Guay, & Senecal, 2011). It is primarily found in occupations related to human services, or those who deal with caring and working with people; and occurs when coping strategies are not used or are ineffective in dealing with workplace stress (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). There is no known cure for burnout.

When an individual is in a high-stress job, particularly those who can be held legally responsible for others, an increase in frustration, stress, and anxiety can occur. This can begin to negatively impact work ability and relationships with colleagues (Sterett, Sclater, & Murray, 2011; Brown, 2012). According to Maslach (1982), those with burnout experienced feelings of depersonalization, emotional exhaustion, and lower sense of accomplishment. It can range from low, moderate, to severe levels. They can also have distorted perceptions in regard to their work performance and even themselves; and are at risk of becoming pessimistic and critical of others as a result of feeling job burnout (Maslach, 2003).

There are many reasons teachers leave the profession altogether. One of the most widely documented factors is a lack of classroom management skills (Reeves, 2012). Another contributor to teacher burnout and attrition was the 2001 congressional act No Child Left Behind. When high-stakes testing became the measure of academic success, many teachers and administrators reported an increase in stress and burnout as a result (Bonner, 2011).

Special education teachers are particularly vulnerable to burnout due to a complex and demanding workload. The National Center for Education Statistics (2012) reports that over 6 million American students between the ages of 5 and 21 receive special education support. Because of this, special education teacher shortages are a critical problem. There are more students with special needs than teachers available to provide the services they need to be academically successful (Loeb & Stempien, 2002). The attrition rate of these teachers is alarmingly high when compared with general education teachers. After one year of teaching, 6% of general education teachers leave the classroom. In the same time, 11% of special education teachers quit (Loeb & Stempien, 2002). The phenomenon of special education attrition is worsening, and students trying to achieve academic success are suffering as a result (Horrison-Collier, 2013).

There are ways to combat teacher burnout and attrition. Schools are constantly studying and developing plans to help support teachers. Whitaker, Casas, and Zoul (2015) stated that when teachers get to come together to share ideas, teachers can feel empowered, which only increases teacher satisfaction. Researchers Levine and Marcus (2010) note the connection between collaboration and teacher retention and state that schools must become organized as a learning community. When teachers are given an

opportunity to collaborate with fellow educators, teacher turnover has been shown to decrease (Reeves, 2012).

### Statement of the Problem

School administrators spend countless hours during the hiring process for teachers each year. This can be exceptionally difficult when trying to fill shortage areas like math, science, and special education. If more is known about why teachers are leaving, leaders can take a proactive approach and focus on keeping qualified teachers rather than looking for new ones. Students in the state of Mississippi deserve to be taught by qualified individuals. When schools cannot fill licensed teacher vacancies, overcrowded classrooms and reduced student learning occur as a result.

What is causing young, inexperienced teachers to leave their jobs? What differences do new teachers see as causes for job satisfaction and burnout compared to experienced teachers? Do factors such as gender, ethnicity, path to certification, years of experience, and school location/socio-economic status predict self-efficacy levels and/or burnout?

### Theoretical Framework

There are multiple theories regarding self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and burnout. Four major theoretical perspectives frame this study. In regard to job satisfaction, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1954) is the foundation for many job satisfaction theories. It states that individuals have a hierarchy of needs including physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization. This can be applied to the concerns of teachers in low socio-economic schools who lack the resources of wealthier areas in the state.

A second job satisfaction theme that pertains to this study is Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory (1957). This theory states that workers encounter motivating factors (within the actual job) that make employees want to work harder, while the absence of hygiene factors (not within the actual job) will make them work less.

In 1976, Maslach and Jackson extended previous burnout research by focusing on teachers. It entails three components: exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. The Maslach Teacher Burnout Inventory is based on these three dimensions and is widely heralded as a leading instrument in burnout research.

Lastly, Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986) applies to teacher and student motivation, and how behavior and growth are affected by cognitive operations. Key principles include self-efficacy, self-regulation, observational learning, and reciprocal determinism.

#### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine what factors contribute to job satisfaction and burnout in special education teachers in the state of Mississippi and to determine if there is a link to why novice teachers are leaving the profession within five years. It will identify through the use of the Teachers' Sense of Self Efficacy Scale and the Teacher Burnout Scale what teachers indicate as reasons for job satisfaction and burnout. Given the unique makeup of students and schools in Mississippi, finding commonalities between teachers across the state may provide useful to administrators in the efforts to combat attrition.



## Justification

School districts across the country are struggling to retain special education teachers. According to the Mississippi Department of Education, research has shown that there is a connection between teacher burnout and attrition. Understanding why special education teachers are leaving the classroom- with half leaving within five years of starting their careers- is vital because it ultimately affects student performance. Students perform better on state mandated assessments when they are taught by highly qualified, experienced teachers (Billingsley, 2004).

If more is known why teachers feel unproductive and frustrated with their positions, perhaps a plan can be implemented by school leaders to address teacher concerns. This research will contribute to the current body of evidence in regard to special education teacher attrition by looking at the relationship between gender, ethnicity, path to certification, years of teaching, school ranking, school socio-economic status as it relates to job satisfaction, and burnout in special education teachers in Mississippi.

## Research Questions

The following questions will be answered with the use of quantitative data:

RQ1: What, if any, is the relationship between special education teachers' self-efficacy and burnout?

RQ2: To what extent can the variability of years of experience, size of caseload, and certification type predict higher self-efficacy?

RQ3: To what extent can the variability of self-efficacy, years of experience, size of caseload, and certification type predict burnout?

## Definitions

*Ethnicity*: social group that shares a common culture, religion, language, etc.

*Gender*: male or female division of a species

*IEP*: Individualized Education Plan

*Teacher Efficacy*: a teacher's feeling of confidence in one's own teaching abilities.

*Teacher Burnout*: State of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion in one's workplace.

*Teacher Attrition*: The loss of employees.

*Mentoring*: A program in place in districts across Mississippi that pairs new teachers with experienced teachers. These pairs are grouped based on grade level and/or similar subjects taught.

*Novice Teacher*: A teacher with 5 or less years of teaching experience.

*Experienced Teacher*: A teacher with 6 or more years of teaching experience.

## Assumptions

1. The surveys used are considered valid and reliable and will accurately measure job satisfaction and burnout.
2. All teachers participating in the survey will be certified to teach special education (K-12) in the state of Mississippi.
3. All teacher participants will understand the directions in the survey and will answer questions honestly.

## Delimitations

1. This study will only focus on data from special education teachers in the state of Mississippi.

2. This study will only focus on special education teachers in Mississippi public schools (no private or charter schools).
3. This study will only focus on special education teachers employed during the 2020-2021 school year.

### Procedures

This study will utilize quantitative data collected from two questionnaire: The Teachers' Sense of Self Efficacy Scale (long form) and the Teacher Burnout Scale. A study will be conducted to determine what factors influence a teacher's sense of self-efficacy and whether it can be linked to burnout levels. The selection of teachers will include those in low and high poverty areas, and low and high achieving schools in order to determine what special education teachers may have in common. Teachers who work only with mild/moderate disabled students will be asked to participate. Many studies have included all special education teachers, including those who work with severe needs students. The study seeks to focus primarily on teachers who work in an inclusion/co-teaching environment in order to understand their levels of self-efficacy and burnout.

## CHAPTER II – LITERATURE REVIEW

There is no doubt that the job of a teacher is important in today's society.

Teachers are considered to be the foundation of education (Sharma & Jyoti, 2006).

Having a strong, effective leader in the classroom is key for academic success. Teachers are struggling, however, to keep up with the demands of a diverse student population and performing the many facets required of teachers. Respect for teachers has also been decreasing, while demands placed on them are increasing (Stempien & Loeb, 2002).

State and federal requirements, and lack of parental and administrative support, contribute to teacher stress, which can lead to burnout and attrition. Students are suffering as a result. Perhaps the most startling research on the topic of teacher burnout found that the difference between a student being taught by an effective, confident teacher versus an ineffective teacher can result in an entire grade level of academic achievement in only one school year (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Hanushek, 1992).

Schools across the world are dealing with a teacher shortage crisis. Countries including Germany, The Netherlands, China, Australia, Iran, Korea, and France have documented alarming rates of teacher attrition within the last two decades. The United States is also dealing with this distressing trend (Aloe, Amo, & Shanahan, 2014). It is estimated that between 20%-50% of teachers leave the field of education within the first five years (Hughes, 2012). The United States Department of Education reported that in the school year of 2011-2012, 8% of the 3,377,900 teachers with current teaching certification left the field of education (Goldring, Taie, & Riddles, 2014).

The problem of teacher attrition is only growing. From 1988 to 2008, the annual attrition rate for teachers increased from 6.4% to 9% (Ingersoll et. Al., 2014). An even

more sobering statistic shows that 450,000 teachers are leaving annually (Carlson, 2012). When compared to other occupations, those in the field of education have been reported as having among the highest rates of burnout (Fisher, 2011). Researchers Brown and Wynn (2009) shared the dire affects in regard to teacher attrition by stating “the high teacher turnover rates result in a deficit of quality teachers and instruction; loss of continuity and commitment; and devotion of time, attention, and funds to recruitment rather than support” (p.37).

Certain subject areas appear to be more vulnerable to attrition, including math, science, and special education. The rate of special education teachers leaving is even higher than general education. This is especially problematic due to reports showing that the population of special needs students has grown over three times faster than that of general education students in the United States (McLeskey et al., 2004). According to American Youth Policy Forum, students with disabilities in public schools account for 13% of total student populations, with 6.6 million students receiving varying degrees of special education services in school (AYPF-CEP, 2015).

Public and private schools are continuing to struggle to fill and retain special education positions in both elementary and secondary settings. With research showing that student achievement is tied to having highly qualified and experienced teachers, this is a major concern (Hughes & Nickson, 2010). One study found that more than 80% of secondary special education teachers are not highly qualified to teach in the academic areas in which they are teaching (McLeskey & Billingsley, 2008). Special education teachers who are knowledgeable of the unique needs of learners and prepared to face the challenges at hand are more effective in the classroom, are satisfied with their work, and

are more likely to stay in the classroom than less prepared teachers (Connelly & Graham, 2009). Having an unqualified teacher is directly linked to low student performance (Futernick, 2007). Schools are unable to have a structured and successful school environment when there is a revolving door of educators, which ultimately hurts the thousands of children attending high needs schools throughout the state of Mississippi, and across the country (Donitsa-Schmidt & Zuzovsky, 2014).

The cost of attrition also places a huge financial burden on school districts. It is estimated that when a teacher leaves the classroom, finding someone to replace them can cost districts between \$9,000-\$23,000 per teacher (Milanowski & Odden, 2007). Not only do schools lose financially, but they lose stability within the individual's school. New teachers have to learn about students and the community they are working with, and new relationships must be established with colleagues (McLeskey & Billingsley, 2008).

Many factors have contributed to teacher turnover, including lack of resources, lack of administrative support, and struggles with classroom management. In fact, student behavior issues have been associated with job related stress and burnout in previous studies (Ratcliff, Jones, Costner, Savage-Davis, & Hunt, 2010). Another significant contributor to these large attrition rates is teacher burnout.

#### History of Burnout

Although there are several definitions for the term "burnout" found in literature, the main component these definitions share is that burnout is the result of long-term, work-related stress (Innstrand, Espnes, & Mykletun, 2004). Psychologist Herbert J. Freudenberger is credited with creating the term "burnout" in 1974 and defined it as a three-part syndrome caused by work related conditions including emotional exhaustion,

depersonalization, and lack of personal realization (Manju, 2018). His studies showed that individuals described as kind-hearted were most susceptible to experiencing the symptoms related to what he called burnout syndrome (Rupert, Mill, & Dorociak, 2015). Individuals who were identified as being overachievers experiencing burnout were found to be putting undue pressure on themselves and others, blaming others inappropriately, and working around the clock. This level of stress becomes too overwhelming for such individuals, which quickly leads to workplace attrition (Clandinin, 2014).

Freudenberger was studying symptoms and causes of burnout in individuals who worked as caregivers. Such jobs, due to the nature of daily job requirements, are a common cause of stress. Workers who take on “too much, for too long, and too intensely” (Freudenberger, 1975; p.74) were at risk of no longer being successful at work. When this stress accumulates, Freudenberger noted that job burnout begins to occur (Larrivee, 2012). He found that those suffering from burnout lacked energy and resources to maintain a positive work experience. They displayed physical symptoms including headaches, fatigue, and sleep disturbances; as well as behavioral symptoms including irritability, anger, and unproductiveness at work.

Despite showing outward signs of being depressed, angry, and/or cynical, these individuals identified instead irritable or fatigued because of burnout (Freudenberger, 1974). As a result, absenteeism, low morale, and job turnover occur. Freudenberger also wrote that burnout effects could reach far beyond the workplace, including increased alcohol and substance use, and family/marital issues (Freudenberger, 1975; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001).

Researcher Christina Maslach continued to explore the notion of burnout in 1978, and further expanded the concept. Her primary focus at the time was healthcare professionals including nurses, doctors, counselors, and caregivers. While conducting interviews with this population of workers, Maslach noticed a commonality in responses. Each of these workers wondered why they chose to enter such an exhausting career field where they sometimes lacked connections with others in their care. In the 1980s, the Maslach Burnout Inventory was developed to identify factors that contribute to burnout of these health care workers. This tool was developed to gather data in order to reduce the negative outcomes associated with burnout. Maslach later developed a second instrument which focused on educators, and a third instrument which focused on burnout of individuals who are not involved in a people-oriented field (Maslach, 2001). Maslach's Burnout Inventories are still used today by a variety of employment fields to deter employees from experiencing workplace burnout (Ullrich et al., 2012).

The primary measurement of this inventory is emotional exhaustion, which Maslach defined as the loss of energy and motivation of workers (Maslach, 2001). It is the first reaction when one begins to experience stress or incur a major change within their jobs. Individuals who were exhausted were reported to be tired more regularly, have low energy, and were shown to be overburdened both emotionally and physically by workplace demands. This is especially seen in employees who tend to overextend themselves, which can cause feelings of being overwhelmed (Maslach, 1982). The way in which workers deal with emotional exhaustion at work is also concerning, particularly when applied to those in the field of education. Some cope by isolating themselves and reduce or even stop their interactions with colleagues. Creating distance between others



in order to deal with the symptoms of emotional exhaustion can be harmful to everyone involved, not just the individual at hand (Maslach & Leiter, 1999).

The component of exhaustion is the central indicator of burnout, and therefore, is the most studied aspect of burnout (Maslach, et al., 2001). Although exhaustion is a vital dimension of burnout, having only exhaustion does not result in burnout because it does not include any aspects of the workplace nor is any account of an employee's relationship with others (Maslach, 2003). Because of this, Maslach later revised her theory of burnout. In addition to the emotional exhaustion component, Maslach later added two more dimensions to workplace burnout to include depersonalization (lack of self-awareness), and lack of personal accomplishments due to anxiety created from work demands.

Depersonalization is defined by Maslach (2003) as distancing and detaching from others in the workplace. Having a negative attitude regarding place of employment and not wanting to be around colleagues are the most apparent characteristics of depersonalization. This has an obvious negative affect on accomplishing workplace tasks, but it takes an even deeper toll on the individual and those who work alongside them. Individuals who are suffering from depersonalization can become detached, pessimistic, and cynical towards others. Some may even begin to show their disdain towards others, and report having lack of feelings. Feelings of guilt because of these negative emotions may emerge, which only further causes an individual more stress as a result (Maslach & Jackson, 1986; Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Maslach 2003).

The third and final dimension of Maslach's theory of burnout is personal accomplishment. Maslach defined this notion as the loss of feeling successful and/or adequately qualified for the position at hand (Maslach, 2003). Feelings of low self-worth,

hopelessness, loss of confidence, and fear of failure all encompass the dimension of personal accomplishment. As such, employees may feel the urge to leave the workplace because of these negative feelings, and for fear of becoming disliked by others because of workplace incompetence (Maslach, 1986).

Workers may experience only one of these dimensions, but those suffering from all three dimensions simultaneously are thought to experience the highest levels of burnout (Pas et al., 2010). An instrument was later created to focus on educator burnout, called the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey (Maslach & Jackson, 1986; Leiter, Bakker, & Maslach, 2014).

Workplace burnout is not currently considered a clinical illness and is therefore not listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders fifth edition (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Despite this, the American Psychiatric Association has reported a staggering worldwide increase in workplace burnout, of which there is no current cure (Mamidenna & Viswanatham, 2014).

### Self-Efficacy

Psychologist Albert Bandura is considered to be a leading expert on the domain of self-efficacy. Bandura defined self-efficacy as one's belief in their ability to perform a certain task (Bandura, 1982). This is different from self-confidence and self-esteem as these are considered to be broad terms. Self-efficacy relates to a specific task at hand (Kelleher, 2016). According to Bandura (1982), individuals will complete tasks they feel they are capable of completing but will avoid tasks that exceed their coping capabilities. Bandura noted that self-efficacy needed further study rather than motivational factors because reasons for an individual's motivation change frequently (Bandura, 1997).

Individuals with high self-efficacy beliefs are willing and able to complete tasks with a positive attitude. Likewise, those who reported having lower levels of self-efficacy tend to be less productive and have more issues with absenteeism in the workplace (Consiglio et al., 2013). Researchers Kulkarni and Chachadi (2015) also noted that some individuals can reportedly have too much self-efficacy and are overly confident when approaching new tasks. Because of this, these individuals can experience failure in completing the task at hand.

The workplace has a significant influence on one's self-efficacy beliefs. It can also impact an individual's personal health either negatively or positively based on their experiences (Baran, 2012; Lavian, 2012). Self-efficacy is reduced among teachers working in an unsupportive school, which could lead to burnout (Lavian, 2012). Experiencing high levels of stress is also linked to lower levels of self-efficacy (Klassen & Chiu, 2010). These are important aspects when studying teacher burnout and attrition because a teacher's self-efficacy impacts student achievement (Abernathy-Dyer, Ortlieb, & Cheek, 2013). Students who have teachers with high self-efficacy perform better than those who are taught by teachers with low self-efficacy (Wang, 2015).

In 1997, Bandura expanded on the notion of self-efficacy by detailing four foundations which establish self-efficacy thus influencing human behavior. These include:

1. Social Modeling- This idea is based upon an individual seeing someone else complete a task and believing that they, too, can complete the task.

2. Mastery Experience- Bandura suggested that individuals who successfully completed a task in the past are more likely to undertake new tasks. These individuals show more effort, perseverance.
3. Social persuasion- When others encourage an individual to complete a task, they feel that it can be accomplished even though they have no previous experience.
4. Psychological responses- How an individual will respond to a task, whether positively or negatively, influences how they accomplish a task. If negative emotions occur, anxiety can increase and thusly lowers one's level of self-efficacy.

Having a strong self-efficacy occurs when an individual knows their abilities and are willing to commit unfamiliar tasks with heightened efficacy beliefs (Bumann & Younkin, 2012). Bandura (1997) determined through a series of human behavior experiments that higher levels of self-efficacy caused higher level of task accomplishments. Employees with high self-efficacy are less likely to experience burnout symptoms due to having strong coping strategies. To these individuals, any challenges presented are seen as chances to improve personal growth (Consiglio et al., 2013). On a positive note, researchers Bumann & Younkin (2012) discovered that when individuals reflect on experiences they have had, self-efficacy levels can rise, and changes in attitude and behavior can improve. An individual's psychological health can also be positively affected when they have strong self-efficacy beliefs (Abernathy-Dyer, Ortlieb, & Cheek, 2013).

Vygotsky's social development theory (1978) is also a critical component to the foundation of this study. While Bandura (1982) and Maslach (1976) address the personal issues involved with burnout, Vygotsky's theory addresses the social aspect of working

in education, including collaboration and mentoring in the workplace. Although this concept was focused on children and their ability to problem-solve and cope, it can easily be applied to adults as well (Miller, 2011; Moll, 2013).

Vygotsky theorized that when individuals work together, they share experiences and build problem-solving skills because of collaborating with others (Rieber & Robinson, 2004).

### Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction research has been conducted since the 1920s and is widely considered to be the most researched variable in organizational research (Tillman & Tillman, 2008; Wright, 2006). As of 2006, more than 10,000 studies were conducted on the topic alone (Wright, 2006). As such, many job satisfaction theories can be found throughout literature, with varying rationales regarding job satisfaction. Herzberg was among the first to research job satisfaction, and in 1959, theorized that the *absence* of job satisfaction is the opposite of job satisfaction (Herzberg, 1959). Although Maslach and Leiter (1999) state that job *engagement* is the antithesis of burnout, others consider job *satisfaction* to be the opposite of burnout (Vannest et al., 2010).

There are also several definitions of job satisfaction. In 1976, Locke defined job satisfaction as the positive emotions felt regarding one's occupational experiences. It is defined as a person's perception of his or her job and work environment according to Mehta (2012). There is a direct link between job satisfaction and teacher retention, and the effects of stress on job satisfaction have been noted abundantly when studying special education burnout and attrition (Stempien & Loeb, 2002). It is considered to be the main factor special education teachers consider when determining whether to stay in the

classroom or leave (Singh & Billingsley, 1996). A study conducted on the topic showed that 94% of teachers surveyed felt that the relationship they had with colleagues was their main source of job satisfaction (Luckner & Hanks, 2003).

Research conducted by Giacometti (2005) revealed that teachers who are satisfied with their job report having a higher sense of administrative and community support, classroom management, instructional support, and adequate benefits and pay. The connection between teacher satisfaction and attrition is largely based on factors in the emotional domain. These include self-confidence, motivation, commitment, and burnout. Some schools have focused on this emotional domain as a way of increasing job satisfaction through providing emotional support to teachers when needed (Giacometti, 2005).

Job satisfaction leads to positive self-efficacy for teachers. Self-efficacy is considered to be the confidence one has in the ability to perform a duty, or in this case, be an effective teacher (Bandura, 1997). Teachers who enjoy being in the classroom and have confidence in their ability to teach have better student achievement results (Spector, 1997).

Teachers, just like other human service professionals including doctors and nurses, begin to have symptoms of job burnout when having to deal with others' emotional, physical, and social needs (Piotrowski & Plash, 2006). According to Carlson (2012), when teachers do not feel a sense of accomplishment in student achievement, they lose job satisfaction and are likely to leave the classroom. When teachers begin to feel burdened by work duties, emotional exhaustion occurs, and teachers lose their sense of personal accomplishment, have lower self-efficacy, and higher levels of

depersonalization. Stress in the workplace can cause teachers to have a distorted view of their ability to cope and function, and can lead to negative thinking (Can, 2011).

### Teacher Burnout

Teacher burnout has been occurring for years. The concern is the rampant rate at which it is happening in today's classrooms across the country (Larrivee, 2012). Having negative and cynical teachers only leads to a strained relationship with coworkers and thus creates a toxic work environment (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015). Increased pressure to improve student achievement scores, legal implications, and teaching the culturally diverse students of the 21<sup>st</sup> century presents obvious challenges to teachers (Lopez et al., 2008). To many, however, these challenges become too much. Teachers experiencing this level of stress is attributed to teachers' perceptions of required demands and the inability to meet such demands (Martinetz, 2012).

There is no doubt that the profession of teaching is demanding, both physically and emotionally. Educators are required to plan lessons, collaborate with fellow teachers, communicate with parents, record grades, and have strong classroom management skills. Beyond this is the overarching requirements of state mandated initiatives that demand the needs of all students be met. With ever increasingly diverse student needs, this complex workload can become overwhelming. Most teachers have experienced negative emotions from time to time throughout their career. Some teachers, however, seem to experience these emotions with greater frequency and more acutely than others (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). They defined this crisis as an abnormal response to chronic emotional stress characterized by emotional tiredness, depersonalization, and low personal realization (Brunsting & Sreckovic, 2014). Teacher burnout has been shown to not only lead to

teacher attrition, but health issues including depression and negative student outcomes (Armon, Melamed, & Shapira, 2010).

A teacher's gender, grade level, and subject taught can all have a bearing on teacher burnout odds (Martin, Sass, & Schmitt, 2011). Secondary teachers are more at risk for burnout than elementary teachers (Domenech, 2006). Retention rates are higher in elementary school teachers than secondary teachers due to instructional techniques and class diversity differences between the two settings (Martin, Sass, & Schmitt, 2011). Male teachers reported higher scores regarding depersonalization than female teachers. Female teachers reported higher scores in emotional exhaustion than male teachers.

Age can also be a point of vulnerability for teachers, with younger teachers reporting high levels of emotional exhaustion (Watts, 2011). Teacher burnout is linked to every stage of one's teaching career, from those near retirement and even as early as post-secondary education majors who are student teaching. Several studies have shown that burnout and attrition is highest among new teachers. This is especially problematic since teachers become more effective with experience. If teachers are leaving the classroom early, students are not being given the opportunity to be taught by an effective teacher, nor is the teacher giving his or her self the opportunity to improve on teaching skills that ultimately may want to make them stay in the classroom after all (Guarino et al., 2006; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Henry, Bastian, & Fortner, 2011; Billingsley & Bettini, 2019).

Significant research has been conducted focusing on burnout of new teachers, but studies have shown veteran teachers also experience work stress and burnout (Desimone et al., 2014). The chronological age of a teacher is a major predictor of burnout, with teachers over the age of 41 reporting low personal accomplishment scores. This age



group of teachers also reportedly think of themselves as being less successful than those their age who are in a different occupation (Watts & Robinson, 2011). Because of this discrepancy, teachers over 41 show higher levels of mental and physical exhaustion (Koruklu et al., 2012).

High poverty areas struggle with high teacher turnover rates (McLauren et al., 2009). According to Teacher Follow-Up Survey data in 2004, schools that are high minority, high poverty in both rural and urban areas struggle with large teacher turnover rates (Ingersoll et al., 2014). Teachers who are in urban areas have a higher turnover rate than those teaching in the suburbs. Teachers are also more likely to leave rural areas due to feelings of isolation and cultural and geographic concerns. Schools with a high number of minority students have attrition rates 70% higher than low minority student schools. Title 1 schools have 50% more teacher turnover than schools with a higher socioeconomic status (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Math and science teachers have higher rates of attrition than other secondary subject teachers, likely due to having more career options with a math or science degree (Borman & Dowling, 2008). Researchers have argued that the number one contributor to teacher burnout is student behavior, and that teachers feel largely unprepared in regard to classroom management (Ariel, 2013).

Another area of concern regarding teacher attrition is the high turnover of minority teachers. Based on data from the U.S. Department of Education (NCES, 2011), 84% of American teachers are White. Although the number of minority teachers has more than doubled since the late 1980s, due largely to district's minority teacher

recruitment efforts, the number of minority teachers leaving the classroom continues to increase (Ingersoll, Merrill & Stuckey, 2018).

#### Reasons for Teacher Attrition

Ingersoll and Smith (2013) organized the reasons teachers leave the field of education into thirteen categories:

- lack of administrative support
- large class sizes
- unmotivated students
- poor salary
- student discipline problems
- no power in having an influence on school policy
- lack of time to prepare lessons
- lack of support from the community
- lack of efficient coworkers
- lack of time to work with students
- no opportunities for advancement
- unsafe working conditions
- outside interferences

These reasons were given by new and veteran teachers who either changed schools or left the field of education. Ingersoll et. Al. (2014) also noted that when compared to other career fields, such as law, architecture, and engineering, attrition rates are higher for both elementary and secondary teachers. The only field with a higher rate is the healthcare industry.

Researchers Goldhaber and Cowan (2014) note that teacher preparation programs may be partly to blame for new teacher attrition. After more than a decade of research, teachers enter the classroom ill prepared for the challenges, and lack strategies to overcome such challenges. With little incentive to stay, some quit in their very first year. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2016), students majoring in special education are at an all-time low, with most recent numbers being the lowest since data began being collected several decades ago.

Becoming a certified teacher and maintaining teacher certification can be challenging. Teacher candidates are required to take tests to receive a teaching license, and they must complete professional development training if they plan to recertify in years to come (Sass et al., 2012). Being a life-long learner and continuing to adapt to the diverse population of students adds to the stress of being a teacher. Teachers must obtain a certain amount of professional development hours before renewing their teaching licenses based on state requirements. Finding and attending beneficial professional development can sometimes be difficult. Hursen (2014) conducted a qualitative study to determine what reasons teachers mentioned for struggling with being life-long learners, and the answers were disheartening. Teachers mentioned being too overwhelmed by their day-to-day duties to actively pursue additional learning workshops. Others mentioned lack of school funding to attend certain professional development. Lack of administrative support was also listed as a hindrance to building on a teacher's current knowledge base.

The work environment has also been found to be a factor when looking at reasons for burnout (Fernet et al., 2012; Baran et al., 2012). School climate is another influence when evaluating stress and job satisfaction. Having a positive school climate where

teachers have the appropriate teaching materials and colleagues who support one have a strong bearing on whether a teacher is experiencing burnout (Collie et al., 2012).

### Special Education Teacher Burnout and Attrition

Burnout and attrition among special education teachers is alarmingly high. The shortage of special education teachers is not a new issue, in fact it dates back to more than 40 years ago, when the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) was enacted. This law required that all students be educated in public schools, no matter their ability level. Students with learning disabilities were previously allowed to be excluded from attending due to having special needs that schools could not address. IDEA created an enormous change in schools across the country, and the demand for special education teachers skyrocketed as a result. Since then, the demand for special education teachers has far exceeded the supply of teachers available (Dewey et al., 2017; McLeskey & Billingsley, 2008; Billingsley & Bettini, 2019).

The problem of finding qualified special education teachers is only worsening. According to Billingsley (2004), special education attrition is twice that of general education teachers. The only group with higher attrition rates is English Language Learner (ELL) teachers (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). 98% of school districts in the United States have reported having a shortage of special education staff (McLeskey, Tyler, & Flippin 2004). According to the National Coalition on Personnel Shortages in Special Education and Related Services (2016), 49 states are currently dealing with special education teacher shortages. The severity of shortages differs across states and regions of the country. The state of Texas is losing special education teachers

twice as quickly as any other state (Sullivan et al., 2017). Less than 80% of special education teachers stay in the same school more than four years (Boe et. Al, 2005).

The shortage of special education teachers throughout the country is due to fewer college students graduating with special education degrees, a growing number of special education students, special education teachers retiring early, and high attrition rates (Planty et al., 2009; Flynt & Morton, 2009). According to reports from the United States Department of Education, states spend more than 90 million dollars a year to recruit special education teachers in order to fill open positions across the country (Brownell, Hirsch, & Seo, 2004).

Special education teachers who work primarily with students with behavioral and/or emotional disabilities have an even higher attrition rate than other special education teachers (Major, 2012). Teachers who have stayed in classrooms for students with emotional disabilities state that they stay because of a strong connection and desire to help students. Teachers of the emotionally disturbed who feel that they work in a positive school environment are more likely to stay (Albrecht et al., 2009).

Special education teacher attrition is caused by a number of factors including student behavior issues, high caseloads, paperwork, and lack of administrative support. Teachers who are responsible for students who act out can have higher frustration levels than others because it affects the teacher's ability to maintain a safe, organized environment (Aloe, Amo, & Shanahan, 2014). There are also a number of special education teachers who change from working with students with special needs to the general education classroom. Special education teachers have noted to find their profession less rewarding when compared to general education teachers (Stempien &

Loeb, 2002). A large portion, however, leave the field of education entirely, with 50% leaving within the first five years of their teaching career (Piotrowski & Plash, 2006).

According to a study conducted by the United States Office of Special Education Programs, special education teachers are struggling to complete job requirements involving students due to time spent working on special education documentation. These teachers reportedly spend no less than five hours a week keeping up with special education paperwork which including student referrals, evaluations, Individualized Education Plans (IEP) and behavior plans. This amount is much higher than the time reported by general education teachers (Aloe, Amo, & Shanahan, 2014).

There are multiple school settings that a special education teacher can be involved with. There is the general education classroom, where special education students can be taught with both a general education and special education teacher. This is known as an inclusion classroom. There are also self-contained classrooms, where students with more severe disabilities than others can be placed. Teachers in self-contained classes have a much higher rate of teacher burnout and attrition when compared with teachers in the inclusion classroom. A number of factors contribute to this, including student age, severity of disability, class size, and student-to-teacher ratio (Brunsting et al., 2014).

Beginning special education teachers have listed reasons such as too much paperwork, lack of time, large caseloads, and lack of support for no longer having job satisfaction (Vitteck, 2015). A study conducted by researchers Luckner and Hanks (2003) revealed that 68% of teachers who responded to surveys indicated that the amount of paperwork involved with special education was the most difficult part of the job. When broken down by grade level, secondary teachers reported a higher number than

elementary teachers in regard to paperwork. The highest group that reported difficulty keeping up with special education paperwork were teachers in resource classrooms, or those who taught students with more severe disabilities and/or students with behavioral and emotional needs (Luckner & Hanks, 2003).

Thirteen percent of first year special education teachers in urban areas leave their positions, and the numbers double for first year teachers in rural areas (Piotrowski & Plash, 2006). Special education teachers in high poverty areas are especially at risk to leaving the field of education. Teachers in this area are not as qualified as teachers in low poverty areas, and face more challenges including higher caseloads, lack of necessary materials, and lack of administrative support. These issues only further dilute the quality of education of students with special needs (Fall & Billingsley, 2011).

Research pertaining to attrition of veteran special education teachers (teachers with ten or more years of experience) versus new teachers (three or less years of experience) is mixed. According to Piotrowski and Plash (2006), attrition rates increase with years of experience. Borman and Dowling (2008) also noted that teachers were more likely to leave after years five and six and found that attrition increased with each additional year. According to Floyd et al. (2013), however, reports show that beginning special education teacher turnover is much higher than veteran teachers. Teachers who held advanced degrees were more likely to leave, although some vacancies were due to changing from a teaching position to an administrative position.

#### Additional Consequences of Burnout

Although attrition tends to be a focal point of concern in teacher burnout research, other negative correlations should also be recognized. Not only does burnout affect the

career of an individual, it could also take a negative toll on one's mental and physical health. Depression is linked to those suffering from job burnout (Bianchi, Boffy, Hingray, Truchot, & Laurent, 2013). Teachers who are overwhelmed with professional and personal demands can potentially experience anxiety (Warren & Sorges, 2013). Documented physical ailments include chronic fatigue, recurrent colds/flu, and even musculoskeletal pain (Armon, Melamed, Shirom, & Shapira, 2010).

Burnout also appears to have a ripple effect beyond the individual at hand. When a teacher is absent because of health issues related to burnout, other staff can become over-worked and burdened (Berry, Byrd, & Wieder, 2013). Having to perform not only the regular duties of a teacher, but also the duties of absent teachers is cause for stress (Zeichner, 2013). Administrators may also mistakenly view a teacher who is experiencing burnout as trying to cause problems with students and coworkers (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Not only are there physical and mental struggles for the teacher, students are also impacted due the consequences of job-related burnout.

Burnout clearly has a negative impact on students as well. When a teacher lacks enthusiasm for learning, it affects not only their ability to plan and deliver successful lessons, but also causes a lack in motivation to try to improve (Klassen & Klassen, 2010). Feelings of hostility can be directed at people a teacher most cares about, their students, because of burnout (Maslach, 1982). Teachers who were found to be struggling with burnout also tend to have negative attitudes at school, which in turn could cause students to become pessimistic as well. Teachers who are experiencing work related burnout can have low expectations for students in the classroom and can also have negative attitudes towards students (Maslach, 1976). Problems with classroom management and an increase



in discipline referrals are also consequences of a teacher experiencing a high level of burnout (Pas et al., 2010).

Researchers Loeb, Ronfeldt, and Wyckoff conducted a study in 2012 and found that teacher turnover resulted in lower test scores for students. In Language Arts, students scored 6-8% of a standard deviation lower when there was teacher turnover as compared to a separate year in which there was not teacher turnover within the same school. In math, students with high teacher turnover had scores 7%-9% of a standard deviation lower. This negative effect was found in a variety of school communities (Loeb et al., 2012).

Teachers who change schools due to symptoms of burnout also hurt student achievement. Even though these teachers continue with their careers, minority students and students in low-socioeconomic areas suffer the most from this movement (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2005; Billingsley & Bettini, 2019). Highly effective teachers who choose to move from a high poverty school to a low poverty school further hinder student in need because they are not given the opportunity to be taught by the best teachers (Boyd et al., 2005; Goldhaber, Theobald, & Fumia, 2018; Billingsley & Bettini, 2019).

Special needs students display more disruptive behavior, have more disciplinary write-ups, and meet their IEP goals less frequently, particularly in students with autism, when teachers are not performing at their best due to work fatigue and burnout (Ruble & McGrew, 2013). Students who do not meet their IEP goals are thusly denied their right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE), which could cause schools to lose state funding.

## Accountability and Attrition

State and federal mandates have impacted teacher attrition rates. The pressure to perform and increase student achievement has caused qualified teachers to leave the field of education due to overwhelming feelings of stress (Sass et al., 2012; Goldring et al., 2014). In 2016, Ingersoll, Merrill, and May conducted research to determine how state accountability measures affected teacher attrition. What they found was that high achieving schools had less turnover, and low achieving schools had higher turnover. They also found that rewards given to high achieving schools made no difference in teacher attrition, but sanctions given to lower-performing districts worsened teacher attrition rates (Ingersoll et al., 2016).

When the National Commission on Excellence in Education released an alarming report entitled *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, the poor results of schools in the United States outraged parents and stakeholders across the country. From this point, federal reform efforts were initiated, and standardized testing became the primary way students were evaluated for academic mastery. If the student failed, it was believed to be due in part to having an ineffective teacher. This shift in education played a significant role in teacher burnout and attrition (Cody, 2014).

Accountability for teachers was only further pressured by the congressional act No Child Left Behind in 2001. This accountability measure required schools, namely special education teachers, to ensure students with disabilities were meeting grade level standards. Students who may be multiple grade levels behind are now required to take state level assessments in the grade in which they are placed, not the grade related to their current ability levels (McLaughlin, 2010).

This issue has been problematic for schools who may be able to show student growth from the beginning of the school year to the end, but still fail annual state testing requirements. With this mandate, results of standardized tests are tied to funds a school receives, therefore significant pressure is placed on administrators and special education teachers to improve student achievement scores. Teachers have also noted that they spend less time actually teaching, and end up spending valuable instruction time on testing, preparing for tests, and maintaining documentation about testing results (Kaff 2004). Some teachers find the stress of these tests and accountability measures too much to handle, and many teachers either quit or retire early as a result of the pressure to perform (Naison, 2014).

Research conducted by Luekens et al. (2004) showed that 7% of special education teachers quit because of rigorous testing demands in the 2000-2001 school year. A similar study of special education teacher attrition was conducted in 2012-2013, eleven years after NCLB was implemented, and 24% of teachers said they left teaching because of stress related to student testing (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Teachers in this study also listed the issue of lacking support to effectively prepare students for state required tests as reason for leaving the profession (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

One mandate of No Child Left Behind (2001) requires schools to have highly qualified teachers for each subject and grade level (Martinetz, 2012). Teachers with frequent absenteeism and those who quit midyear due to burnout are frequently replaced with substitutes who are not highly qualified. Because of this, schools are not able to meet this component of NCLB and may have sanctions placed by the state or federal

government. High absenteeism also impacts students because they are not being taught by a highly qualified teacher (Marzano, Pickering, & Heflebower, 2011). In other cases, a teacher who is physically present but not properly engaged due to workplace fatigue can also negatively impact student achievement (Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2012).

Race to the Top (2010) and the introduction to Common Core Standards (although not implemented in every state) have further added to the pressure placed on teachers (Kamenetz, 2015). Not only are teachers and administrators pressured to continue making adequate yearly progress on standardized tests, now teacher evaluations are tied to student performances on these tests (Ravitch, 2014; Kafele, 2015). Some see this as positive change, as it potentially weeds out poor performing teachers. Although it is natural to have some level of attrition due to retirement or poor performance, these cases only account for 32% of attrition, which means 68% of attrition among schoolteachers is voluntary (Adnot, Dee, Katz, & Wyckoff, 2016; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Case studies and survey results show that it also causes high performing teachers to feel frustrated and decreased teacher morale (Rentner & Kober, 2014). One study conducted by Sass et al. in 2012 reviewed high stakes testing and its influence on teacher attrition. After conducting a teacher survey, the results showed that feelings pertaining to teacher attrition increased during times of high stakes testing, and when teachers were being evaluated by administrators (Sass et al., 2012).

## Path to Certification

The link between the path to special education teacher certification and attrition has been studied in recent years with mixed results. In one study conducted in 2011, researchers Coughlin and Ringlaben found that certification type was a significant factor in teacher attrition. Results from surveys indicated that those teachers who planned to leave the field of education had received teacher certification through the traditional method of graduating with a degree in education. Teachers who obtained certification through alternate pathways stated that they intended to stay in the classroom. A similar study was conducted to compare students who graduated with dual certification (meaning that the teacher is qualified to teach both general education and special education) and those who only certified in special education. Results showed that the teachers who obtained dual certification had higher rates of transferring and attrition than those with only special education certification (Edgar & Pair, 2005).

According to the Mississippi Department of Education website, there are several ways in which an individual may obtain the ability to teach special education in the state of Mississippi. There is the traditional route of attending a 4-year university and completing coursework through a certified program. Mississippi also has an alternate-route certification option for individuals who may have obtained a non-education degree, but who are interested in teaching. Course work must be taken for both options, and Praxis testing is required as well.

Another option is for teachers who are currently certified in a subject/grade level, but who would like to teach special education. In this instance, teachers can take one or two Praxis tests, and if they pass, can become certified in special education. The final

option is for schools who are unable to find certified individuals to teach students with special needs. This is referred to as emergency certification.

Licenses in special education are very broad and tend to allow teachers to work with students with mild to moderate disabilities from kindergarten to grade 12. This gives schools flexibility to move teachers around where they are needed and gives special education teachers a chance to experience other subjects and grade levels (Sindelar, Fisher, & Myers, 2019). Some states require teachers to have both a general education license with special education, while others require special education endorsements alone (Blanton et al., 2017). As more districts find viable solutions for teacher shortages, alternate paths to certification are becoming more common, and therefore, warrant research on individuals entering the teaching force without the standard training.

### Special Education History

In the pre-twentieth century era of the United States, individuals with disabilities were largely ignored, and were denied admission into public schools. Many were sent to asylums or prisons. By the late 1800s, parents and concerned citizens wanted an alternative solution, and students with disabilities were eventually able to attend public schools due to several landmark cases that argued all students should be given an opportunity to receive access to an education in public schools.

As education continued to evolve, political movements became dedicated to ensuring that students with special needs received the opportunity to receive an education like their non-disabled peers. By the 1950s, parents of disabled children were banding together to enact change and worked together to create the National Association for Retarded Children. Soon, over 100 universities offered special education classes to

prospective teachers. Before congress passed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1975, students with disabilities were largely forgotten about in schools. In fact, more than one million students were excluded from receiving an education altogether.

### Landmark Special Education Court Cases

There have been several court cases related to students of special needs that show a) students being denied admission into public school; b) a reversal of the previous decisions to exclude students, and c) the extent of services students are able to receive in public schools based on their disability and needs. These cases are worth documenting briefly within this study because they show how students have been excluded, as seen in earlier court cases. The reversal of what led to essentially moving from full exclusion to full inclusion made a huge impact on public education. The latter cases also show how multi-faceted the field of special education has become, and the tasks teachers and service providers must undertake to ensure they are meeting the needs of their special education population.

Chief Justice Earl Warren perhaps said it best when explaining the decision of the *Brown v. Board of Education* case (1954) when he wrote “in these days, it is doubtful that any child may be reasonably expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity, where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right that must be made available to all on equal terms.”

-*Watson v. City of Cambridge* (1893)- Allowed students to be expelled from public school due to not being academically strong. The Massachusetts Supreme Court would later uphold this decision.

-Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (PARC) v. Pennsylvania- Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and Mills v. Board of Education of the District of Columbia (1972)-addressed concerns of students with special needs being denied access to a public education. This was considered to be an extension of the previous landmark court case, Brown vs. Board of Education, which ruled that segregation in public schools was illegal in 1954.

In 1975, Congress passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, later known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This act requires that students be placed in the “least restrictive environment” possible. In other words, the more time spent among non-disabled peers the better (Carson, 2015).

Since this time, changes in the United States public school classroom have continued to occur. No longer are special needs students allowed to be excluded from their general education peers. Each of the cases beyond 1954 were meant to positively influence the lives and educational opportunities of students with special needs. But they did not cure all the plight of special education services in public schools. In fact, they may have unintentionally created new problems that schools are currently trying to address, including the issues related to burnout and attrition of special education teachers.

Although some schools were able to train teachers to handle the unique needs of special needs students when they were required to be admitted into public schools, many were hiring unqualified individuals to handle the growing number of students. As accountability of special education students becomes more stringent, so too does the stress of the role of the special education teacher. Special education teachers are more likely than general education teachers to experience high levels of stress, burnout, low



self-efficacy, and low job satisfaction due to overwhelming job responsibilities (Emery & Vandenberg, 2010).

The position of special education teacher is a very unique one, with much responsibility and legal implications due to IDEA (Johnson, 2011). The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2019) provides a broad job description of special education teachers as:

Special education teachers work with students who have learning, mental, emotional, or physical disabilities. They adapt general education lessons and teach various subjects to students with mild to moderate disabilities. They also teach basic skills to students with severe disabilities.

Special education teachers must develop, follow, and document Individualized Education Plans (IEP). According to IDEA (2004), an IEP is a written statement for students with disabilities that is developed, reviewed, and revised annually at a minimum. It contains present and past levels of performance, measurable goals relating to a student's unique needs, and accommodations and modifications a student may need to be successful.

This paperwork is also subject to scrutiny by outside sources, including administrators, special education advocates, and special education directors. It could also be subject to random audits conducted by the state, who are checking to ensure all paperwork is completed and accurate. Special education teachers are required by law to implement an IEP, and advocate for each student. They provide direct instruction for students; work with general education teachers to ensure the needs of students are being met; provide strategies and support students with their IEP goals, and much more (Williams, 2014).

In addition to the academic component of working with special needs students, teachers also must address any communication, behavioral, or physical needs. Some students with more severe disabilities also have medical and nursing needs that must be taken care of during the school day (Sheldrake, 2013). These job duties clearly add to the stress special education teachers may feel. New teachers, in particular, face difficulties if their post-secondary training lacked problem solving discussions when challenges should arise in the classroom (McLaurin et al., 2009). This stress can come from a mismatch of teachers' expectations and job realities. This could be because of difficulties identifying the vast needs of special needs students, lack of time to prepare for instruction, and having success with the implementation of students' IEPs (Major, 2012; Johnson, 2011). This in turn causes teachers to lose a sense of accomplishment, when reduces job satisfaction and leads to an increase in burnout and attrition (Piotrowski & Plash, 2006).

Special education teachers can only be successful when administrators are able to hire and retain experienced and effective educators (Christle & Yell, 2013; Johnson & Simon, 2013). Special education teachers have increased job satisfaction and decreased odds of attrition when they receive administrative support and smaller caseloads (Brown & Wynn, 2009). Likewise, teachers who lack administrative support have reported higher levels of exhaustion and low sense of accomplishment (Carlson, 2012).

### Solutions

There is no "one size fits all" quick fix approach to teacher burnout and attrition, but there are ways in which a school district can minimize burnout and its effect, which includes attrition. Measures taken during the hiring process, support for new teachers during the school year, and continuing to support veteran teachers have all been shown to

reduce teacher turnover. With the demand for special education teachers increasing almost 20% in the last decade, more obviously needs to be done to attract and maintain special education teachers (Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, 2009).

Administrators who are in the hiring process can begin to take the steps to ensure stability in schools by thoroughly vetting applicants before they even enter the classroom. Traits of effective teachers were studied by Darling-Hammond (2000) to determine what qualities administrators could look for in new hires. Findings showed that strong verbal ability had a larger impact than a person's overall IQ score. Teachers who were fully certified (not provisionally or unlicensed) were also found to be more effective.

Regarding teacher training, those who took more classes in math and science *methods* outperformed those who took regular math and science classes. Years of experience did not appear to correlate with effectiveness, with numbers remaining the same after five years of teaching. Teachers who had advanced degrees, more continuing education courses, and were certified in their field were also less likely to leave the classroom. Multiple studies have also shown that having an effective classroom management style has a significant impact on student outcomes (Scherer, 2003). When a teacher is able to positively control the environment in the classroom, a profound impact on student achievement will occur (Sterrett et al., 2011). Learning coping skills in regard to the teacher workload and classroom management is key when working to stop teacher turnover (McCarthy, Lambert, & Ullrich, 2012).

After years of struggling to help teachers with burnout and lower rates of attrition, many districts have enacted mentoring programs for first year teachers and new to the district teachers. Most districts require first year teachers to be mentored by a veteran

teacher. When teachers lack a relationship with coworkers, feelings of isolation can occur (Cooper & Conley, 2013). Having teacher outreach programs where teachers, new and veteran, can meet to discuss concerns, brainstorm classroom management techniques, and otherwise problem solve has been shown to improve retention rates. In addition, schools who began collaborative mentor meetings have seen an improvement in teacher leadership and student achievement (Hopkins & Spillane, 2014).

A study conducted by Horrison-Collier (2013) revealed that mentor programs and job satisfaction can significantly influence a teacher's decision to stay in the classroom. It was also noted that when administrators provided special education teachers time to work with general education teachers to lesson plan and problem solve- rather than focusing on additional professional development hours- job satisfaction increased. Mentoring has been shown to be effective for general education teachers, but this positive correlation has not been supported when it comes to special education teachers (Guarino et al., 2006; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Billingsley, 2004; Billingsley & Bettini, 2019). In one quantitative study conducted by Connelly and Graham (2009), mentoring did not predict special education teacher attrition in young teachers. In multiple qualitative studies, however, special education teachers noted value in the mentor programs they were apart of in school (Lopez-Estrada & Koyama, 2010; Gehrke & McCoy, 2007). Although mentoring has been a positive solution for teacher attrition, more solutions are still needed to address teacher shortages (Ingersoll, 2012).

The ability to manage stress has been documented as a leading factor of burnout across all teaching levels and subjects. New teachers are especially vulnerable because they have not had the time to develop skills needed to manage stress. Young teachers

may not have been taught the coping strategies needed to deal with the demands that come with teaching in their post-secondary training. When novice teachers feel overwhelmed with job duties, they are likely to leave their teaching careers behind (McLaurin et al., 2009). Coaching educators with different strategies for dealing with stress has been linked to having students be able to adjust to stress appropriately in the classroom (Wang, 2015).

Researchers Williams and Dikes (2015) found several strategies that showed a reduction in teacher stress. They state that male teachers would benefit from networking with others to share learning strategies, while female teachers (especially at the middle school level) would benefit from wellness programs designed to reduce stress (Kipps-Vaughan, 2013). Professional development aimed at improving self-care and reducing stress should be carefully considered. Some teachers may find such seminars as offensive and belittling, even though it may be intended to positively help reduce symptoms of burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

Veteran teachers should not be forgotten, and benefit from regular check-ins with administration to address any concerns. Special education teachers may have lower stress with reduced caseloads and time to collaborate with other teachers. (Williams & Dikes, 2015).

Administrative support has been listed as a factor to whether teachers decide to stay or leave the classroom. Researchers Anderson and Fry (2011), found that special education teachers who felt they had a strong relationship with their administrative team were less likely to quit. Special education teachers who report having a supportive and encouraging administration have increased self-confidence which in turn leads to

increased job satisfaction. Likewise, special education teachers who reported little to no interaction with administration feel less supported and are more likely to leave.

Dissatisfaction with an administrator has been found to be a factor for teachers when deciding if they should change schools or leave the profession altogether (Sharma & Jyoti, 2006). Researchers Hughes and Nickson (2010) interviewed current and former special education teachers and found that administrative support, in addition to colleague and parental support, were vital factors in the decision to stay or leave the classroom.

Another research study conducted by Sheldrake in 2013 surveyed both administrators as well as special education teachers. Both groups agreed that there are certain ways in which to increase teacher satisfaction and decrease burnout and attrition.

These include:

- (a) redesigning the role of special education teacher
- (b) providing professional development opportunities
- (c) reducing caseloads and paperwork
- (d) increasing administrative support
- (e) increasing salaries
- (f) providing a co-teaching environment that allows both general education and special education teachers to play equally important roles
- (g) providing general education teachers and administrators a better understanding of the role of the special education teacher

More recent successful change in the fight against teacher burnout and attrition has been the implementation of collaborative professional development opportunities (Avalos, 2011). In many schools, these are known as professional learning communities, or PLCs.

In these communities, teachers meet with fellow teachers to discuss curriculum, lesson plan, and trouble-shoot any areas of concern. Having this sense of community has shown to improve teacher morale, and has also led to more teachers, both new and veteran, choosing to remain in the field of education (Darling-Hammond et al. 2012; Hattie, 2011).

There are other key job-related factors that have been researched and found not to be strongly linked to teacher burnout and attrition. Borman and Dowling (2008) shared that school expenditure on teaching material and teacher support was not statistically significant in regard to teacher attrition. It was also noted that in the general education setting, class size averages and student to teacher ratios did not correlate with increased burnout and attrition. According to research conducted by Buchanan (2012), however, showed that a larger class size was correlated with teacher burnout.

Teacher salary has received significant attention in the last decade, with some believing that teachers should be paid based on student performance. Some states, including Mississippi, have also recently piloted merit-based pay bonuses for teachers who met or exceeded expectations, or showed significant growth in student achievement. One study found no link between teacher salary and job satisfaction. In fact, studies have shown there may be a slight increase in work dissatisfaction when there was an increase of \$1000 in annual teacher pay (Moore, 2012).

### CHAPTER III - METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this quantitative, correlational study was to determine the relationship between teacher efficacy levels and teacher burnout among secondary special education teachers who teach in an inclusion/co-teaching environment. The independent variable was the three components of the Teachers' Sense of Self Efficacy Scale: efficacy in student engagement, efficacy in instructional strategies, and efficacy in classroom management. The dependent variable was the four components found within the Teacher Burnout Scale: career satisfaction, perceived administrative support, coping with job related stress, and attitudes towards students.

This study's target population was special education teachers employed to work with mild/moderate students (Mississippi teacher license code 221) during the 2022-2023 school year. A letter was sent to superintendents in the state of Mississippi asking for permission to contact special education teachers. A follow-up phone call was placed for districts that did not respond within a reasonable time period. After obtaining permission from superintendents, the researcher worked with special education departments to determine contact information for special education teachers who teach mild/moderate disability students in the co-teaching or inclusion setting. These teachers were then emailed with the purpose of the study and a link to complete the survey. All participants were at least 18 years of age and employed within the targeted school districts during the 2022-2023 school year.

This particular population has been targeted because there are no recent studies focusing on self-efficacy and burnout rates among secondary special education teachers in the state of Mississippi. There is also a large body of research showing that special



education teachers who work primarily with students with behavior and/or severe disabilities have lower self-efficacy and higher burnout rates than other teachers, but limited research remains for teachers who work with students who are capable of functioning in the general education classroom. This study sought to determine what factors contribute to low self-efficacy and burnout among special education teachers who are in alongside a co-teacher/general education teacher in order to best meet the needs of special education students.

This study will help school districts and administrators firstly by determining what areas of the job special education teachers are struggling to deal with on a daily basis. Secondly, after knowing which categories teachers note as being a struggle, districts can develop an action plan to address these issues. For example, specialized professional development with a focus on classroom management for special education teachers, or specialized support groups for teachers who teach with an alternative pathway teaching license.

#### Research Questions

RQ1: What, if any, is the relationship between special education teachers' self-efficacy and burnout?

RQ2: To what extent can the variability of years of experience, size of caseload, and certification type predict higher self-efficacy?

RQ3: To what extent can the variability of self-efficacy, years of experience, size of caseload, and certification type predict burnout?

## Instrumentation

The instrumentation used for this study was the Teachers' Sense of Self Efficacy Scale (long form), the Teacher Burnout Scale, and seven demographic questions. These instruments were selected after a review of instruments available based on the topic of self-efficacy and teacher burnout.

The Teachers' Sense of Self Efficacy Scale (long form) is a 24-item survey that determines efficacy in three teacher areas: student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. It uses a Likert-scale response to determine three sub-scores, and an overall efficacy score (Tschannen-Moran, M., & Woolfolk, Hoy, A., 2001).

The 24 questions that make up the efficacy scale are broken down into three categories:

- Efficacy in Student Engagement: Questions 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 14, 22
- Efficacy in Instructional Strategies: Questions 7, 10, 11, 17, 18, 20, 23, 24
- Efficacy in Classroom Management: Questions 3, 5, 8, 13, 15, 16, 19, 21

The Teacher Burnout Scale is a 21-item survey Likert-scale survey developed in 1987 by researchers Seidman and Zagler in order to have a career burnout survey that focused on education in particular. It is composed of four major components that are unique to teachers:

- Career Satisfaction: Questions 1, 5, 10, 12, 19
- Perceived Administrative Support: Questions 3, 8, 11, 15, 18, 20
- Coping with Job Related Stress: Questions 2, 4, 7, 9, 13, 14
- Attitudes Towards Students: Questions 6, 16, 17, 21

Both of these instruments have been thoroughly tested and shown to be reliable in measuring perceived teacher efficacy and burnout in educators.

Table 1

*The Self-Efficacy Rating Scale Reliability (Long Form)*

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Alpha
Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale	7.1	.94	.94
Engagement	7.3	1.1	.87
Instruction	7.3	1.1	.91
Management	6.7	1.1	.90

Table 2

*The Teacher Burnout Scale Reliability*

Subscale	Test-retest reliability coefficients
Career Satisfaction	.89
Perceived administrative support	.84
Coping with job-related stress	.80
Attitudes towards students	.72

## Procedures

Permission to contact teachers was obtained by contacting school superintendents via letter and follow up phone calls if needed. These scales were distributed electronically via email, and data were collected as entries were received through the Qualtrics website. The following steps are a detailed guide of the procedures that were carried out. First, the researcher contacted superintendents to receive approval to survey secondary special education teachers. Upon receiving approval, the researcher contacted special services

department to receive contact information for secondary special education teachers. Next, the researcher emailed a cover sheet informing teachers of the purpose of the email and included a link for teachers to complete one survey containing two scales as well as a demographic page. Data were collected and kept confidential through password protected Qualtrics website. The researcher then worked with statisticians to analyze data. Finally, the researcher wrote a detailed report of findings and presented information to the dissertation committee.

## CHAPTER IV – RESEARCH RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to determine if self-efficacy and burnout levels are influenced by certain demographic factors in Mississippi mild/moderate special education teachers. The self-efficacy scale was broken down into three main areas of a teacher's daily responsibilities: student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. Participants were asked to rate their range in belief of their abilities to control these key areas of teaching. This study also sought to determine which factors (such as years of experience, path to certification, etc.), if any, contribute to a higher degree of burnout among special education teachers.

After receiving approval from superintendents throughout the state of Mississippi, special education teachers in twenty-two districts around the state were emailed an online questionnaire. This study was composed of a demographics page, the Teacher's Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale, and the Teacher Burnout Scale. One hundred and fifty-two special education teachers from Mississippi participated in this online research study.

### Description of Sample

Participants in this study were asked seven demographic questions. Of the 116 participants who answered this question, one hundred-six (91.38%) were female and nine (7.76%) were male. One participant (.86%) did not to provide an answer this question. Of the 116 responses to age, four (3.45%) were between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-five, nine (7.76%) were between the ages of twenty-six and thirty, nine (7.76%) were between the ages of thirty-one and thirty-five, fourteen (12.07%) were between the ages of thirty-six and forty, seventeen (14.66%) were between the ages of forty-one and forty-five, twenty-six (22.41%) were between the ages of forty-six and fifty, fourteen (12.07%)

were between the ages of fifty-one and fifty-five, twelve (10.34%) were between the ages of fifty-six and sixty, and eleven (9.48%) were over sixty years old.

Participants were asked job related questions including how long they had been a special education teacher. Of the 116 responses to this question, twenty-three (19.83%) had one and three years of experience, twenty-one (18.10%) had between four and seven years of experience, twelve (10.34%) had between eight and ten years of experience, seventeen (14.66%) had between eleven and fifteen years of experience, fifteen (12.93%) had between sixteen and twenty years of experience, and twenty-eight (24.14%) had over twenty-one years of experience.

The next question related to teacher pathway to certification. Of the 116 responses to this question, seventy-three (62.93%) stated they went the traditional school of education route; thirty-nine (33.62%) stated they obtained teacher certification through the Alternate Route pathway; four (3.45%) stated that they received teacher certification through critical/temporary/other methods.

Participants were asked to list their teaching assignment for the 2021-2022 school year. Fourteen (12.17%) answered self-contained classroom, sixty-eight (59.13%) answered inclusion/co-teaching assignment, thirty-one (26.96%) answered a combination of self-contained and inclusion/co-teaching assignment, and two (1.74%) answered that they were special education consultants/leaders.

The final demographics question asked participants to share how many students were on their caseloads during the 2021-2022 school year. This question relates to how many students that the teacher is responsible for managing IEP paperwork, meetings, discipline/behavior plans, modifications/accommodations, IEP goals, grade reviews, etc.

115 participants answered this question. Six (5.22%) said zero students, four (3.48%) had between 1-5 students, sixteen (13.91%) had between 6-10 students, thirty-three (28.70%) had 11-15 students, thirty-seven (32.17%) had 16-20 students, eleven (9.57%) had between 21-25 students, one (.87%) had between 36-40 students, two (1.74%) had between 41-45 students.

### Self-Efficacy

One section of this study included the Teachers' Sense of Self-Efficacy. A nine-point Likert scale was used to measure teacher's beliefs from 1 (*nothing*) to 9 (*a great deal*). The means and standard deviations are reported in Table 3.

Table 3

#### *Self-Efficacy Variable Means*

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?	115	6.07	1.78
How much can you do to help your students think critically?	115	5.68	1.60
How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?	114	6.46	1.74
How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in schoolwork?	115	6.35	1.73
To what extent can you make your expectations clear about students' behaviors?	115	7.27	1.73
How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in schoolwork?	115	6.34	1.75
How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students?	115	7.10	1.41

Table 3 (continued)

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly?	115	7.37	1.43
How much can you do to help your students value learning?	114	5.97	1.90
How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?	115	6.79	1.69
To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?	114	6.83	1.47
How much can you do to foster student creativity?	115	6.23	1.72
How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?	115	6.77	1.68
How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing?	114	6.21	1.65
How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?	114	6.52	1.72
How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?	114	7.04	1.74
How much can you do to adjust your lessons to the proper level for individual students?	113	6.93	1.81
How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?	115	6.85	1.83
How well can you keep a few problem students from ruining an entire lesson?	115	6.24	1.90
To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?	115	7.22	1.35
How well can you respond to defiant students?	115	6.44	1.72
How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?	115	6.25	1.91



Table 3 (continued)

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?	115	6.74	1.53
How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students?	113	6.80	1.42

### Teacher Burnout

The final component to this study was a 21-question survey with a scored range from 1 (*disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*), used to measure teacher burnout. This survey was composed of four subscales including career satisfaction, perceived administrative support, coping with job-related stress and attitudes towards students.

Table 4

#### *Teacher Burnout Variable Means*

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
I look forward to teaching in the future	130	2.58	.94
I feel depressed because of my teaching experiences	126	2.02	.91
I get adequate praise from my supervisors for a job well done	129	2.43	1.01
The teaching day seems to drag on and on	130	2.12	.98
I'm glad I selected teaching as a career	128	2.89	1.01
The students act like a bunch of animals	130	1.80	.96
My physical illnesses may be related to the stress in this job	130	2.09	1.08

Table 4 (continued)

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
I feel that administrators are willing to help me with classroom problems, should they arise	130	2.82	1.03
I find it difficult to calm down after a day of teaching	130	2.07	.96
Teaching is more difficult than I had expected	128	2.59	1.06
I believe that my efforts in the classroom are unappreciated by the administrators	130	2.05	1.08
If I had to do it all over again, I would not become a schoolteacher	130	2.04	1.12
I feel that I could do a much better job of teaching if only the problems confronting me were not so great	129	2.60	1.03
The stresses in this job are more than I can bear	130	1.92	.95
My supervisors give me more criticism than praise	130	1.69	1.06
Most of my students are decent people	130	3.42	.85
Most students come to school ready to learn	129	2.16	.96
I feel that the administrators will not help me with classroom difficulties	130	1.64	.82
I look forward to each day teaching	129	2.53	.95
The administration blames me for classroom problems	130	1.53	.90
Students come to school with bad attitudes	130	2.34	.90

IBM's SPSS software program was used to run a correlation between the three subscales of the Teacher's Sense of Self Efficacy Scale and the four subscales of the Teacher Burnout Scale. Next, a multiple linear regression was used to predict the

relationship between the factors of size of caseload, years of experience, certification pathway on the dependent variables of the self-efficacy subscales (classroom management, student engagement, and instructional strategies). Finally, another multiple linear regression was performed to predict the relationship between the independent variables of size of caseload, years of experience, and certification pathway on the dependent variables of the teacher burnout subscales (career satisfaction, administrative support, coping skills, and attitude).

### Research Questions

#### *Research question 1*

What, if any, is the relationship between special education teachers' self-efficacy and burnout? The researcher used a nine-point scale in order to gather data related to self-efficacy. This scale ranged from 1 (*nothing*) to 9 (*a great deal*). The sample size for this analysis was 130. A second, four-point scale survey was given to gather data related to teacher burnout. The sample size for the burnout survey was 115. Data were then sent from the Qualtrics website and saved to SPSS. Through the use of transformations in SPSS, another category was formed from finding the means of each category related to self-efficacy survey (student engagement, classroom management, instructional strategies) and the mean of each subscale of the burnout survey (career satisfaction, perceived administrative support, coping with job related stress, attitudes towards students). These values were then correlated in SPSS.

Results showed the subscales of Student Engagement (SE) and Instructional Strategies (IS) are positively correlated ( $r [115] = 0.766, p < 0.001$ ). Subscales of Student Engagement and Classroom Management (CM) are positively correlated with  $r (115) =$

0.766,  $p < 0.001$ . The Teacher Burnout survey subscale of Coping had a negative correlation with two variables, including Student Engagement and Classroom Management. Student Engagement had a negative correlation with Coping Skills with  $r(115) = -.303, p < 0.001$ ; Classroom Management was  $r(115) = -.285, p < 0.002$ . Coping and Administrative Support are positively correlated with  $r(130) = .405, p < 0.001$ .

Table 5

*Research Question One: Descriptive Statistics*

	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Self-Efficacy: Student Engagement	6.1	1.4	115
Self-Efficacy: Instructional Strategies	6.9	1.2	115
Self-Efficacy: Classroom Management	6.8	1.4	115
Burnout: Career Satisfaction	2.5	.4	130
Burnout: Administrative Support	2.0	.4	130
Burnout: Coping Skills	2.1	.7	130
Burnout: Attitude	2.4	.4	130

Table 6

*Research Question One Correlations*

		Correlations						
		SE	IS	CM	Career Satisfaction	Admin Support	Coping	Attitude
Student Engagement	Pearson Correlation	1	.766**	.776**	.179	-.102	-.303**	.161
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001	.055	.276	<.001	.085
	N	115	115	115	115	115	115	115
Instructional Strategies	Pearson Correlation	.766**	1	.755**	.122	-.046	-.254**	.144
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001	.193	.628	.006	.124
	N	115	115	115	115	115	115	115
Classroom Management	Pearson Correlation	.776**	.755**	1	.190*	-.132	-.285**	.155
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001		.042	.158	.002	.098
	N	115	115	115	115	115	115	115
Career Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.179	.122	.190*	1	-.006	-.221*	.198*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.055	.193	.042		.948	.012	.024
	N	115	115	115	130	130	130	130
Administrative Support	Pearson Correlation	-.102	-.046	-.132	-.006	1	.405**	.046
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.276	.628	.158	.948		<.001	.605
	N	115	115	115	130	130	130	130
Coping	Pearson Correlation	-.303**	-.254**	-.285**	-.221*	.405**	1	.140
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.006	.002	.012	<.001		.113
	N	115	115	115	130	130	130	130
Attitude	Pearson Correlation	.161	.144	.155	.198*	.046	.140	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.085	.124	.098	.024	.605	.113	
	N	115	115	115	130	130	130	130

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

## *Research question 2*

To what extent can the variability of years of experience, size of caseload, and certification type predict higher self-efficacy? Before regression analysis was run, a data screening process checked to ensure data quality. Data used in this research question was found to be normally distributed. No residual statistics or patterns were found. After this preliminary testing, a linear regression using the sample size 113 was performed on SPSS software for each of the three subscales found within the Teacher's Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale. The variables of size of caseload, years of experience, and pathway to teacher certification were listed as independent variables. The mean value of each self-efficacy subscale was the dependent variable. Multiple linear regression was used to test if size of caseload, years of experience, and pathway to teacher certification significantly predicted self-efficacy subscale levels including Student Engagement, Instructional Strategies, and Classroom Management. The results for each subscale were not statistically significant.

Student Engagement results were  $R^2 = [.021]$ ,  $F(3,110)$ ,  $p < .507$ . Results showed no linear regression among variables.

Table 7

### *Self-Efficacy: Student Engagement Subscale*

	Descriptive Statistics		
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Student Engagement	6.2	1.4	114
Degree Type	1.4	.6	114
Caseload Number	4.5	1.6	114
Years of Experience	3.6	1.9	114

Table 8

*Self-Efficacy: Student Engagement Subscale Coefficients*

		Coefficients				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	6.146	.539		11.402	<.001
	Degree Type	.193	.219	.089	.882	.380
	Caseload Number	-.112	.086	-.127	-1.304	.195
	Years of Experience	.065	.073	.089	.893	.374

a. Dependent Variable: Student Engagement

Instructional Strategies results were  $R^2 = (.021)$ ,  $F(3,110)$ ,  $p < .500$ . Results showed no linear regression among the variables of degree type, caseload number, and years of experience on self-efficacy subscales.

Table 9

*Self-Efficacy: Instructional Strategies Subscale*

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
IS	6.9	1.2	114
Degree Type	1.4	0.6	114
Caseload Number	4.5	1.6	114
Years of Experience	3.6	1.9	114

Table 10

*Self-Efficacy: Instructional Strategies Subscale Coefficients*

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	6.903	.460		14.998	<.001
	Degree Type	-.049	.187	-.027	-.264	.792
	Caseload Number	-.047	.073	-.063	-.645	.520
	Years of Experience	.079	.063	.125	1.256	.212

a. Dependent Variable: Instructional Strategies

The final Self-Efficacy subscale, Classroom Management, showed results of  $R^2 = .029$ ,  $F(3, 110)$ ,  $p < .348$ . Results showed no statistically significant relationship when a linear regression was conducted among independent variables and the dependent variable of classroom management.

Table 11

*Self-Efficacy: Classroom Management Subscale*

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
CM	6.8	1.4	114
Degree Type	1.4	0.6	114
Caseload Number	4.5	1.6	114
Years of Experience	3.6	1.9	114



Table 12

*Self-Efficacy: Classroom Management Subscale Coefficients*

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	6.613	.545		12.134	<.001
	Degree Type	.344	.222	.156	1.553	.123
	Caseload Number	-.112	.087	-.125	-1.286	.201
	Years of Experience	.048	.074	.065	.649	.518

a. Dependent Variable: Classroom Management

*Research Question 3*

To what extent can the variability of self-efficacy, years of experience, size of caseload, and certification type predict burnout? Data screening showed no patterns or skewed results. Data was distributed normally and was of good quality. Because of this, a linear regression, with a sample size of 113, was used to determine variability of the independent factors (case size, years of experience, self-efficacy, and type of teacher certification) and the dependent variable (Teacher Burnout subscales: Career Satisfaction, Administrative Support, Coping Skills, Attitude).

Results of the linear regression for the Teacher Burnout subscale of Career Satisfaction showed no statistical significance with  $R^2 = .033$ ,  $F(3,111)$ ,  $p < .293$ .

Table 12

*Teacher Burnout: Career Satisfaction Subscale*

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Career Satisfaction	2.5	0.4	115
Degree Type	1.4	0.7	115
Caseload Number	4.4	1.6	115
Years of Experience	3.6	1.9	115

Table 13

*Teacher Burnout: Career Satisfaction Coefficients*

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	2.780	.153		18.215	<.001
	Degree Type	-.046	.058	-.078	-.791	.431
	Caseload Number	-.014	.024	-.059	-.615	.540
	Years of Experience	-.035	.021	-.167	-1.674	.097

a. Dependent Variable: Career Satisfaction

Results for the Teacher Burnout subscale of Administrative Support showed no statistical significance with  $R^2 = .095$ ,  $F(3,111)$ ,  $p < .011$ .

Table 14

*Teacher Burnout: Administrative Support Subscale*

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Admin Support	2.0391	.35959	115
Degree Type	1.4435	.67786	115
Caseload Number	4.43	1.590	115
Years of Experience	3.55	1.888	115

Table 15

*Teacher Burnout: Administrative Support Subscale Coefficients*

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.901	.135		14.088	<.001
	Degree Type	-.078	.051	-.148	-1.540	.127
	Caseload Number	.068	.021	.299	3.248	.002
	Years of Experience	-.014	.018	-.072	-.743	.459

a. Dependent Variable: Administrative Support

Results for the next subscale of the Teacher Burnout Scale, Coping Skills, showed no statistical significance with  $R^2 = .042$ ,  $F(3,111)$ ,  $p < .185$ . These results show that degree type, caseload number, or years of experience influence the teacher burnout component involving administrative support.

Table 16

*Teacher Burnout: Coping Skills Subscales*

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Coping	2.1504	.73226	115
Degree Type	1.4435	.67786	115
Caseload Number	4.43	1.590	115
Years of Experience	3.55	1.888	115

Table 17

*Teacher Burnout: Coping Skills Coefficients*

Model		Coefficients				t	Sig.
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta			
		B	Std. Error				
1	(Constant)	2.545	.283		9.001	<.001	
	Degree Type	-.221	.107	-.204	-2.068	.041	
	Caseload Number	.026	.044	.057	.597	.552	
	Years of Experience	-.054	.038	-.139	-1.406	.162	

a. Dependent Variable: Coping

The final component in the Teacher Burnout Scale was the subscale of Attitude. Based on the findings of a linear regression analysis, no statistical significance was found between the factors of size of caseload, years of experience, or type of teaching degree and teacher burnout/attitude ( $R^2 = .043$ ,  $F [3,111]$ ,  $p < .177$ ).

Table 18

*Teacher Burnout: Attitude Subscale*

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Attitude	2.4188	.38211	115
Degree Type	1.4435	.67786	115
Caseload Number	4.43	1.590	115
Years of Experience	3.55	1.888	115

Table 19

*Teacher Burnout: Attitude Subscale Coefficients*

		Coefficients				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.450	.147		16.611	<.001
	Degree Type	-.103	.056	-.183	-1.854	.066
	Caseload Number	.033	.023	.139	1.467	.145
	Years of Experience	-.008	.020	-.042	-.423	.673

a. Dependent Variable: Attitude

## CHAPTER V – DISCUSSION

### Summary

This quantitative research study sought to determine to what extent, if any, there was a relationship between a special education teacher's self-efficacy and teacher burnout levels. It also sought to determine if certain independent variables, including size of caseload, years of experience, and type of teaching certification earned, had any effect on self-efficacy and burnout levels. The Teachers' Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale, developed by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) and the Teacher Burnout Scale, developed by Seidman and Zager (1986), were used by the researcher in addition to a demographics page.

The researcher requested permission from 143 superintendents from across the state of Mississippi to survey mild/moderate special education teachers. Twenty-two superintendents granted permission and emails were sent with a link/QR code to special education teachers to complete the questionnaire via Qualtrics. This questionnaire consisted of fifty-two items. The first block consisted of a twenty-four question Likert scale about self-efficacy. The second block was made up of a twenty-one item, Likert scale questionnaire about burnout. Finally, the third block asked seven demographic questions about participants and their work history.

Using a convenience sampling method, the researcher focused on narrowed scope of special education teachers, specifically only those who worked with mild/moderate disabled students. Teachers with a valid Mississippi teaching license with the teaching endorsement code 221 (mild/moderate) were selected to participate. 152 teachers responded to this study.

## Conclusions and Discussions

This research study tested three hypotheses regarding special education teachers' levels of self-efficacy and burnout, and whether factors including size of caseload, years of experience, and type of teaching certification influenced self-efficacy and/or burnout levels.

### *Hypothesis I*

Hypothesis I suggested that there is relationship between a special education teacher's self-efficacy level and their burnout level. The results of the correlation research showed that subscales of Student Engagement and Instructional Strategies are positively correlated. Subscales of Student Engagement and Classroom Management are positively correlated. The Teacher Burnout survey subscale of Coping had a negative correlation with two variables, including Student Engagement and Classroom Management. Student Engagement had a negative correlation with Coping Skills. Coping and Administrative Support are positively correlated.

### *Hypothesis II*

Hypothesis II suggested a relationship between independent factors such as size of caseload, years of experience, and type of teaching certification have an impact on self-efficacy levels. A multiple regression analysis showed no statistically significant relationship between these independent factors and the independent factors of the Teacher's Sense of Self-Efficacy subscales.

### *Hypothesis III*

Hypothesis III suggested a relationship between the independent factors of size of caseload, years of experience, and type of teaching certification have an impact on

burnout levels. A multiple linear regression analysis showed no statistically significant relationship between the independent factors and the dependent variable of each of the Teacher Burnout Scale subscales.

### Limitations

Limitations of this study include that the participants of this study were only from public schools in Mississippi. Furthermore, only 15% of Mississippi superintendents responded and approved the participation of district special education teachers, which limited the number of participants involved. Some districts also chose to send the survey to their teachers themselves, which could also have limited the number of possible teachers having access to answer this study. The time of year could also be considered a limitation since the 2022-2023 school year has only recently started and it is a busy time for most teachers.

Another aspect that may be considered a limitation is the fact that teachers are recently coming back to school after the COVID-19 pandemic. This research study started well before the pandemic began, but the survey was conducted one and a half years after the pandemic closed most schools; and one year after many schools switched to a virtual method of learning. The responses to certain questions from this survey may have been influenced by the difficulty teachers faced during this unique time in history.

### Recommendations for Policy or Practice

In 2007, North Carolina congressman David Price stated while seeking additional funding to address educational needs stated, “the impending teacher shortage is the most critical education issue we will face in the next decade.” Fifteen years later, this problem has only continued to worsen nationwide. Firstly, when educational systems are not fully



funded, the repercussions trickle down into the classroom. Overcrowded classrooms, low teacher salaries, and lack of classroom/teacher resources are not going to attract potential teachers to give the field of education a considerable thought in terms of a career choice.

Secondly, given the significant shortage of teachers in schools across the United States and around the world, keeping current teachers in the classroom is of utmost importance. With up to 50% of special education teachers leaving the classroom within five years of beginning a teaching career, the stakes are high. Instead of spending billions of dollars annually to recruit new teachers, putting a mere fraction of those funds in an effort to keep teachers in the classroom should be further considered. Resources should be easily available for teachers seeking additional development in areas of weakness, including classroom management and differentiating materials.

These factors, among others, are out of the control of a building level administrator. This does not mean, however, that principals should do nothing to help the current crisis of teachers leaving the field of education. As this study showed, there is a relationship between a teacher's coping skills and self-efficacy components such as classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement. With this in mind, a principal could survey teachers in the building to get a better understanding of what areas they are struggling in, and what components of self-efficacy and burnout are elevated, if any. These results could serve as a guide as leaders are selecting what to do with professional development funds. Addressing these areas of concern is vital in keeping teachers in the classroom. Professional development in the area of classroom management, coping skills, and instructional strategies could boost the morale of

teachers. Giving teachers choices as to what professional development opportunities they can attend could also help with addressing individual needs.

At the very least, it is the responsibility of every principal to stay abreast with current educational research, including the topics of self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and burnout. Solutions to these issues are being piloted around the country and knowing what the latest research shows can make a difference. Having courageous conversations with teachers to truly understand what they deal with on a daily basis is of utmost importance. Teachers want to know that their administrators understand what it is like to be in the classroom; they need to also know that administrators support them. Having open lines of communication is free and vital to the relationship between leaders and teachers.

Finally, principals may benefit from giving a questionnaire or having a conversation with teachers who choose to not return to the classroom. Knowing what factors went into the decision for one to leave a teaching job may prevent other teachers from having the same outcome. This may provide insight into changes that need to occur at the building level. It may be difficult to hear why a teacher feels like they can no longer be in the classroom, but self-reflection as a principal is one of the most important aspects of being a leader.

#### Recommendation for Future Research

Significant research exists about special education teachers as a whole, but within this large umbrella of a category lies many positions including mild/moderate disability teachers, severe needs/life skills teachers, behavior consultants/teachers, speech language therapists, occupational therapists, and more. The job responsibilities of each of these categories vary significantly and more research needs to be done to address these roles

individually. Future research could include more qualitative studies to have a deeper understanding of special education teachers' beliefs about self-efficacy and burnout. Furthermore, a larger scale study could render more data than this study that focused only on Mississippi teachers only. Comparative studies between types of school, locations, and other demographic factors could produce vital information needed to understand why so many teachers choose to leave the field of education entirely, and in such a short amount of time. While several studies are focused on the topic of burnout, the topic of self-efficacy is limited. More research is needed about this topic, and ways to improve teacher self-efficacy levels are warranted.

# APPENDIX A – IRB APPROVAL

## Office of Research Integrity



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### NOTICE OF INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD ACTION

The project below has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services regulations (45 CFR Part 46), and University Policy to ensure:

- The risks to subjects are minimized and reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered involving risks to subjects must be reported immediately. Problems should be reported to ORI via the Incident submission on InfoEd IRB.
- The period of approval is twelve months. An application for renewal must be submitted for projects exceeding twelve months.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 22-1022  
PROJECT TITLE: Self-Efficacy and Burnout Among Mississippi Mild/Moderate Special Education Teachers  
SCHOOL/PROGRAM: Educational Research & Administration  
RESEARCHERS: PI: Stacey Price  
Investigators: Price, Stacey-Lee, David-  
IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Approved  
CATEGORY: Expedited Category  
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 08-Sep-2022 to 07-Sep-2023

*Donald Sacco*

Donald Sacco, Ph.D.  
Institutional Review Board Chairperson

## APPENDIX B – PARTICIPATION CONSENT LETTER

IRB Protocol Number: 22-1022  
Recruitment Email

Dear (name),

I am conducting a research study on the relationship between self-efficacy and burnout among special education teachers who work with mild/moderately disabled students in Mississippi. This study is composed of two short surveys as well as a demographics page. Participation is voluntary and will take 20 minutes. If you are willing to participate, please follow the link provided below. Participants who complete this study will be entered into a drawing to receive one of four \$25 Amazon gift cards. There are no known risks involved in participating in this research and responses will be anonymous.

If you have any questions, please contact me via email at [staceyfrye1618@gmail.com](mailto:staceyfrye1618@gmail.com). Thank you for your participation in my research study!

Sincerely,  
Stacey Price Frye  
University of Southern Mississippi  
Ph.D. Candidate

|

APPENDIX C – SUPERINTENDENT PERMISSION LETTER

July 26, 2022

Dear Superintendent,

I am conducting research for my doctoral dissertation in Educational Leadership at The University of Southern Mississippi. I am interested in learning about the link between mild/moderate special education teacher self-efficacy and burnout. There is a nationwide shortage of special education teachers, and this research seeks to understand factors that cause these teachers to leave the profession. With a better understanding of this topic, perhaps more can be done to keep teachers in the classroom.

I would appreciate it if you would grant me permission to send an electronic survey to your special education teachers within your schools at all levels. Once they receive the survey, they can voluntarily participate or elect not to participate. Responses will be kept anonymous. Please respond below with the appropriate choice. I would greatly appreciate it if you could send it back as soon as possible.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at (228) 327-6475 or contact my research advisor, Dr. David Lee, at 601- 266-4580. A self-addressed stamped envelope has been enclosed for you, as well as a copy of the survey instruments. This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research subject should be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Dr. #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820.

Thank you in advance for your assistance in this research.

Sincerely,

Stacey Price Frye, researcher  
Dr. David Lee, USM Research Advisor  
IRB Protocol #22-1022

Enclosure

- YES, I am granting permission for my schools to participate in this voluntary survey.
- NO, I am not granting permission for my schools to participate in this voluntary survey.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Superintendent

## APPENDIX D – SURVEY INSTRUMENT

During the 2021-2022 school year, were you employed as a special education teacher?

- Yes
- No

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary / third gender
- Prefer not to say

At the conclusion of the 2021-2022 school year, what was your age?

- 21-25
- 26-30
- 31-35
- 36-40
- 41-45
- 46-50
- 51-55
- 56-60
- 60+

At the conclusion of the 2021-2022 school year, how many years have you been teaching special education?

- 1-3
- 4-7
- 8-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- 21+

During the 2021-2022 school year, which type of teaching certificate did you possess?

- Traditional Teacher Education Route
- Alternate Route
- Temporary/Critical
- Other (Not listed here)

During the 2021-2022 school year, what was your teaching assignment?

- Self-Contained Classroom Only
- Resource/Inclusion Classroom Only
- Combination of Self-Contained/Inclusion/General Education
- Special Education consultant

During the 2021-2022 school year, how many students with IEPs were on your caseload?

- 0
- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- 21-25
- 26-30
- 31-35
- 36-40
- 41-45
- 46+



Directions: This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create difficulties for teachers in their school activities. Please indicate your opinion about each statement below. Your answers are confidential.

(Please choose a point on the scale to indicate your degree of belief of "How much can you do?" for each statement)

	Nothing 1	2	Very Little 3	4	Some Influence 5	6	Quite a Bit 7	8	A Great Deal 9
How much can you do to get through to get through to the most difficult students?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much can you do to help your students think critically?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To what extent can you make your expectations clear about students' behaviors?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much can you do to help your students value learning?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much can you do to foster student creativity?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How much can you do to help your students value learning?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much can you do to foster student creativity?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much can you do to adjust your lessons to the proper level for individual students?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How well can you keep a few problem students from ruining an entire lesson?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How well can you respond to defiant students?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Directions: Rank each of the following statements strongly agree to disagree. Your answers are confidential.

	Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
I look forward to teaching in the future	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel depressed because of my teacher experiences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I get adequate praise from my supervisors for a job well done	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The teaching day seems to drag on and on	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am glad that I selected teaching as a career	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The students act like a bunch of animals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My physical illnesses may be related to the stress in this job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that administrators are willing to help me with classroom problems, should they arise	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find it difficult to calm down after a day of teaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teaching is more difficult than I had expected	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe that my efforts in the classroom are unappreciated by the administrators	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I had it to do all over again, I would not become a schoolteacher	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that I could do a much better job of teaching if only the problems confronting me were not so great	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The stresses in this job are more than I can bear	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My supervisors give me more criticism than praise	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most of my students are decent people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most students come to school ready to learn	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that the administrators will not help me with classroom difficulties	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I look forward to each day teaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The administration blames me for classroom problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students come to school with bad attitudes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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