Analysis of the Hiring Process to Ensure that the Best Teacher Candidate is Selected for a Small Southwestern Pennsylvania School District

Barbara Pagan

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ANALYSIS OF THE HIRING PROCESS TO ENSURE THAT THE BEST TEACHER CANDIDATE IS SELECTED FOR A SMALL SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

A Dissertation
Submitted to the School of Education

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

By
Barbara Ann Pagan

May 2020
ANALYSIS OF THE HIRING PROCESS TO ENSURE THAT THE BEST TEACHER CANDIDATE IS SELECTED FOR A SMALL SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

By

Barbara Ann Pagan

Approved February 20, 2020

Carol Parke, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Education
(Committee Chair)

Rick McCown, Ph.D.
Professor of Education
(Committee Member)

Robert Snyder, Ed.D.
Professor of Education
(Committee Member)

Cindy M. Walker, Ph.D.
Dean, Duquesne University
Professor of Education
ABSTRACT

ANALYSIS OF THE HIRING PROCESS TO ENSURE THAT THE BEST TEACHER CANDIDATE IS SELECTED FOR A SMALL SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

By

Barbara Ann Pagan

May 2020

Dissertation supervised by Dr. Carol Parke, Ed.D.

The purpose of this study was to examine teacher selection through a survey of the top 100 elementary schools in Pennsylvania and analyzing commercially produced screening tools. In order to hire the most effective teachers, districts must pay attention to the characteristics they desire in a teacher and ensure that their measures are aligned with those qualities (Little, Goe, & Bell, 2009). This dissertation examines the teacher hiring practices in Brentwood Borough School District in Pennsylvania, in hopes of improving the current hiring process. The researcher developed two research questions to guide the study. The principal researcher used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to answer the following questions:

1. What does research show about the uppermost characteristics of effective teachers?
2. After surveying principals from the top 100 school districts in Pennsylvania, what researched based questions will they choose to be of most importance in selecting teacher candidates?

The literature on teacher hiring process, teacher effectiveness, and the findings from this research suggest that there is not one clear measure to predict teacher effectiveness during the interview process. Several commercial hiring tools were utilized by districts in their selection. While the research is specific to Brentwood Borough, the findings can be broadly applied to school districts who have an interest in changing their hiring process to acquire the most effective teachers. Ultimately, there is no one best tool when selecting teachers. As the findings throughout this dissertation suggest, there is not one selection tool or set of interview questions that consistently yield the most effective teachers. Each one comes with limitations and advantages that must be considered in concert with the district. To this end, districts must consider the outcomes, in addition to the literature, when creating the hiring process to meet the needs of their district. These findings contribute to the very limited research that has examined the hiring practices of principals and human resources departments for effective teachers.

This study investigates how the top principals from Pennsylvania rank researched based questions in order of importance, when interviewing teacher candidates. An online survey was conducted asking principals who currently serve in the top 100 elementary schools across Pennsylvania to rank 15 researched based questions in order of importance when interviewing teacher candidates. At the conclusion of the survey, the principals were also asked to volunteer for a follow up phone interview in order to investigate their hiring process further.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to Dr. Carol Parke, my committee chair, for her encouragement, wisdom, guidance, and commitment in seeing me through this dissertation process. In addition to reading and commenting on countless drafts, she provided invaluable guidance on both my dissertation work and conducting research in general. Without her guidance and continual help, this dissertation would not have been possible.

I would also like to thank my committee member, Dr. Rick McCown, and Dr. Robert Snyder for their support and valuable suggestions through this exciting and challenging journey. The Cohort of 2019 have impacted my life in many ways with their continued support and prayers.

I am eternally grateful for my dearest friend, Dr. Rebecca Rockey, for without her continual support, invaluable guidance, recommendations, and occasional pep talks in helping me get to the end of this journey. The endless nights of revisions and support are finally over.

I would like to give special thanks to my husband, Al, for his love, support, and help with cooking dinners and cleaning, all of which made this dissertation process possible. You have definitely gone beyond the requirements of a loving husband.

Finally, the most important thanks of all to God, the Most High. There have been many days and nights I have prayed for your guidance and strength to see me to the end of this journey.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgement</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1: Problem of Practice</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Principal</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the Hiring Process</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Improve the Problem of Practice</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law and Policies</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of Study</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of Study</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2: Review of Literature</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualities of an Effective Teacher</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Teachers Use Data</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Focus on the Hiring Process</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Process</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Description of the District, Community, and Culture ........................................ 61

Conclusion ........................................................................................................ 62

Chapter 4: Description of Findings .................................................................... 64

Analysis of Interview Questions ......................................................................... 68

Phone Open Ended Questions ........................................................................... 74

Phone Interview One ......................................................................................... 75

Phone Interview Two ......................................................................................... 77

Chapter 5: Discussion of the Findings ................................................................. 80

Contributions to the Field of Educational Leadership ...................................... 81

Recommendations and Implications for Educational Leadership .................... 82

Limitations ......................................................................................................... 83

Implications for Leadership Agenda and Growth ............................................ 84

Recommendations for Future Research ............................................................ 86

Conclusion ......................................................................................................... 87

References .......................................................................................................... 89

Appendix A ........................................................................................................ 100

Appendix B ........................................................................................................ 106

Appendix C ........................................................................................................ 107
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table Number</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Domains for Teacher Effectiveness to Select Teacher Candidates</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Uncertainty to Certainty</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Professional and Personal Attributes</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Importance of Digital Portfolio Items for Hiring by Administrators</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pennsylvania Standard Application for Teacher</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Theoretical Framework for Hiring Qualified and Effective Teachers</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Process Completed for Hiring Effective Teachers</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Additional Questions Principals asked during Interview Process</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1

Problem of Practice

The researcher Mertz (2010) opined that how teachers are chosen is critical to promoting student learning and teacher instructional effectiveness. School improvement and student success are both dependent upon the quality of the teacher in front of the classroom. Likewise, with the ever-rising accountability for schools to decrease the achievement gap and with funding being attached to high stakes test scores, now more than ever the interviewing process and hiring of the best teachers is critical. In order to ensure that the best candidates are chosen, a systematic procedure is needed. The most effective teacher candidates need to be selected through a process that is objective and equal for all applicants. This dissertation will investigate researched based questions to establish an objective interview process in hopes of acquiring the best candidates, via the most equitable method.

The past practices of my district, as well as many other school districts, allows the interview questions for prospective candidates to be generated at the discretion of the interviewer. The typical questions would include background, classroom management, typical lesson format, and parent involvement. The system in place now is very subjective and the questions are not research-based. As a new principal in my district this brought me much concern. Formerly a principal in an inner-city school district, I saw firsthand the need for an equal playing field for all teachers and students. Sometimes, teachers are hired because they went to school where they are interviewing, or they know someone on the board of directors.

To increase both school quality and student performance schools need to attain high-quality teachers (Mendoza, Jordon, Gomez, Anderson, & Bembry, 1998; Sanders & Horn, 1998).
There is little literature that systematically compares the current hiring practices used by school districts today that equate to ensuring an effective system and produces student achievement for school districts and students. Currently, there is no research to prove there is one best system for screening potential candidates. Additionally, there is limited research to guide administrators through the screening and interview process. The purpose of this research is to examine our interview process and investigate more deeply into a research-based method that will produce the most effective and qualified teacher candidates.

In fields other than education, there has been valid, research-based recommendations for hiring systems, such as Aptitude/Attitude Assessments, Behavior Profiles, and Personality Profiles. In the field of education, several guidelines have emerged for maximizing the effectiveness for screening of candidates. See Table 1: Domains of Teacher Effectiveness from Stronge & Hindman (2003).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domains</th>
<th>Qualities</th>
<th>Look For</th>
<th>Ask</th>
<th>Listen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prerequisites of an effective teacher</td>
<td>Certification status, Content knowledge, Teaching Experience, Knowledge of teaching and learning</td>
<td>Certification status, Major or Minor Praxis, Coursework, Work Experience</td>
<td>Explain how coursework has been useful for instruction</td>
<td>Integrates actual experience in a clear and logical explanation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher as a Person</td>
<td>Motivation, Enthusiasm, Dedication to teaching, Caring, Reflective practice, Interaction with students</td>
<td>Letter of interest, Letters of recommendation, with evidence of the qualities</td>
<td>Share an experience with students that you had not prepared for</td>
<td>Share a substantive issue, How do you demonstrate care and respect for students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom management and organization</td>
<td>Discipline, Organization, Classroom management</td>
<td>Application packet, Letters of recommendation</td>
<td>How do you establish a positive learning environment in the class</td>
<td>How do you establish routines and expectations at the beginning of the year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizing for instruction</td>
<td>Time allocation, Instructional planning, Expectations</td>
<td>Comments on references about time management, Educational philosophy</td>
<td>Describe the key components of a lesson, How do you plan for a substitute</td>
<td>How do you accommodate for individual abilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing instruction</td>
<td>Content expectations, Questioning, Engagement, Instructional strategies</td>
<td>High ratings on effective instruction on references, Specific examples</td>
<td>Describe how you differentiate instruction</td>
<td>Tell me why individual student accommodation are needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring student progress</td>
<td>Differentiation, Homework, Learning</td>
<td>Courses on assessment strategies, Positive comments</td>
<td>Tell me about the homework you assign</td>
<td>Explain the alignment of assignments and feedback on homework</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Linda Darling-Hammond (2010) posit that the connection between teacher performance and student outcomes has risen with the use of multiple data systems, such as Emetrics and PVAAS. The need for assessments to inform teacher licensure, recruitment, induction, retention, and recognition, will no doubt strengthen this practice. Furthermore, implications suggest that a more comprehensive and coherent policy be developed for teacher licensure, recruitment and evaluation, which will lead to improved teacher quality. With the requisite for consistency in teacher licensure across the states, an evaluation to assess teacher performance is necessary. These assessments can be utilized for induction programs, in-service days, and initiative decisions. In conclusion, a teacher can use the continuum of assessments throughout their career to improve the consistency and quality of their subject knowledge.

Teacher quality has become the single most important issue linked to student achievement. Students taught by effective teachers learn more and outperform those taught by less effective teachers (DeArmond, M., Gross, B. & Goldhaber, D., 2010). The researchers estimate that students with effective teachers gain one third of a standard deviation higher in reading and half of a standard deviation higher in math as compared to less effective teachers. The differences can be staggering. Low performing teachers have students that only gain half a year while their high-performing colleagues have shown to post a year and a half of gains. The researchers Goldhaber, Grout, and Huntington-Klein (2014) found that a one standard deviation increase in screening scores is linked with an increase of between 0.03-0.07 deviations in student achievement and a decrease in teacher attrition of 2.5 points. This correlates to long-term student outcomes, which include college and career earnings. The authors assert that teachers can have enormous effect on students and their achievement, which can lead to lifelong implications. In addition, teacher attrition can have dramatic effects on student achievement and the district’s
costs. The last attribute is teacher absences, which also contributes to a high correlation in regard to student achievement. Likewise, the researchers suggest a high correlation between using a selection instrument and acquiring the most qualified teacher for the district instead of using the more common informal processes. Additionally, students assigned to a low-performing teacher for several successive years can have a compounding negative effect (Hanushek, 2011). In summary, a school with exceptional teachers will produce a school with quantifiable and significant student academic growth.

**Role of Principal**

To acquire the best teacher candidate is the principal’s responsibility, which will have a direct impact on student learning. With this responsibility comes perhaps the greatest opportunity that administrators have to influence student performance. Chingos and Peterson (2011) suggest, “It’s easier to pick a good teacher than to train one” (p. 449). Significant skill, time, and resources are required to hire good teachers. School administrators have an obligation to fill their schools with talented teachers who possess the skills and knowledge to inspire students to achieve. Although it is challenging for researchers to find any connection of outside training with teacher effectiveness, the authors posit that on the job training is the only professional development that has been identified to increase teacher effectiveness. Chingos and Peterson (2011) assert there is little evidence that even teachers with advanced degrees have any impact on classroom effectiveness. The authors likewise report that only teachers who have passed the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) have shown some impact on teacher effectiveness. It has been difficult for professionals to identify trainings that would make a significant amount of improvement in teacher quality. Furthermore, the training a teacher receives may not be enough to qualify the teacher as effective. Studies show that even on the job
trainings decrease after several years and advanced degrees do not guarantee an effective teacher. In summary, as opposed to training teachers to become effective, it is easier to pick one that is great from the start (Chingos, M., & Peterson, P., 2011).

**Importance of the Hiring Process**

The daunting task of hiring a teacher can be ambiguous and non-objective. The strategies being used for the pool of applications are wide from which the successful candidate will be hired. A principal has to be confident that they have chosen the best candidates. Even though this is such an important process, there has not been a great deal of research about the best methods for hiring teachers throughout the United States. This is evident in the school district I serve, with its lack of any standard interviewing procedures. Many administrators, including myself, have not been formally trained in the hiring process and a great deal of inconsistencies exist. Most principal preparation programs do not include a course dedicated to the hiring process and the details of selecting an effective candidate from the applicants that apply.

The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future published a report in 1996 entitled “What Matters Most: Teaching for America’s Future” (National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 1996). The premise of the report was that recruiting, preparing, and retaining good teachers is the central strategy for improving our schools and what teachers know and can do is the most important influence on what students learn. Twenty years later, we are still grappling over the hiring process. Researchers Loeb, Kalogries, and Betille (2012) discovered four key findings from their study, which addressed the hiring and development of effective schools. The first was that effective schools are able to hire more effective teachers. Second, novice teachers are assigned to students that they will be successful teaching. Third,
teachers who work in effective schools continue to raise the achievement of students in following years. Lastly, effective schools are able to retain more effective teachers. Although, the research states that the quality and effectiveness of the teacher in front of the classroom is the most important factor when trying to raise achievement of students, not all schools can attract the same caliber of candidates. Additionally, a student’s achievement level is a combination of all the years of teachers, family, and their experiences.

Likewise, President Obama announced Race to the Top (RtTT) as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. This reform financially awarded states with billions of dollars to align their educational policies and practices, in which teacher quality was the general theme for funding. The report outlined the importance of attracting talented prospects, providing high-quality pathways to teaching, teacher training, and supporting teachers new to the field. Although millions of dollars have been poured into the school systems, we still have an achievement gap with our social economic populations that still needs to be addressed and figured out in order to consider this program a success.

Strauss, Bowes, Marks, and Plesko (2000) conducted an analysis of Pennsylvania school districts stating that districts tend to gravitate toward what they know and hire their own graduates or applicants similar to their students and teachers. The authors assert “It is also clear that most districts do not actively seek new teacher applicants through vigorous advertising and recruiting” (p. 405). This practice leads to lower student performances as reported from these researchers. The practice of hiring local graduates is destructive especially in low performing schools. Additionally, the practice has been found to impact student achievement negatively and confirm the notion that the best teachers are not always local. The researchers state that the recruitment system should be based on merit, not personal relationships or community
connections. The practice of hiring teachers based on likability must change since teachers are the most influential factor in a student’s success.

The effectiveness of the teacher selection process hinges on which interview questions to implement, the demonstration of teaching, and a written response that will ultimately predict high levels of effective teaching in the classroom. Given the high stakes era, the evaluation of potential teachers’ requirements need to meet the goals of the school district. Such assessments will vary according to the conception of teaching held by the interviewer as well as the goals to be served by the selection process. The purpose of this dissertation is to determine which interview protocol questions would predict high levels of effective teaching behaviors exhibited by teachers in the classroom. Heneman and Milanowski (2004) suggest that in the selection of teachers one must align the practices of hiring. The researchers state that two major thrusts emerge, which include improvement in performance and instructional practices. Specifically, instructional practices that include pedagogical skills, content knowledge and performance improvement involve induction, motivation, and development.

Teacher effectiveness has been integrated into many school district human resources practices. Likewise, there has been much scrutiny about the decisions made by principals resulting from the interview process. The most critical source of determining the teaching quality is through the use of questions in the hiring process (Clement, 2009). Principals use many commercially produced interview instruments such as Hire360, Star Teacher Interview, Teacher Quality Index, and Gallup’s TeacherInsight Interview, which do not focus on teaching quality, but rather on teacher personal attributes, such as honesty, work ethics, and communication skills.

Effective interviews are consistent and well-structured. Candidates are asked to unpack and analyze how they would or did respond/act in a variety of complex situations, including a
disruptive student, a parent complaint, or addressing low achieving students during the interview process. In addition, candidates need to be asked to discuss how they would or did solve problems and how they would respond to particular assignments. Furthermore, “Best practice” states the importance of involving superintendents in interviewing each finalist (Ash, 2001; Lee, 2005). Ash (2001) discussed how the involvement of the superintendent is essential in the process to accomplish the objectives for the organization. First, it provides an additional quality control measure and makes the candidate feel valued and that teacher quality is important. It also communicates to all of the members of the organization that teacher quality is critical, allowing the superintendent to build relationships with entering teachers. Finally, the message is sent to all involved in hiring teachers that their time and effort put toward hiring teachers are important.

Another frequently utilized model during the interview process is that of lesson demonstration. The research from the Danielson Framework on Teaching is grounded in a constructivist view of learning and teaching. While the Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards on effective demonstration lesson systems rely on highly effective teaching practices to judge potential teacher quality. Teaching strategies for the subject, grade, and development of students should be aligned in the demonstration lessons. The qualities during the demonstration lessons are aligned with the teacher evaluation systems and values of the district in relationship to highly effective teaching practices.

Likewise, larger businesses have made this shift in the selection of employees. In Collins book, Good to Great (2001), he spends momentous time explaining the importance of having high-quality employees in the organization. Selecting the “right people” has more to do with character traits and innate capacities than specific background, skills, or knowledge. Collins
(2004) continues to state that this is more important than finding an individual with the education, qualifications, or experiences.

**To Improve the Problem of Practice**

March 10, 2009, President Barack Obama explained during a speech to the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce that, “From the moment students enter a school, the most important factor in their success is not the color of the skin or the income of their parents, it’s the person standing at the front of the classroom” (p. 14). Hiring qualified teachers, defined as competent, reflective, respected, and diversity-responsible, as well as teacher effectiveness after hiring, are the major factors for student growth, school improvement, and academic achievement (Clement, 2009; Coggshall, Lasagna, & Laine, 2009; Pillsburg, 2005, & Stronge & Hindman, 2003).

Teacher selection and interviewing processes vary from district to district. Some districts use their central office through the human resources department to conduct the teacher screening and interviewing processes. Other districts utilize the building principals for screening and interviewing. Mason and Schroeder (2010, p. 186) contended that if building principals are in charge of the hiring then their most important job is to hire “highly qualified, exceptional staff” (2010, p. 186). These decisions require more attention because of the ramifications that a single decision holds for the future of numerous students. Experts in the field agree that the most crucial decision a principal contemplates is which teacher to hire (Peterson, 2002). It is the hope of this research that by surveying the top 100 elementary school principals and analyzing commercially produced tools, a list of research based interviewing questions will be constructed to help in the process of hiring the most effective teachers.
Law and Policies

It is because of the aforementioned that during the teacher interviewing process, district administrators need to be aware of federal and state laws to protect against employment discrimination. It is unlawful in accordance to the act of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-352, 42 U.S.C. 2000E) for an employer to “refuse to hire” a person due to his or her race, color, religion, sex, or national origin (LaMorte, 2008, p. 480). Based on a person’s race, color, religion, sex, or national origin it is also unlawful to discriminate in terms of “compensation, terms, conditions, and privileges of employment” (LaMorte, 2008, p. 480).

The Nation at Risk report of the 1980’s addressed “a rising tide of mediocrity” in regard to teacher quality (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1996). Also, the standards movement of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2001 has pushed teacher quality and student achievement to a top priority. Presently, the No Child Left Behind Act has caused school districts to be faced with increased pressure of accountability. In school districts that have failed to meet Average Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements, hiring quality teachers is a critical performance responsibility as teaching quality has a direct impact on student performance and the success of schools (Stronge, 2007). Pillsburg (2005) concluded that focusing on teacher quality in the hiring process is an important aspect to school improvement. Student learning and instructional practices are two of the most important aspects in the teacher selection process for principals (Mertz, 2010). One bad hiring decision can lead to lower student achievement and poor morale among colleagues (Clement, 2009). The hiring process is challenging, because experience and years of schooling are not reliable measures for student achievement (Hanushek and Rivkin, 2007, p. 70).
Summary

As mentioned previously, the current process of interview questions for the Brentwood Borough School District is subjective and lacks consistency. This study investigates how the top 100 principals from Pennsylvania rank researched based questions in order of importance, as well as analyzed commercially produced interviewing tools. The purpose of this research is to examine our interview process and investigate more deeply into a research-based method that will produce the most effective and qualified teacher candidates. The results from this research will be utilized to establish an objective interview process in hopes of acquiring the best candidates, via the most equitable method.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine teacher selection through a survey of the top 100 elementary schools in Pennsylvania and analyzing commercially produced screening tools. The researcher will utilize this data to improve current interviewing processes in hopes of acquiring the most effective teacher candidates. Although, teacher effectiveness has been integrated into many school districts’ human resources practices there has been much scrutiny about the decisions made by principals resulting from the interview process. The most critical source of determining the teaching quality is through the use of questions in the hiring process (Clement, 2009). Principals use many commercially produced interview instruments, which do not focus on teaching quality, but rather on teachers’ personal attributes.

Effective interviews are consistent and well-structured. Candidates are asked to unpack and analyze how they would or did respond or act in a variety of complex situations during the interview process. In addition, candidates need to be asked to discuss how they would or did
solve problems and how they would respond to specific situations. The last interview should be with the Superintendent, who will make the final decision. This protocol provides an additional quality control measure and makes the candidate feel valued and that teacher quality is important. It also communicates to all of the members of the organization that teacher quality is critical, allowing the superintendent to build relationships with entering teachers. Finally, the message is sent to all involved in hiring teachers that their time and effort put toward hiring teachers is important.

Another frequently utilized interview component is that of lesson demonstration. The research on effective demonstration lesson systems rely on highly effective teaching practices to judge potential teacher quality. Teaching strategies for the subject, grade, and development of students should be aligned in the demonstration lessons. The qualities during the demonstration lessons are aligned with the teacher evaluation systems and values of the district in relationship to highly effective teaching practices.

Likewise, larger businesses have made this shift in the selection of employees. In Collins book Good to Great (2001), he spends momentous time explaining the importance of having high-quality employees in the organization. Selecting the “right people” has more to do with character traits and innate capacities than specific background, skills, or knowledge. Collins stresses that this is more important than finding an individual with the education, qualifications, or experiences.

The researched-based questions will permit candidates to demonstrate their strengths, admit their weaknesses, and reveal their beliefs about curriculum, classroom management, collegiality, social justice, school culture, and commitment to the profession. Previous questioning practices were not specifically aimed at the aforementioned areas. The general
interview questions presently utilized allow the interviewer to be subjective, without any accountability to equality for all applicants.

**Significance of Study**

Consequently, with public education being funded by taxpayers’ dollars, the accountability for fiscal efficiency and student performance is at an all-time high. There are several methods used to access student achievement which include: end of course exams, achievement tests, and report cards. All of these are used to assess progress and accomplishments of students and are becoming more and more popular (D’Agostino & VanWinkle, 2007; Hanushek & Rivkin, 2007). The role of the classroom teacher becomes more critical in relation to student achievement with the increased level of expectations (Chingos & Peterson, 2011; Clotfelter, Ladd & Vigdor, 2006). To ensure that the best teachers are hired, school officials may need to review their employment process. The cost of hiring an unqualified teacher is massive. Likewise, an effective teacher can save the district a significant amount of money over the course of the employment term (Anthony, 2009).

In summary, the hiring process sets the foundation for the success or failure of a school district. The decisions can be laborious, intense, and pressure filled for a principal, but it is critical to allot sufficient time on the process to ensure that the best candidate is hired. Many school districts lack an equitable system that creates an equal opportunity for all applicants. For this reason, I think it is pertinent that as an administrator, I take responsibility in creating a protocol of research-based interview questions that will provide an objective and consistent process, which considers all aspects of a highly qualified candidate. The proposed list of questions will allow for an equal playing field for all candidates and assist in the process of hiring an effective teacher.
Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

The effectiveness of the teacher selection process hinges on which interview questions to implement that will predict high levels of effective teaching in the classroom. Given the high stakes era, the evaluation of potential teachers’ requirements need to meet the students and the goals of the school district. Such assessments will vary according to the conception of teaching held by the interviewer as well as the goals to be served by the selection process. Additionally, Clement (2009) asserts that, “in today’s era of accountability, we have high-stakes hiring, as a weak hire may impact student achievement, lower overall school performance, and lower morale of colleagues” (p.22).

The art of finding an exemplary teacher that possesses 21st Century teaching qualities is the administrator’s most important job. The Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21) (2015) developed a framework to help integrate skills into teaching of academic subjects. The P21 (2015) describes the skills needed as critical thinking, communication, problem solving, and collaboration. Each of the skills are broken down into subcategories as follows:

Creativity and Innovation

- Think Creatively
- Work Creatively with Others
- Implement Innovations

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
• Reason Effectively
• Use Systems Thinking
• Make Judgments and Decisions
• Solve Problems

Communication and Collaboration

• Communicate Clearly
• Collaborate with Others

Administrators need to continue to develop interviewing skills to acquire the most effective and qualified teachers for their districts. Clement (2009) maintains that “in today’s era of accountability, we have high-stakes hiring, as a weak hire may impact student achievement, lower overall school performance, and lower morale of colleagues” (p. 22). With the decrease in school funding, and the rise in accountability, now more than ever the interviewing process and hiring of teachers is critical (Darling-Hammond, 2010). A systematic procedure is needed to ensure that the best candidate is selected through a process that is objective and equal for all applicants. I am proposing to design researched-based questions that have been found valid and reliable in acquiring the best teacher candidates. The researched-based questions will create a consistent interview process that is equitable for all candidates.

Stronge and Hindman’s (2006) research concludes that many administrators have had little or no training in the interview process and how to select the most effective teacher for their districts. The past practices of my district were to leave the interview questions for perspective candidates to the discretion of the interviewer. The system in place is very subjective and the questions are not research-based. There is not currently a standard set of questions in place to
compare the candidates on an equitable level. As a new principal in my district I found this type of hiring process to be of much concern.

The need to improve our schools is not a new one, on the contrary it has been a topic of debate for many years. Reports such as, the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future published a report in 1996 entitled “What Matters Most: Teaching for America’s Future” address the issues of improving schools (National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 1996). The premise of the report was that recruiting, preparing, and retaining good teachers is the central key for improving our schools. The authors cite that what teachers know and can do are the most important influence on what students learn. Likewise, President Obama announced Race to the Top (RtTT) as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. This reform financially awarded states with billions of dollars to align their educational policies and practices, in which teacher quality and excellence was the general theme for funding. The report outlined the importance of attracting talented prospects, providing high-quality pathways to teaching, teacher training, and supporting teachers new to the field.

Likewise, Darling-Hammond (2010) agrees that the placing of effective and highly qualified teachers in all classrooms is the key to improving public education. Her research investigated the practical set of standards and assessments that are needed for teachers to be well prepared and equipped to teach. In her study, the research questions explored: 1) how to measure teacher effectiveness, and 2) how do administrators decipher the ways in which assessments of teachers can both reflect and predict a teachers’ success with children. One important finding from this study by Darling-Hammond (2010) is that teachers are the fulcrum determining whether any school initiative tips toward success or failure. As educational
standards rise and the diversity of the student body increases, the level of highly skilled teachers becomes even more imperative.

Furthermore, the hiring of highly qualified teachers who possess the ability to engage students in order to raise student achievement in schools today is of the highest priority (Atha, 2009; Butler, 2016; Treese, 2012). The process to hire these teachers takes many long hours. To fill one position, an administrator has to screen the applicants, interview the candidates, and observe a lesson, all of which encompasses many hours. Hiring effective and qualified teachers impacts our children, but more importantly the economic future of America. The focus on teacher effectiveness and quality has evolved since the beginning of No Child Left Behind (2001). The single most important leverage on achievement is to hire the best teachers for our students. In their study, Coggshall, Lasagna, and Laine (2009) state that the hiring and evaluating of teachers needs to be analyzed in order to help administrators offer the most qualified candidates a position in the district. They go on to reiterate that “Teachers are – and likely always will be – the critical school factor in student learning” (p. 1).

**Qualities of an Effective Teacher**

Dr. James Stronge, an international expert on teacher quality and a university professor, had a hard time defining teacher quality, but did comment... “if a single method for developing an effective teacher existed, such a teacher would be in every classroom” (Stronge, 2007, p. 7). Although, by looking at many decades of teacher research on the key characteristics of effective teachers, Stronge (2007) cited the following key behaviors to consider when hiring teachers:

1. Prerequisites of effective teaching – knowledge of teaching and pedagogy, certification, teaching experience and content knowledge
2. Teacher as a person – affective characteristics such as fairness, respect, enthusiasm, motivation, caring and reflective practice

3. Classroom management – includes discipline

4. Organizing for instruction – time management, expectations, planning, and instruction

5. Implementing instruction – the delivery of the lesson

6. Monitoring student progress – through assessments and observations

The aforementioned characteristics of effective teachers were founded by years of research from approximately 90 independent studies by Stronge (2007). The researcher stresses that administrators should look for these qualities when interviewing for effective teachers. In summary, leaders of our schools must understand what effective, excellent, and equitable teaching and learning looks like and sounds like.

Likewise, Ziebarth-Bovill, Kritzer, and Bovill (2012) noted that the characteristics of accomplished teachers were confident, positive, friendly, committed, and open. The researchers cited that these characteristics when coupled with strong content knowledge and instructional strategies would complete an effective teacher. In their study of education graduates from the University of Nebraska, student teachers must demonstrate proficiency in eight areas. The authors summarize that the following are the areas deemed important to become an effective teacher:

1. Knowledge of Standards
2. Assessment and Evaluation
3. Self-reflection and Self-assessment
4. Instructional planning
The researchers’ study tabulated the results of teacher candidates, supervising teachers, cooperating teachers, and 143 hiring principals, who rated the eight qualities in importance of first year teachers. The teacher candidates voted prior classroom experience as the most important quality, while supervising teachers noted both enthusiasm and motivational skills as equally important. The ability to form positive relationships was found to be the most essential for the cooperating teachers. Finally, the principals wanted to see enthusiasm and staff collaboration in the first-year teachers.

Chingos and Peterson (2011) posit the purpose of their study was to examine the findings in respect to teacher effectiveness and student achievement as measured by performance on standardized tests. The data from this study was collected from the Florida Department of Education Data Warehouse, which included reading and math data for students in grades four through eight. The authors found some teachers become more effective with experience, while others show a decline in the second decade of teaching. The gain or value-added student performance was evaluated by comparing the teacher’s effectiveness from one year to the next. Some researchers have concern that the outcome performance may be unfair as the teachers and students are not randomly assigned to classrooms. Although it is challenging for researchers to find any connection of outside training with teacher effectiveness, Chingos and Peterson (2011) claim that on the job training is the only professional development that has been identified to increase teacher effectiveness. The authors assert there is little evidence that even teachers with
advanced degrees have any impact on classroom effectiveness. Likewise, they reported that only teachers who have passed the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) have shown some impact on teacher effectiveness. However, the differences were minor ranging from 0.02 to 0.03 standard deviations, which correlates to about 25 - 30% of a standard deviation in the teacher effectiveness and 40 - 60% of a standard deviation in the middle grades (p.456). It has been difficult for professionals to identify trainings that would make a significant amount of improvement in teacher quality. Furthermore, the training a teacher receives may not be enough to qualify the teacher as effective. This study found that even on the job trainings, decrease after several years and advanced degrees do not guarantee an effective teacher. In summary, Chingos and Peterson (2011) found that as opposed to training teachers to become effective, it is easier to pick one that is great from the start.

Wong and Wong (2011) proclaim that teacher effectiveness is not a mystery. Effective teachers are described as having a caring relationship with children. Butler’s research in 2016 concurs with the correlation between effective teachers and their students. Butler’s study contained two parts, the first part consisted of 530 teachers across all grade levels in 31 Israeli school districts, who completed two open-ended surveys. One survey was given at the beginning of the year and the other at the end of the year. The second study was completed by 73 teachers and their students, who were selected to investigate approaches to instruction. The correlation was significant between teachers’ commitment to their students and the students’ perception of teacher relationships. Butler (2012) summarized that both studies conclude that teachers with close and supportive relationships with their students positively link with good teaching (p.738). Likewise, Ziebarth-Bovill (2012) assert that the characteristics of these accomplished teachers fall into the domains of qualitative descriptors such as: confident, positive, friendly, committed,
warm, and open. Moreover, Mason & Schroeder (2010) add that these characteristics when coupled with strong content knowledge, intelligence, and the ability to match instructional strategies with students creates an effective instructor.

In a related study, Mason & Schröder (2010) affirm the importance of enthusiasm in hiring teacher candidates. The researchers' mixed-method study consisted of 60 Wisconsin principals, who answered open-ended questions related to their hiring practices that were coded using common themes. The most highly rated themes included personal characteristics: excitement, confidence, appearance, and a love for children (p.190). The researchers randomly selected sixty principals from 312 principals in the Cooperative Educational Service Area #2 in southeastern Wisconsin. The surveys were confidentially conducted by phone, which included demographics, years of experience, and student population. The data collected on the hiring process was both qualitative and quantitative in format. The qualitative questions were a response format. The quantitative questions asked principals to rate the importance of the aspects of the application and to answer yes or no to questions dealing with the hiring process.

Mason & Schröder (2010) attest that vital hiring is the single most important aspect of their job and can lead to increased academic growth, and change the dynamics and culture of a school. The purpose of their study was to investigate the hiring practices of K-12 school principals. The researchers examined the screening, hiring, and the consistency of hiring practices across a variety of demographics. Three threads of research emerged from the research, which included: (1) the historical characteristics when interviewing for a teacher, (2) consistent hiring procedures, and (3) variables that may influence during the hiring process. Mason and Schröder’s (2010) thirty years of research indicate what qualities have been consistent and are currently ones that principals look for during the interview process. A survey of nine research
studies identified the qualities that principals are looking for when hiring potential new teachers. The studies ascertained as many as eighteen characteristics to as few as three and were separated into personal and professional attributes. This span made it difficult to quantify specific characteristics as the survey facilitated a variety of response patterns.

Furthermore, Mason & Schroder (2010) venture that there are three steps in the hiring process, which involves increased cost and quality of knowledge at each level. The first step involves the screening of paper credentials, a low-cost process to reduce to a manageable number of candidates. The second step involves more time consuming tasks with a more in-depth examination of paperwork and contacting references. The third and final step is that of selection and hiring. The components of the applicants include: letters of reference, transcripts, cover letter, experience, and portfolios. The researchers state that there is a dearth of knowledge about the importance of any of these components.

Mason and Schroder (2010) label the hiring process as the “reduction of uncertainty” (p. 188). They continue to state that there is a positive relationship between the degree of uncertainty of the outcome and the amount of applicants that are received for an open position. The first step is combing through the paper applications to decide whom to invite in for a face-to-face interview. Letters of references and mutual colleagues are called to inquire about the candidate before the interview. After the first interview, there may be several other interviews before a decision is made, which leads to eliminating the uncertainty. This process can be lengthy, labor intensive, and time consuming. This is depicted in Table 2.
Table 2: Uncertainty to Certainty

The qualitative questions were open-ended and covered both low- and medium-cost processes. A low-cost question involved gathering information about who is at the interviews. The principal is usually involved with the interview, as well as, grade level teachers, content area teachers, special education teachers, and parents. These results indicated that the process was decentralized and used a team approach during the interview process. The items that were reviewed included: years of experience, proper certification, letters of reference, grade point average, and knowledge of content area. The researchers asked the principals about characteristics that are positive and negative, and which do they consider during the hiring
interview. These fell into two categories – professional and personal. Many of the positive attributes did fall into the personal traits: excitement, confidence, appearance, love of children, communication skills, and willingness to learn. The professional attributes mentioned were content knowledge, professionalism, and pedagogical knowledge. The results support the idea that professional attributes are more important at the first level of the interview process, and personal attributes are considered more important at the second level of the interview process.

Moreover, Mason and Schroder (2010) surveyed the principals to rate aspects of the application. The aspects included first impressions, written references, verbal references, and portfolios. The highest rated aspect was the verbal references and portfolios the lowest. A five-factor ANOVA revealed consistent differences among participants. The Modified Schaffer procedure was used to control family-wise error at 0.5 revealed that all pairwise comparisons were significant. Additionally, a series of two (gender) and three (school type) ANOVAs were conducted to determine systemic differences between principals of genders and types of school. A Bonferroni procedure was used to control experiment-wise error of 0.5.

The results did not show any significant difference between any of the groups concerning the importance of materials or references. The conclusion is that principals were consistent no matter their gender or school size. Finally, a multiple regression was conducted to determine if any variables of the hiring process had any influence in regards to the principal. The preliminary bivariate scatterplots and residual data revealed that statistical assumptions were not violated. There was no significant relationship between the predictors and the importance of each piece of the candidate’s application. This result is consistent with all principals regardless of school size, make-up, or level. In summary, the face-to-face interview is considered to be the most important aspect of the interview process. During the interview, personal characteristics are weighted more
than professional characteristics. The principals in this study did not use demonstration lessons, portfolios, or videos of lessons because of the time constrains. Mason and Schroder (2010) advocate that the results reflect those of the profession and that verbal references and first impressions carried the most weight. Although the final decision is usually made by the principal, the team contributes to a consensus by synthesizing all the information provided by the candidates.

Likewise, Kersten (2008) and Rutledge, Harris, Thompson, and Ingle (2008) conducted research on recent hiring practices and have varied their methods on quantifying professional and personal attributes. Kersten’s (2008) survey consisted of open-ended responses as well as forced-choice items. The researcher provided the most comprehensive characteristics that principals seek when hiring new candidates. The most common attributes found in the nine studies are found in Table 3. Rutledge et al. (2008), on the other hand, used only open-ended responses that were coded for quantitative analysis and looked at the interview process. The researchers found the most important instrument was the interview and identifying the personal characteristics to ensure the candidate was a fit for the school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Attributes</th>
<th>Personal Attributes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Enthusiasm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grades</td>
<td>Work Ethic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooperative Teacher reference</td>
<td>Good Verbal communication skills</td>
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Effective Teachers Use Data

Another quality of an effective teacher is their use of data to increase student achievement. As agreed upon by policymakers, parents, and principals, placing effective and highly qualified teachers in all classrooms is the key to improving public education, which includes lowering class size (Richardson, 2008). In the research of Thomas (2017) the practical use of four types of data is investigated. The four types of data that were addressed are: Big Data, Medium Data, Small Data, and In-The-Moment Data. When we think of data, many of us only look at what is referred to as “Big Data.” This type of data is retrieved from state and national standardized assessment tests, which sometimes ends up in the headlines of the newspapers. However, this type of data was not designed to drive our instructional procedures of the classroom, but only to hold schools accountable and to drive curriculum modifications. Thomas (2017) explains many schools collaborate to administer common assessments horizontally in each grade or course of study. The data retrieved from these forms of assessments are referred to as Medium Data. This type of data is used by districts to support and raise the achievement for all students.

Thomas (2017) explains that In-the-Moment data refers to the blank stares, hands raised, or other indicators that signal students do not understand the concept being taught. Teachers are well adjusted to utilize this type of data throughout the day, but it is impossible to predict when these moments will occur. Thomas (2017) cites that the type of data to make the most significant contribution to student learning is referred to as the Small Data. This type of data is collected at the “hinge points” of each lesson. The teacher must decide immediately if the students are grasping the lesson or if plan B should be put in place. To use this type of data effectively, teachers need to have more advanced tools to capture the information instantaneously, and be
able to navigate through the data as teaching is occurring. In summary, Thomas (2017) concluded that data would be collected in the hands of the teacher with the speed of teaching and empower the use of data to ensure all students are achieving and understanding the material as it is being presented.

Furthermore, teacher quality is one of the significant areas that is related to student achievement gains (Darling – Hammond, 2010; Hanushek, 2011). The researchers emphasize that now more than any other factor, teacher quality accounts for two-thirds of the student achievement gains. Hanushek (2011) found that effective teachers improve student performance by one grade level as compared to their colleagues. Additionally, it was found that prolonged exposure to effective teaching can make up for uncontrollable factors, such as low socioeconomic background, after three sequential years as reported by Eric Hanushek (2011). Hanushek, and Rivkin (2007) calculated an estimate that teacher quality accounts for 7.5% variation found in student achievement gain. A similar result was found by Goldhaber (2014) in a Tennessee data set, which teacher characteristics were responsible for 8.5% of the student achievement.

In a 2010 analysis of 10 value-added studies, Hanushek and Rivkin determined that a student would gain nine percentage points if their teacher was in the 75th percentile and not the 25th percentile as measured on a teacher quality scale. This percentile equates to a 0.2 standard deviation, which is the equivalent of a 10-student reduction in class size. Surprisingly, Hanushek (2011) states that there is little agreement on the qualities and skills that a successful teacher should possess. Recognizing the impact of teachers on student achievement is important in making decisions about possible teacher candidates. Reviewing research on traits of quality teachers and what makes them successful in the classroom helps determine the characteristics of
an effective teacher (Clemons, 2010). Likewise, John Hattie (2008) studied classrooms across the United States to identify qualities of effective teachers. He concluded that over 30% of student achievement is directly related to the teacher in the classroom. Also, the researcher stated the factors that a classroom teacher controls include feedback, instructional quality, class environment, and overall goals. Hattie (2008) also acknowledged that teachers with high-quality relationships with their students had 31% fewer discipline problems over the school year than teachers with low-quality relationships.

Critical Focus on the Hiring Process

Finding a match between a teacher candidate and the effective teaching qualities that have been identified (Johnston, Almerico, Henriott, & Shapiro 2011; Pretorius 2012), the responsibility of recruiting, screening, and selecting teachers rests on the shoulders of school and district administrators. With this responsibility comes perhaps the greatest opportunity that administrators have to influence student performance. As Chingos and Peterson (2011) suggest, “It’s easier to pick a good teacher than to train one” (p.449). Hiring good teachers is complex and requires significant skill, time, and resources. If the hiring goes well, school administrators fill their schools with talented and effective teachers who possess the skills and knowledge to inspire students to achieve. On the other hand, the results of poor hiring decisions are often catastrophic to schools and the success of the students they serve. One bad hiring decision can lead to lower student achievement and poor morale among colleagues (Clement, 2009).

Seyfarth (2008) asserts seven items of information can be collected for prospective teachers during the interview process. These include the standard application, transcripts, certification documents, references, test scores, federal and state background checks, and interviews. Each piece of information will assist districts in the process of hiring the most
effective teacher. The seven elements can be used to screen and select applicants that meet the minimum requirements for the positions that are open. The candidates that qualify can be invited in for a face-to-face interview. In his book, *Human Resource Leadership for Effective Schools*, Seyfarth (2008) recommended that more than one person should be involved in the interview. There is one person designated to lead the interview, while the other members ask questions, which have been scripted. It is important that all candidates are asked the same questions in the same order.

Clement (2008a) posit that behavior based interviewing questions “is based on the premise that past behavior is the best predictor of future performance” (p. 5). He continues to emphasize that the topics of “curriculum, planning, methods, classroom management, assessment and grading, meeting the needs of individual students, communication with parents and others, and professionalism” need to be woven into the questions during the interview (p. 39).

In their policy brief, Harris, Rutledge, Ingle and Thompson (2010) surveyed thirty principals using a mixed methods analysis for interviewing and hiring new teachers in a midsized Florida school district. Principals were selected from elementary, middle, high, and special population schools. The analysis consisted of interviews, which lasted about two hours each, and a follow-up interview the following summer. Their sampling of principals is close to the national average in regards to race and education. Previously, the researchers found the practice concerning the interview process was unstructured, and principals had the option of including stakeholders, selecting the process, and the number of interviews before hiring a successful candidate. Furthermore, Harris, Rutledge, Ingle and Thompson (2010) found that an “individual mix” of personal and professional qualities was favored by the principals. The “organizational mix” happened when teachers with different experience, race, gender, and skills were
interviewed and hired. An “organizational match” occurs when the interviewing teacher has comparable work experience and the potential to remain at the school for a period of time. Maximum weight was given to recommendations from cooperating teachers, internships, and administrators. Lesson plans and portfolios were not given as much weight and reliability, as indicators of a quality teacher. Implications from this study suggest that it is inaccurate that principals prefer personal over professional characteristics. Content knowledge and teaching skills ranked as the top qualities that principals are interested in when they interview potential candidates. Lastly, Harris, Rutledge, Ingle and Thompson (2010) states that as school principals are usually in charge of the hiring process, abundant research is essential in this important task and decision making for the district and community.

Another study by Rutledge, Harris, Thompson, and Ingle (2008) compared the hiring process of teachers to other occupations. The study consisted of a single midsized school district in Florida with three district officials and 39 principals who are involved in the hiring process. This study examined two steps in the hiring process, screening and selection. With the increased attention to the relationship between the hiring of teachers, teacher quality, and how it effects student achievement, the authors of this study chose to look at the ways in which teachers are screened and selected. Rutledge, et al. (2008) found that principals look for both the personal and the professional characteristics that will match the building culture. Interviews were conducted and recorded using the software N*Vivo for the coding process. The findings from their study suggest that the hiring process is problematic. The researchers assert that by improving the tools during the hiring process, there is a potential to improve the quality of teaching and student achievement. The results found that there was not much difference between teachers and other
occupations that have the same levels of complexity. However, the researchers found the interview was the most important aspect in the hiring and selection process.

From their review of literature, Rutledge, et al. (2008) identified three types of job categories. The first was person-job fit (P-J), which looks at how the skills, abilities, and knowledge of the employee match the job requirements. The second type was labeled person-organization (P-O) compares the compatibility of the candidate to the culture and values of the organization. Lastly, the person-group (P-G) focused on the fit of the employee and who they would work closely with in the organization. Although the P-J fit is the most important for teachers, all three types of job skills are needed to become an effective and quality teacher. In the end, the results of this study claim that the interview, experience, and letters of recommendation are more important than the college coursework or the resume.

Additionally, Loeb, Kalogries, and Beteille (2012) used value-added methods to study the relationship between retention of teachers and the school’s recruitment and effectiveness. There were four key findings from the study that emerged. The first was that effective schools are able to hire more effective teachers. Second, novice teachers are assigned to students that they will be successful teaching. The researchers state that very few teachers are dismissed and this becomes more difficult once a teacher attains tenure. School administrators can encourage less effective teachers to transfer or leave the profession all together. Third, teachers who work in effective schools continue to raise the achievement of students in following years. Lastly, the authors postulate that high performing schools are able to retain more effective teachers. Although, the research states that the quality and effectiveness of the teacher in front of the classroom is the most important factor when trying to raise achievement of students, not all schools can attract the
same caliber of candidates. Additionally, a student’s achievement level is a combination of all the years of teachers, family, and their experiences.

To illustrate this point, the researchers used seven years of data from district staff and students from the Miami-Dade County Public Schools in Florida, which is one of the largest public districts in the United States. Their research was based upon an analysis of schools in a geographic area. The authors were able to add to the examination on effective schools by using detailed longitudinal data from students, teachers, and schools on personnel practices to determine if a school was effective or not. Kane, Rockoff, and Staiger (2008) declare that the effectiveness between the top and bottom quartiles of teachers is 0.33 standard deviation gain on student test scores in a given year. Additionally, the authors state that the first step is to identify the strengths and weaknesses in teacher candidates during the hiring process.

Rockoff, Jacob, Kane, and Staiger (2011) found that it may be difficult for principals to identify a good teacher at the time of hire. The researchers set out to answer four questions in their study that addressed recruitment, assignment, development, and retention. The four questions were:

1. When vacancies arise to what extent do effective schools hire more effective teachers?
2. Do principals place effective teachers in class assignments more equitably in effective schools?
3. Are teachers able to become more effective in schools that are effective?
4. How do effective schools retain the most effective teachers?
Not surprisingly, the researchers found that teachers in high value-added schools could improve one standard deviation more effective and a 10 percent increase of a value-added standard deviation in a given year.

In their study, Loeb, Kalogries, and Beteille (2012) included analyzing teacher professional development and a teacher’s ability to raise student achievement. The researchers documented that a teacher’s ability to raise achievement increases over the first few years of employment and then remains stable thereafter. To interpret the results of the study, two caveats must be examined. The first is that math achievement is greater than language arts, which was not statistically different. The second caveat is the assignment of the teachers is important, but is sometimes driven by the teacher or the school administration guidelines. Finally, the researchers could not identify if school effectiveness was a result of the recruitment and assignment of teachers or the school leadership and personnel practices. The researchers assert this might be an area for further work by expanding the research of effective schools and school improvement in regard to student learning and personnel dynamics. The empirical evidence from this article provides that the most effective schools are doing three important steps, which include retention of good teachers, hiring and recruitment, and providing professional development for improvement.

**Interview Process**

Historically the research for teacher selection has not been given much attention. This lack of focus has not given districts much direction for interviewing and teacher selection. The employment interview dates back to the 1940’s when the Army used interviews to match specific jobs to soldiers (Eder & Harris, 1999). Further studies supported this practice as it was more effective to match soldiers to positions than to randomly assign them. During the twentieth
century, this notion of matching candidates to their jobs was most prevalent. Later, studies started to focus on the actual interview process. Presently behavior-based interviewing (BBI) has become a more popular format in education (Deems, 1994). This style of interviewing is borrowed from businesses and industries, and this process is based on the assumption that past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior. BBI utilizes explicit questions to determine if the candidate is the best fit for the job, based on skills, education, and background. The questions ask the teacher candidate to give specific and concrete examples pertaining to different scenarios in the classroom. A few examples of these type of interview questions would include: (Clement, 2008b, p. 44)

1. Tell me about a time when…

2. Describe a situation when…

3. Describe how you have implemented one topic…

4. Describe a unit of study….

5. How do you write a daily lesson plan…

Jerome Cranston (2012) acknowledged that other school districts rely on Likert-like scale questionnaires to retrieve information about hiring. This 23-item questionnaire was developed to provide feedback about the processes and criteria for the hiring practices. While many researchers conclude that the single-most crucial factor for school improvement is the preparing, selecting, and hiring of effective teachers, the process is one of the least researched areas of education (Stronge, 2010; Dinh, Ingarson & Klienhenz, 2008; Hattie, 2008; Boyd, Goldhaber, Lankford & Wyckoff, 2007). Furthermore, Hattie (2008) surmises that what teachers do and care about have a significant effect on student achievement. As a result, it is important to
assess the procedures for teacher selection and how the most qualified applicant is being chosen (Harris & Sass, 2009).

Rebore (2007) determined that a more structured framework was needed to guide the interview process. The conceptual framework for his study was understanding human resource management decisions in schools. Rebore stated:

The goals of the human resources function are basically the same in all schools systems – to hire, retain, develop, and motivate personnel in order to achieve the objectives of the school district, to assist individual members of the staff to reach the highest possible levels of achievement, and to maximize the career development of personnel. (p11).

Using Rebore’s framework provided insight on how teachers are sorted as effective or ineffective. Rebore (2007) delves even deeper when suggesting more thought needs to be considered prior to the hiring process. The author asserts the hiring process needs to take into consideration seven guiding questions prior to hiring teachers. These include: (Cranston, 2012 p.354)

1. What materials must applicants submit, and how should the material be submitted?
2. What deadlines must be adhered to, and what happens if someone misses a deadline?
3. How are applications to be assessed?
4. Who reads, analyzes, and assesses the applications, and are these people properly prepared for this work?
5. Who will be involved in the interviews, to what extent will these individuals be involved and are they prepared for the work?
6. What kinds of questions will be asked, and how will responses be assessed?
7. What are the most important criteria in hiring decisions and what decision-making process is used in deciding whom to hire?

As a result, two criteria emerged as the most influential: the candidate’s personal characteristics during the interview and the background from the references. In this study, Cranston (2012) considered the interview to be the most important criterion of the hiring process. Sorenson and Goldsmith (2009) emphasize that principals might know which candidates are the best fit for their schools, but they need to make sure the teacher is best for the whole school district. These researchers go on to state that if they simply ask the right questions they will be able to select the most effective teachers. In the end, this study suggests that school districts use a wide variety of practices to select the effective teachers, which may or may not be based on criteria that is valid and reliable. Cranston (2012) stated that we need teachers who are good enough to meet the challenges of the 21st century learners. The researcher continues to affirm that to employ successful candidates, school districts need to seriously consider the procedures and practices that have been established in the hiring process. This correlates to student success that the hiring process impacts.

**Interview Questions and Instruments**

**Teacher Perceiver Interview**

The most critical source of determining the teaching quality is through the use of questions in the hiring process (Clement, 2009). Principals use many commercially produced interview instruments, which do not focus on teaching quality, but rather on teacher personal attributes. Even though little research has examined the effectiveness of commercially designed teacher interview tools, many districts still utilize them. In a sample of just under 2,000 school
districts, it was revealed that many school districts choose such tools despite the significant cost of the instruments (Metzger & Meng-Jia, 2008). One such instrument is the Gallup Organization’s Teacher Perceiver Interview (TPI) first developed by Selection Research Incorporated (SRI) back in the early 1970’s. The TPI is a face-to-face interview where a trained administrator asks 60 open-ended questions. An abbreviated version was developed that contains only 22 open-ended questions. Both versions of the TPI were linked to the Gallup’s twelve themes as listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>This is the belief that students will achieve success through the contributions of significant people and the teacher in their life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>The teacher needs to understand the student’s feelings and attitudes to know to the students’ point of view.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapport Drive</td>
<td>The teacher and student need to have a positive relationship to maximize the student’s potential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualized Perception</td>
<td>The teacher spontaneously thinks about the needs and interests of each student and personalizes the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>The teacher must be a responsive listener to others and have acceptance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment</td>
<td>Intrinsic value of a teacher is the satisfaction of the student’s growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Input Drive</td>
<td>The teacher is searching for ideas, experiences, and materials to maximize student learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activation</td>
<td>The teacher is capable of motivating students to think and learn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>The teacher finds new ideas and techniques to promote student learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gestalt</td>
<td>The teacher has a drive to succeed in the completion and goal of student learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectivity</td>
<td>The teacher must look at the total situation getting all the facts before making an impulsive reaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>The teacher has a plan for the future and the goals of student learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School administrators must attend a four day training by Gallup at a cost of $1,950.00 per trainee. To become certified to administer the TPI, a school administrator must have at least an 85% inter-rater reliability on each item. The interviewer is trained on what to listen for based on the above 12 themes. The interview is structured so all candidates respond to the same questions in the same sequence and with the same conditions. School administrators must be recertified every 18 months to ensure accuracy in the coding of answers. The researchers concluded, “The TPI’s affective orientations do not appear to be relevant to pedagogical effectiveness” (p. 934). However, no pre-packaged system for screening candidates currently exists that will ensure that a candidate is the right fit for your district. A variety of measures are needed for an effective screening of candidates.

**Ventures for Excellence**

Another instrument used by many school districts to assist with their hiring process is the Ventures for Excellence created by Dr. Vic Cottrell (Martin, 2008). The Ventures For Excellence instrument is considered effective and accurate in distinguishing candidates who display characteristics sought by school districts in their new hires. The Ventures For Excellence contains 22 questions designed to obtain responses that separate the most talented teacher candidates from the less talented ones (Evan, 2016). For example, a school district in Northwestern North Carolina implemented the Ventures for Excellence instrument in hopes of providing a common hiring process that would select quality applicants. The motivation for utilizing Ventures for Excellence was that the school district was in need of a hiring instrument that produced a large applicant pool of quality teachers and created an efficient hiring system. Also, the school district was in need of a hiring system that would protect them from any legal issues that might arise from the interviewing of the applicants. Prior to this the district did not
have a formal process, which led them to having legal issues associated with hiring (Wood, 2014).

The Ventures for Excellence protocol (Martin, 2008) involved quantitative and qualitative methodologies, which included survey responses, focus-group interview data, a study of human resource data related to legal issues, and a study of North Carolina Educator Value-Added Assessment data for teachers hired using the program. The qualitative data was collected via focus-group interviews. The quantitative data was provided from surveys, EVAAS data, and frequency counts. The researcher utilized triangulation, by summarizing the data from the focus-group interviews, surveys, EVAAS data, and frequency counts. This was used to determine the consistency of the data. A primary limitation was the number of applicants hired using the Venture for Excellence program was limited. In addition, the number of respondents during the focus-group interviews varied in each. Lastly, participation in the principal surveys was limited and may have impacted the survey results. The researchers assert that Ventures for Excellence has potential to contribute to the field in that 75% of the teachers hired using the instrument produced value-added growth scores that met or exceeded the standard expected growth scores. However, the study found no statistical difference between the former hiring process and the Ventures for Excellence hiring process. To truly know its’ impact further research would need to be conducted.

Similarly, Goldhaber, Grout, and Huntington-Klein (2014) investigated in their working paper the extent to which screening instruments are predictive of teacher retention, student achievement, and teacher absences. Specifically, the researchers analyzed two teacher rubrics used during the hiring process in Spokana Public Schools (SPS). In addition, three additional outcomes that were studied included teacher absence behavior, measures of effectiveness, and
the likelihood of attrition. It is always a challenge to hire the best applicant, and SPS is one district using a structured selection instrument to aid in the process. The screening instrument that Spokana Public Schools used projected student achievement and teacher attrition, but was not a valid tool for measuring teacher absences. The SPS found one standard deviation increase in screening scores is linked with an increase of between 0.03-0.07 deviations in student achievement and a decrease in teacher attrition of 2.5 points. This correlates to long-term student outcomes, which include college and career earnings. The authors’ assert that teachers can have enormous effect on students and their achievement, which can lead to lifelong implications. In addition, they found teacher attrition can have dramatic effects on student achievement and the districts costs. The last attribute investigated was teacher absences, which also contributes to a high correlation in regard to student achievement. In summary, the researchers suggest a high correlation between using a selection instrument and acquiring the most qualified teacher for the district instead of using the more common informal processes.

In their study, Schumacher, Grigsby, and Vesey (2012) offered school districts an instrument to identify candidates that are expected to become effective in their teaching. The researchers state that one bad hiring decision can be devastating to a school’s morale and lower student achievement. Schumacher, Grigsby, and Vesey’s study consisted of 222 teachers who had an average of 7.2 years of teaching experience. The teachers were all employed by two large public school districts in the Houston area. The majority of teachers in this study were elementary, followed by middle school teachers, and high school teachers. The study consisted of two phases, a qualitative research design was used in phase one and phase two consisted of quantitative data responses using a seven-point Likert-scale. All teachers from the two districts were given the opportunity to answer the interview questions, which were delivered via email.
The researchers developed the interview questions along with the principals from the districts. The four key qualities of effective teachers were established utilizing the research of Stronge, Tucker, and Hindman (2004):

1. Classroom organization and management - This category includes classroom climate, organizations, and expectations.
2. Instruction - This area will focus on high expectations, maximizing time, planning, instruction, and preparation.
3. Implementing the lesson - Here the focus is on student engagement, instructional strategies, content knowledge, and contextual understanding.
4. Monitoring the progress of students - The final category differentiating instruction, student learning, and assessment.

The next step of the study was a round table discussion with the two districts and a three-hour workshop with the administration staff to determine if the interview questions met the meaning and readability of the desired format. The questions were revised according to the comments and the recommendations. The final step was to present the revised 30 questions to a graduate-level class of administrators for feedback and to improve the quality of each question. This resulted in compiling the interview protocol of nine questions for classroom management, two questions for instruction, three questions for planning and five questions for monitoring the progress of students. The researchers found that the four key components were attributed to having a profound effect on students who were under their tutelage.
STAR On-Line Pre-Screener

Haberman (2007) developed an online screener tool used by school districts to help determine if the teacher candidates should be invited in for a formal interview. This pre-screener is based on the Haberman’s ten dimensions of teaching:

1. Persistence – works with children with learning and behavioral problems on a daily basis without giving up on them for the year
2. Organization and Planning – refers to how teachers plan and manage the classroom
3. Values student learning – predicts the willingness of the candidate to make student learning the highest priority
4. Theory to Practice – the ability to see the practical implications of generalizations and the concepts of specific practices
5. At-Risk Students – predicts how well the candidate will connect and teach students of all backgrounds and levels
6. Approach to Students – analyzes if a teacher will be able to relate to students in an effective manner
7. Survive in Bureaucracy – refers to the likelihood that the candidate can function in a depersonalized organization
8. Explains Teacher Success – refers to the criteria used to determine if the teacher is successful
9. Explains Student Success – refers to the criteria used to determine if the student is successful
10. Fallibility – refers to how the teacher plans to deal with mistakes in the classroom
Some school districts may require the pre-screener as a prerequisite to a formal interview. The cost of the test is $20.00, and only takes about 30 minutes to complete. The Haberman Foundation (n.d.) compares the candidate’s answers to the answers of successful teachers, and has a 97% accuracy rate for predicting which teachers will stay longer and succeed in improving student achievement.

A final tool that Haberman (2008) produced and one that some districts are using is called “The Start Classroom Management Protocol.” This tool places the candidate into an interactive computer game to determine the ability to manage a classroom. The teacher is placed into a classroom with 24 students who must be kept on task. Students begin to move off-task at a randomly, timed sequence. If the teacher does not intervene in an appropriate manner, the student will start to disrupt their neighbors. The candidate’s responses are timed and assessed for appropriateness. The total number of seconds that the teacher is able to keep the students on task is scored for each episode. The game is based on Rudolph Dreikur’s theory of logical consequences, which include need for attention, revenge, power, and avoidance of failure.

**Star Teacher Interview**

Dr. Martin Haberman (2007) also created an electronic format of interviewing known as The Star Interview. This is a scenario-based interview process that includes a structured manner of responding to behavioral-based questions. School administrators attend a one day training at a cost of approximately $1,500.00. This process has been researched for over three decades with a 95% accuracy rate of predicting the candidates who will stay and succeed in your district and those that will fail in the classroom setting. The Haberman Foundation website (n.d.) reports that over 160 school districts use Haberman’s interview protocols. STAR represents an acronym for the four key concepts of the process. The candidate answers the behavioral interview question by
completing all four steps to ensure they provide a thorough answer. The four key concepts include:

Situation: The candidate needs to describe a specific event or situation in detail so that the interviewer will understand. This may be a job he/she performed or a challenge he/she faced at work.

Task: Next, the candidate needs to describe their responsibility in this situation.

Action: This step entails the candidate describing the actions he/she took to complete the task and their contribution to the project.

Result: Finally, the candidate describes the outcome of their actions.

Lesson Demonstration

Another frequently utilized model for interviewing is that of lesson demonstration. The research on effective demonstration lesson systems rely on highly effective teaching practices to judge potential teacher quality. Rowan, Miller, & Camburn (2009) posits that teaching strategies for the subject, grade, and development of students should be aligned in the demonstration lessons. The components of the demonstration lessons are aligned with the teacher evaluation systems and values of the district in relationship to highly effective teaching practices. Although they are time-consuming, the demonstration lesson can provide the hiring team the opportunity to see a candidate engage in the teaching and instruction process. The research on the validity of the demonstration lesson is scarce and lacks consistency. Research on the teacher demonstration lacks consistency, and the predictive validity is scarce according to Rowan, Miller, & Camburn.
Effective demonstration lessons should be aligned with teaching strategies for the grade, subject, and development of the students.

**Teacher Portfolios**

In the past few decades, the use of professional portfolios, as an interview tool, has been utilized in hopes of identifying the qualities of an effective teacher (Boody, 2009; Fox, White & Kidd, 2011, Ndoye, Ritzhaupt, & Parker, 2012). Although there may be a conflict between principals and professors about the value and use of portfolios in the hiring process, the portfolio is a common tool developed in teacher programs (Lin, 2008; Strudler & Wetzel, 2012). The study of Whitworth, Jones, Deering, and Hardy (2016) analyzed the differences between school administrators and teacher educators in the use of portfolios during the hiring process. The researchers sought to answer two questions: (p.2)

1. How do teacher educators and school administrators differ in their perceptions regarding the value and use of portfolios in the teacher employment process?
2. How can portfolios become a more useful tool in the teacher employment process?

Two surveys were administered by the researchers, who utilized PsychData as their data collection source. These surveys were administered to 127 teacher educators and 41 administrators. Although most schools do not require portfolios during the hiring process, both groups who completed the surveys agreed that portfolios have some weight in the hiring process. The researcher considered nine factors within their surveys; personal interview, amount of previous teaching experience, information from previous employers, reputation of preparation program, personal characteristics, grade point average, references from professors, and non-education employers. From these nine factors teacher educators ranked
portfolios as sixth in importance and school administrators placed portfolios seventh. One advantage noted by both groups with the use of portfolios was the role of self-reflection for the candidates. Other benefits of the portfolio are a means for teacher candidates to demonstrate their use of technology and to display their organizational skills and writing. The researchers assert that the portfolio can aid the candidates in reflecting on their abilities and skills to organize answers to possible interview questions. Boody (2009) agrees with this finding in that “…a major value of portfolios for students is that they can help close the sale and showcase their skills. It can help tell a story to the interviewers” (p. 69). However, the researchers noted several problems with the use of portfolios, such as the accuracy of actual teaching skills and ability, and the time to view portfolios. Whitworth, Jones, Deering, and Hardy (2016) concluded that the portfolio provided evidence of the teacher’s ability to individualize instruction.

Although there are a few limitations, the researchers found several recommendations for teacher educators, teacher candidates, and school administrators. For teacher educators, the authors recommend that the portfolio be integrated during the hiring process and not a stand-alone item. It is suggested that students should focus on developing artifacts from time in actual classrooms and gaining insight into their knowledge and skills. Whitworth, Jones, Deering, and Hardy (2016) instruct teacher candidates to carefully select items for their portfolios and spend time articulating what the items say about their teaching ability in the simplest way. Lastly, for school administrators the researchers suggest using a multi-tiered process in the screening phase, where a review of the portfolio could be the first step before moving a candidate to the next step of the process. They should also be more explicit in the types of information that candidates need to supply in the portfolio. Lastly, Whitworth,
Jones, Deering, and Hardy (2016) posit that for the portfolio to become an effective tool in the interview process, school administrators and teacher educators need to work together to ensure the teacher selection is efficient in employing the most effective teacher.

**Teacher Education Program**

In another study by Yao, Thomas, Nickens, Downing, Burkett, and Lamson (2008), the researchers found the use of electronic portfolios widely used in teacher education programs across the United States. They define an electronic portfolio as a purposeful and systematic collection of work samples that document the progress of teacher candidates over a period of time. In addition, digital portfolios have become standard practice in education programs as cited by Snoeyink & Meyer (2007). The purpose of their study was to advise their teacher candidates to craft their portfolios to position themselves more favorably in job interviews. The study took place at a small Midwestern college with the education faculty and was aligned to the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards. In the 2004 fall semester, 300 teacher candidates in 12 certification programs were developing their digital portfolios as a new requirement for graduation.

The participants of the research involved 23 school personnel who were involved in the hiring process and included principals, superintendents, teachers, and directors. There were four phases that evolved as qualitative data. The first phase was a focus group that viewed portfolios via a projector. Input was given as to the valuable information that should be contained in the digital portfolio. This information was shared with the teacher candidates. Additionally, the second phase consisted of presenting portfolios via projector and specific information about the organization and content of the portfolios was given. The general recommendations included:
- The structure of the portfolio needs to be streamlined
- Information should be available by a menu so the hiring team can choose to view selected areas
- Credentials should be a link in the portfolio
- A video of the candidates teaching a lesson

The third phase attempted to gather more qualitative data by inviting 42 administrators to log on to the portfolio system and view seven teacher portfolios. After reviewing the portfolios, the administrators completed an online questionnaire, which included both open-ended and objective questions. The following nine items were rated as Critical, Somewhat Important, Not Very Important, or Insignificant.

1. Introduction Page
2. Resume
3. Philosophy of education
4. Video of teaching
5. Artifacts for standards
6. Reflections on artifacts
7. Artifacts of technology skills
8. Action Research
9. Formal evaluations

Additionally, the respondents ranked these nine components in order of importance in the hiring process. The final phase of the study presented modified portfolios to seven administrators and four college professors. They examined the structure, layout, and content of the portfolios.
and viewed the video clips that were included. The minutes and notes from the focus groups were read multiple times and coded for patterns and emergent categories. The responses from the Likert scale items were tabulated and the mean scores were determined.

Furthermore, Snoeyink & Meyer (2007) recognized that none of the 23 participants indicated that the digital portfolio would not be valuable or utilized until the pool of candidates had been narrowed down as to whom to interview. Table 4 shows the importance of items for hiring. The results of this study conclude that the portfolio must be streamlined, and conducive to finding items quickly, and the video clip should be no longer than five minutes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: Importance of digital portfolio items for hiring by administrators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal evaluations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video of teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>Artifacts of technology skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philosophy of education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflections on artifacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifacts for standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Action research</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Summary

Teacher selection and interviewing processes vary from district to district. Some districts use their central office through the human resources department to conduct the teacher screening
and interviewing processes. Other districts utilize the building principals for screening and interviewing. Mason and Schroeder (2010, p. 186) contended that if building principals are in charge of the hiring then their most important job is to hire “highly qualified, exceptional staff” (2010, p.186). These decisions require more attention because of the ramifications that a single decision holds for the future of numerous students. Experts in the field agree that the most crucial decision a principal contemplates is which teacher to hire (Peterson, 2002).

In summary, the hiring process sets the foundation for the success or failure of a school district. The decisions can be laborious, intense, and pressure filled for a principal, but it is critical to allot sufficient time on the process to ensure that the best candidate is hired. Many school districts lack an equitable system that creates an equal opportunity for all applicants. The proposed list of questions will allow for an equal playing field for all candidates. Ultimately, there is not one best tool or set of questions that is used when selecting the most highly effective teacher as the findings throughout this study recommend. There are limitations and advantages that must be considered that will best meet the needs of each individual district, while creating their hiring processes.
Chapter 3

Methodology

Historical Hiring Process and Tools used to Hire Teachers

Charlotte Danielson has done much research on teacher effectiveness. In her *Framework for Teaching* (2011), she created a rubric to align researched based domains and components to identify effective teachers. The Danielson’s Framework includes four domains and twenty-two components that explicitly describe the skills and characteristics of effective teachers. The four domains in the framework are: 1) Planning and Preparing for Student Learning, 2) Creating an Environment for Student Learning, 3) Teaching for Student Learning, and 4) Professionalism. Districts often utilize the Danielson’s Framework to assist with the interview process to help districts choose the most effective teacher candidates who rate high on this model. Another interview tool utilized across Pennsylvania is the *Standard Application* (24 P.S. 12-1204.1, 1996), which is required in Pennsylvania. The sections of the application are noted in Table 5 (See Appendix A for complete application).

Table 5: Pennsylvania Standard Application for Teacher

1. Areas of certification, state, and date issued
2. Tenure acquisition
3. Date available for employment
4. Educational Background, school, degree, and grade point average
5. Experience, titles, dates of service, supervisor, salary, work performed, reasons for leaving
6. Activities qualified to supervise or coach
To increase both school quality and student performance, schools need to attain high-quality teachers. The literature is limited that systematically compares the current hiring practices to effective systems in school districts. Currently, there is not one best system for screening potential candidates. Additionally, there is limited research to guide administrators through the screening and interview process. For these reasons, it is my responsibility as an administrator to examine our interview process and investigate more deeply into a research-based process that is equitable for all candidates and that will result in hiring the best candidates.

Strauss, Bowes, Marks, and Plesko (2000) conducted an analysis of Pennsylvania school districts stating that districts tend to gravitate toward what they know and hire their own graduates or applicants similar to their students and teachers. “It is also clear that most districts do not actively seek new teacher applicants through vigorous advertising and recruiting” (p. 405). This practice leads to lower student performances as reported from these researchers. Especially in low performing schools, this practice of hiring local graduates is destructive. Such practice has been found to impact student achievement negatively and confirm the notion that the best teachers are not always local. Likewise, Loeb, Kalogrides, and Beteille (2011) state that the recruitment system should be based on merit, not personal relationships or community connections. The practice of hiring teachers based on likability must change, since teachers are the most influential factor in a student’s success. The effectiveness of the teacher selection
The Methods and Processes of Teacher Selection in Schools

Student achievement is dependent upon the teacher in front of the classroom. Reviewing research on effective teachers, their traits, and characteristics in order to become successful in the classroom is essential (Clemons, 2010). To obtain and evaluate the desired teacher for the Brentwood Borough School District, a new method is required. As mentioned previously, the current process and interview questions are subjective and lacks consistency. As a principal in the district, the present method is idiosyncratic and lacking in fairness for all applicants. During the first year in the district, I had the task of hiring a new Special Education teacher. Being new to the district, I reached out to other principals to inquire about the district’s policy for hiring. To my surprise, the other principals informed me that the questions and process were left up to my discretion. In previous positions, I had not been asked to create questions for the interview process, therefore, I started searching for potential questions. I felt that the process in place was not objective for any of the candidates. For the aforementioned reasons, the research-based questions will lessen the discrepancies that can occur during the interview process. The new process will allow for all candidates to be assessed utilizing a multi-step interview system, which will promote a more equal playing field for all applicants. This process will lead to acquiring the best possible candidate to serve the Brentwood Borough School District and its community.

Their knowledge about curriculum, classroom management, school culture, and commitment to the profession will be demonstrated through the researched-based questions and
interview process. The interview protocol will create a process in which all individuals will have an equal opportunity to score based on their knowledge and experience. Previous questions were not content specific or geared toward the curriculum areas. The general interview questions presently utilized allow the interviewer to be independent, without any accountability to impartiality for all applicants. The previous questions did not allow the candidate to demonstrate their depth of knowledge in the subject matter or reveal expertise in classroom management, pedagogy, parent relationships, and their use of technology to strengthen lesson planning.

To increase the student achievement at Brentwood Borough School District, we need to acquire the best teacher from the candidates that apply. Indeed, the Nation at Risk report of the 1980’s, addressed “a rising tide of mediocrity” in regard to teacher quality (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Also, the standards movement of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2001 has pushed teacher quality and student achievement to a top priority. Presently, the No Child Left Behind Act has caused school districts to be faced with increased pressure of accountability. In school districts that have failed to meet Average Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements, hiring quality teachers is a critical responsibility, as teaching quality has a direct impact on student performance and the success of schools (Stronge, 2007). The Brentwood Borough School District has shown a drop-in student achievement as measured on the PSSA scores and the PVAAS data used to measure school success. Student learning and instructional practices are two of the most important aspects in the teacher selection process for principals (Mertz, 2010). One bad hiring decision can lead to lower student achievement and poor morale among colleagues (Clement, 2009). The hiring process is challenging, because experience and years of schooling are not reliable measures for student achievement (Hanushek and Rivkin, 2007, p. 70). In summary, through a detailed interview process with researched
based questions, the Brentwood Borough School District will hire the best teacher from the pool of applicants and improve the district.

**Theoretical Framework**

This study was framed and guided by decision-making theory by Green (2004). The decision-making theory is defined as a systematic process of choosing from among alternatives. The seminal process has two alternative models: the rational economic model and the administrative decision-making model (Etzioni, 1964). The rational economic model entails a sequential process for making decisions, which begins with identifying the problem, generating solutions for the problem, evaluating the alternatives, and ending with selecting and implementing the best alternative (Sergiovanni, 1980). This is the model that administrators use for decision making. The administrator decision making model involves numerous contextual constraints, which limit the ability of administrator to follow the systematic rational economic model. Principals are required to select the teachers who possess the qualities and competencies to enhance student learning, which include setting high expectations for students, pedagogical expertise, and content knowledge. For these reasons, it is expected that a principal would use some form of the rational model of decision making. The elements of the rational model of decision making are as follows:

1. Think carefully about where the principal wants the school to go in relation to where they are now.
2. To assess where the strengths and weaknesses are in the school.
3. For the position needed filled, to enhance the strengths and advance progress to move the school forward.
Principals need to develop criteria to systematically assess candidates to correlate with the vision and position for the school. This needs to be in combination with the qualities that are associated with teacher effectiveness to enhance student learning. Furthermore, principals need to create methods and procedures to uncover this information from the candidates to enable those involved in the interview process to adequately assess the teacher’s fit with the school and position.

Table 6: Theoretical Framework

![Diagram of the theoretical framework]

**Evaluation Approach**

**Evaluation Context**

The researcher can improve the interview process by investigating the best research-based interviewing questions and analyzing commercially designed interviewing tools that will
guide the hiring process. The research-based questions will lessen the inequalities during the interview process. The effectiveness of the teacher selection process depends upon the validity and reliability of the interview questions.

**Evaluation Questions**

1. What does research show about the uppermost characteristics of effective teachers?

2. After surveying principals from the top 100 school districts in Pennsylvania, what researched based questions will they choose to be of most importance in selecting teacher candidates?

**Table 7: Process Completed for Hiring Effective Teachers**

1. Review literature of best practices of hiring teacher candidates
2. Search data basis for research based or proven effective interview questions
3. Survey the top 100 elementary principals of Pennsylvania using Survey Monkey
4. Analyze the responses from principals and the ranked 15 questions
5. Call principals who volunteered to be part of the phone interview
6. Analyze the phone interviews for themes
7. Create list of researched-based top 15 questions
8. Use the questions for interviews
9. Hire qualified, effective teachers for open positions
10. Successful School and Students
Description of the Setting and Sample

Brentwood Borough is a suburb of Pittsburgh, located in Allegheny County. The borough encompasses approximately 1.5 square miles. Brentwood currently has an estimated population of 10,000 citizens. The average household income is $53,076.00 and the median house value was $107,040.00. The Brentwood Borough School District is comprised of two elementary schools for grades K-5, and a combined middle/high school for grades 6-12. The district currently serves an estimated 1,250 students and employees about 100 teachers and six administrators. In Pennsylvania, the school district ranked 152nd out of 498 school districts. This ranking was based on five years of student academic achievement from results of the PSSA testing in reading, writing, math, and science. The graduation rate is 95.4%. According to district records, 58% of students received free or reduced-price lunches, due to low family income in the 2018-2019 school year. The district offers a wide variety of clubs, activities and sports i.e. track and field, golf, football, girls’ volleyball, girls’ basketball, girls’ softball, baseball, cross country, soccer, and swimming. Likewise, at the middle school level, students have the opportunity to participate in swimming, cheerleading, basketball, and track and field.

The Brentwood Borough School Board requires a minimum of 25 credits for a student to graduate, including: English four credits, Graduation project one credit, Social Students four credits, Science three credits, Mathematics four credits, Arts/Humanities two credits, Health and Physical Education one credit, and lastly six credits of electives. Additionally, the board requires that the students achieve a score at the advanced or proficient levels on the writing, reading, and mathematics assessments of the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) administered in the eleventh grade.
The average teacher salary in the district is $55,595 for 192 days. The beginning salary is $42,460, while the highest salary is $93,975. Teachers work a 7½ hour day, which includes one 40-minute planning period and a paid 30-minute lunch. Additionally, the teachers receive a defined benefit pension, health insurance, vision insurance, income insurance, 100% professional development tuition reimbursement, four paid personal days, 10 paid sick days, three paid bereavement days, and after 10 years of teaching may apply for a one year paid sabbatical leave. Furthermore, the district offers a retirement stipend that includes payment for unused sick days. Lastly, the board pays a $2,500 annual stipend to a teacher who achieves National Board Certification and continues for each year that the national board certification is maintained.

**Procedures and Sample**

My position in the Brentwood Borough School District is the principal of Elroy Elementary. The school consists of kindergarten through fifth grade students, with 320 students and families. Elroy employees 25 teachers, three paraprofessionals, a custodian and a secretary that reports directly to me. Not only do I serve the professional staff within my building, but also the immediate families and extended families of my students. My role includes observations and evaluations for teachers, paraprofessionals, a school nurse, and the school secretary. Since there is only a part time counselor in my building, I serve in this capacity for my students as well. Each day brings new challenges to overcome and triumphs to celebrate. Each decision is made with a team of staff members, including myself. I hold meetings for grades levels, the Olweus Bullying program, Student Assistance Program, attendance and truancy issues, the Parent Teacher Association, and student Individual Education Plans. To promote open communication, notes are typed for each meeting and distributed, plans are put into place, and emails are sent to inform all members of the staff. I have an open-door policy in which parents are welcomed to
meet with me at any time and many times I call to set up these meetings. If a concern is brought to me, I immediately call the parents to come in and meet with the teacher and myself personally. Additional duties I perform include creating 504 plans, safety plans, and crisis plans for students, which entails meeting with teachers and parents to best serve our pupils. At the administration level, I meet monthly with the superintendent, curriculum coordinator, technology coordinator, special education director, and the other building principals. It is for these responsibilities that hiring the most qualified and effective teachers is valuable and of the highest concern to me.

**Description of District, Community, and Culture**

The gentrification in my community is changing exponentially with the increased number of English as a Second Language (ESL) families that have moved into the Brentwood Borough School District. The language barriers have impacted the entire school from teaching, parent meetings, office procedures, to the food served in our cafeteria. The staff has found alternative ways to communicate using pictures, sign language, or other students who speak the same language. Our parent meetings involve community members as translators or utilizing a translator by phone. When ESL parents come to register, the secretary utilizes Google translator to connect with the families. Creating a welcoming and trusting community is my mission for all families that attend Elroy Elementary. As families step into the building, it is my job to ensure they feel welcomed and valued as an important part in their child’s education. I agree with Mapp & Kuttner (2013) in that teachers feel ill prepared and equipped to handle the necessary tools for building relationships with families who do not speak English. In addition, Mapp & Kuttner (2013) assert that parents of ESL students often lack the knowledge of how an American school operates to become actively engaged with the system. For my building to reach the systemic level, I will need to create a plethora of professional activities for my staff and increase the
amount of instructional guidance, in order to produce a student-centered learning atmosphere with parent involvement. For this reason, my leadership falls into the traditional partnerships according to Auerbach (2012). The following are examples of traditional partnerships that have shaped our school.

Elroy Elementary has partnered with many of the community resources over the past few years. These include, but are not limited to, Girl Scouts, Holy Family, Allegheny Food Bank, YMCA, JA Day with Pittsburgh Plate Glass, and Wesley Spectrum. The collaboration with these institutions has provided valuable resources for student learning, which in turn builds trust and a sense of belonging. To broaden this sphere of influence to the ESL population, is an area of greatest concern for myself and my district. These are just some examples of how Elroy has made strides to become more family friendly, community oriented, and democratic over the past year.

**Conclusion**

In summary, the Brentwood Borough School District needs to acquire the best teachers from the candidates that apply in order to increase student achievement. With teacher quality, accountability, and student achievement a top priority in the nation, hiring effective and quality teachers is a critical first step. The researched based questions acquired from this study will provide our district with an equitable process of hiring the most qualified teacher. In the end, selecting effective teachers, who have the most impact upfront with our students, could lead to successful citizens for all of us. Principals need a systematic approach for sorting and selecting the most effective new hires. Candidates’ previous performance is the top predictor to their future performance and developing an approach to hiring that evaluates the candidates
experience, expertise, and preparation is the best way to ensure the hire of an effective teacher (Clement, 2013).
Chapter 4
Description of Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine teacher screening and selection tools and the interview process used by a small Southwestern school district in Pennsylvania to ensure that the most effective teacher candidates are chosen. The purpose of this study was to examine the use of structured interview instruments that would measure research-based traits of teacher effectiveness during the interview process. The study consisted of an online survey of the top 100 elementary principals from Pennsylvania that asked them to rank interview questions in order of importance as seen by them. Participants were also asked to add any additional questions they ask candidates during the interview process. As was made clear throughout this study, there is not one answer or one right way to structure the process of hiring effective teachers. There is not one characteristic or measure that accurately predicts which candidates will be effective teachers. Past practice on teacher hiring and teacher effectiveness has shown this, and the data analysis presented did not offer conclusive results (Harris & Sass, 2009). Even if there was more conclusive evidence of what effective teacher characteristics were, there is still variation in what districts and schools are looking for in teachers, and what they consider to be effective teachers (Clemet, 2013).

In addition, this study intended to gather the data from the top 100 principals from Pennsylvania rank researched based questions in order of importance, when interviewing teacher candidates. However, the total participation was well below that number. An online survey was conducted asking principals who currently serve in the top 100 elementary schools across Pennsylvania to rank 15 researched based questions from in order of importance when interviewing teacher candidates. At the conclusion of the survey, the principals were also asked to volunteer for a follow up phone interview in order to investigate their hiring process further.
The top 100 school list was developed by Niche, which is a company that is headquartered in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and produces ranks, and reviews of the best colleges, schools, neighborhoods, and companies. Niche rigorously analyzes dozens of public data sets to produce comprehensive rankings and profiles for every K-12 school. The top 100 elementary school list is ranked from millions of Niche users and based on rigorous analysis of test scores, academic, student, and college data from the Department of Education. The rankings are calculated using a series of steps to ensure statistical rigor. The process used to calculate is as follows:

1. Select the factors to represent a healthy balance between statistical rigor and relevance.
2. Evaluate the data for each factor to ensure it provided value using the Bayesian method, which estimates the mean of a population using outside information that is factored into the calculation.
3. A standardized score is processed for each factor (called a z-score) at each school. Distance from the average was evaluated using standard deviation, which allowed each school to be compared with others in a statistical manner.
4. Next, weights are assigned for each factor to ensure that one factor did not have a positive or negative impact on the final score.
5. The overall score is calculated by applying the weights to the school’s individual factors. This created a final score for each ranking.
6. Only schools that have all the required factors were eligible for a ranking and grade.
7. The last step is to create a numerical ranking and assign grades. The ranking is based on the final z-score and grades are determined by how each school performs compared to all other schools included in the ranking.
The researcher developed two research questions that guided the study:

1. What does research show about the uppermost characteristics of effective teachers?
2. After surveying principals from the top 100 school districts in Pennsylvania, what researched based questions will they choose to be of most importance in selecting teacher candidates?

The first question was answered in the literature review section about teacher characteristics, which has become the single most important issue linked to student achievement. Students taught by effective teachers learn more and outperform those taught by less effective teachers, these differences can be staggering. Low performing teachers have students that only gain half a year while their high-performing colleagues have shown to post a year and a half of gains. Additionally, students assigned to a low-performing teacher for several successive years can have a compounding negative effect (Hanushek, 2011). In summary, a school with exceptional teachers will produce a school with quantifiable and significant student academic growth.

To acquire the best teacher candidate is the principal’s responsibility, which will have a direct impact on student learning. With this responsibility comes perhaps the greatest opportunity that administrators have to influence student performance. Chingos and Peterson (2011) suggest, “It’s easier to pick a good teacher than to train one” (p. 449). Significant skill, time, and resources are required to hire good teachers. School administrators have an obligation to fill their schools with talented teachers, who possess the skills and knowledge to inspire students to achieve.
The second research question will be answered by the analysis of the data gathered from the online and phone surveys. The daunting task of hiring a teacher can be ambiguous and non-objective. The strategies being utilized for the pool of applications are wide, from which the successful candidate will be hired. A principal must be confident that they have chosen the best candidates. Even though this is such an important process, there has not been a great deal of research about the best methods for hiring teachers throughout the United States. This is evident in the school district I serve, with its lack of any standard interviewing procedures. Many administrators, including myself, have not been formally trained in the hiring process and a great deal of inconsistencies exist.

There were 10 principals from Pennsylvania schools that completed the online survey in this study. The majority of principals (n=9) indicated that they have grades Kindergarten through grade five in their buildings. Only three building principals (n=3) indicated that grades Kindergarten through sixth grade were served in their buildings. The data revealed that the majority of principals (n=6) have worked in their current position between one and five years. The next group of principals (n=3) have worked in their current position between six and ten years. Only one principal (n=1) has worked in their current position for eleven to twenty years. No respondents have worked in their current position for more than twenty years as a principal. Four participants have been a principal for 11 – 20 years in their career. Three participants (n=3) have been a principal from 6-10 years, and three participants (n=3) have been a principal from 1-5 years. The principals held various amounts of total years in education. The largest group fell in the eleven to twenty-five range (n=5). The second largest group (n=4) had between twenty-one and twenty-nine years of education, and one principal (n=1) held more than thirty years of
education. All participants (n=10) are working towards or hold a master’s degree, while four (n=4) of the participants are working towards or hold their doctorate degree.

**Analysis of Interview Questions**

In answering question 4, 10 principals ranked the top fifteen researched-based interview questions in order of importance as seen by them. Survey data revealed that participants selected three questions as their most important question as indicated by participants who ranked it number one when interviewing for effective teachers in order of importance. The results data revealed a trimodal frequency distribution for three of the ranked questions. Each of the three questions below was selected by two participants as their number one selection out of the 15 questions.

1. Give an example of a time you had difficulty with a student’s behavior and how you addressed it.
2. Describe how you promote high expectations during instruction and in your classroom.
3. Explain how you would differentiate your instruction and assessment to meet the student’s needs.

The other four participants choose four different questions as their number one.

The result of the data also revealed a multimodal frequency distribution when that participants selected two questions as their second most important question as indicated by participants who ranked it number two when interviewing for effective teachers in order of importance. The first question below was selected by four participants as their second most
important question out of the 15 questions. The second question below was selected by two participants as their second most important question out of the 15 questions.

1. Describe the routines and classroom procedures you would have in place to create an inclusive, safe, challenging, and positive classroom environment.

2. Explain how you would differentiate your instruction and assessment to meet the student’s needs.

Likewise, data revealed a multimodal frequency distribution for the third most important question as indicated by participants. The first question below was selected by three participants as their third most important question out of the 15 questions. The second question below was selected by two participants as their third most important question out of the 15 questions.

1. Give me an example of how you have or will accommodate a student’s learning needs in the classroom.

2. Describe how you have or would use student data in planning for instruction.

The selection of the fourth ranked question also revealed a trimodal frequency distribution. Survey data revealed that participants selected three questions as their fourth most important question. Each question below was selected by two participants as their fourth most important question out of the 15 questions.

1. Describe how you promote high expectations during instruction and in your classroom.

2. How would you communicate with parents and how frequently would you do so?

3. Explain how you would differentiate your instruction and assessment to meet the student’s needs.
Similarities were also noted in the participant’s fifth ranked question. Survey data revealed that participants selected two questions as their fifth most important question. Again, the data revealed a multimodal frequency distribution. The first question below was selected by three participants as their fifth most important question out of the 15 questions. The second question below was selected by two participants as their fifth most important question out of the 15 questions.

1. When a large group of students do poorly on an assessment, what is your next step?
2. Describe how you have or would use student data in planning for instruction.

Survey data revealed that participants selected three questions as their sixth most important question. The data once again revealed a multimodal frequency distribution. The first question below was selected by three participants as their sixth most important question out of the 15 questions. The second and third question below was selected by two participants as their sixth most important question out of the 15 questions.

1. How would you communicate with parents and how frequently would you do so?
2. Describe how you promote high expectations during instruction and in your classroom.
3. Explain how the standards have or will guide your instruction and planning.

The questions chosen seventh of most importance by participants also revealed a trimodal frequency distribution. Each question below was selected by two participants as their seventh most important question out of the 15 questions.

1. Describe the routines and classroom procedures you would have in place to create an inclusive, safe, challenging, and positive classroom environment.
2. Describe how you have or would use student data in planning for instruction.
3. When a large group of students do poorly on an assessment, what is your next step?

Once again the data revealed that the eighth chosen question of most importance by participants shared a trimodal frequency distribution. Each question below was selected by two participants as their eighth most important question out of the 15 questions.

1. Give me an example of how you have or will accommodate a student’s learning needs in the classroom.

2. Explain how you would differentiate your instruction and assessment to meet the student’s needs.

3. When a large group of students do poorly on an assessment, what is your next step?

Survey data revealed a trimodal frequency distribution as participants selected three questions as their ninth most important question as indicated by participants who ranked it number nine when interviewing for effective teachers in order of importance. Each question below was selected by two participants as their ninth most important question out of the 15 questions.

1. Describe a formal and informal assessment you have implemented.

2. Give one example of a lesson you thought did not go well and how you knew it was not successful.

3. Explain how the standards have or will guide your instruction and planning.

The data again displayed a multimodal frequency distribution for the tenth most important question. The first question below was selected by three participants as their tenth most important question out of the 15 questions. The second question below was selected by two participants as their tenth most important question out of the 15 questions.
1. Give an example of a time you had difficulty with a student’s behavior and how you addressed it.

2. Describe the routines and classroom procedures you would have in place to create an inclusive, safe, challenging, and positive classroom environment.

Survey data revealed trimodal frequency distribution when participants selected three questions as their eleventh most important question. Each question below was selected by two participants as their eleventh most important question out of the 15 questions.

1. Give an example of a lesson that you thought went well and how you knew it was a success.

2. Describe a formal and informal assessment you have implemented.

3. How would you communicate with parents and how frequently would you do so?

The data on the twelfth most selected question also revealed bimodal frequency distribution. Each question below was selected by two participants as their twelfth most important question out of the 15 questions.

1. Give one example of a lesson that you thought did not go well and how you knew it was not successful.

2. Explain how the standards have or will guide your instruction and planning.

The question chosen as the thirteenth most important revealed a multimodal frequency distribution. The first question below was selected by three participants as their thirteenth most important question out of the 15 questions. The second question below was selected by two participants as their thirteenth most important question out of the 15 questions.

1. Give an example of how you would use technology in a lesson.
2. Describe the classroom management system that you would use or presently have in your classroom.

Survey data revealed another bimodal frequency distribution when participants selected two questions as their fourteenth most important question as indicated by participants who ranked it number fourteen when interviewing for effective teachers in order of importance. Each question below was selected by two participants as their fourteenth most important question out of the 15 questions.

1. Describe how you would set up your classroom or a classroom you have taught in.
2. Give an example of how you would use technology in a lesson.

Finally, data on the fifteenth ranked question revealed a multimodal frequency distribution as well. The first question below was selected by five participants as their fifteenth most important question out of the 15 questions. The second question below was selected by two participants as their fifteenth most important question out of the 15 questions.

1. Describe how you would set up your classroom or a classroom you have taught in.
2. Give an example of how you would use technology in a lesson.

The overall data revealed a plethora of multimodal frequency distributions, therefore not one question was found to be of most importance by all participants. Table 8 provides additional questions that principals in this study asked of a candidate during the interview process. The questions provide a broad span of individual beliefs that may relate to the culture of the district the candidate is interviewing with for the open position.
Table 8: Additional Questions Principals asked during the interview process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional Questions asked during the interview process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>How comfortable (on a scale from 1 – 10) are you in discussing race and culture in your classroom and why did you give yourself that rating?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>We ask a question about a scenario regarding racial bias.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Are there any questions that we should have asked you, but didn’t?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How do you manage your own professional learning and continue to grow as an educator?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A student yells, “That’s gay,” in front of the entire class. How do you handle it?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>We ask about how they support LGBTQ students.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Describe how you form and maintain positive relationships with your colleagues, parents, and most importantly students.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How do you instill a love of ------(whatever content they are interviewing for)?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>We ask about a previous mistake they have made in the classroom and how they corrected it.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Phone Open Ended Questions**

Open-ended responses were coded using thematic analysis. Initial analysis yielded several reoccurring themes. Finalized themes represented a consistent pattern in responses across participants. These patterns were enumerated in order to aide in the interpretation of the findings. Of the most prevalent themes, participants’ discourse was further analyzed to offer context to principals’ perceptions of the hiring process. Finally, in determining themes, the researcher recognized limitations in the sample size, which complicated the generalizability of the findings. Thus, the researcher presented these themes acknowledging that they represent a limited, albeit important, snapshot of the hiring process in Pennsylvania. In analyzing principals’ suggestions for hiring the most effective teachers, results indicated an overwhelming need for more years of experience in selecting the most qualified teacher candidate.
Phone Interview One

Researcher: What is the most impactful part of the interview process as an indicator of an effective teacher?

Principal 1: Ideally having teachers do a demo lesson with real students is very telling and we try to structure that whenever possible. Unfortunately there are times when time is of the essence and we have to hire someone and we don't have the luxury of having that piece of the puzzle but we often times will recruit people who we have had as longterm subs, so we've had an opportunity to see them in the classroom when they're ready to offer a contract with some, we really need to have that opportunity to see them interact with kids.

Researcher: Okay, perfect. Besides the interview questions what do you think is the most crucial part of the interview process besides just the question. So it could be anything from when you start to get the resumes to the end.

Principal 1: I mean, I think the teacher's demeanor and their ability to be articulate, to express some passion for what they do, love of kids, in addition to the expertise in the content areas and pedagogy, what I really want to see is somebody who lights up when they talk about teaching kids and that's a little less tangible but it's very important.

Researcher: Right. Definitely. So do you think your current interview process has resulted in hiring the most effective teachers for your district?

Principal 1: Yes. I mean I feel like we have been working to improve our process over the last couple of years. We have an administrative team at the elementary level. We have seven elementary schools and for time, several years back, the process was a little more disjointed and we did not work as much as a team, but we really try to, as a team, have initial screening interviews with school of candidates so that we all have an opportunity to vet the first round of candidates and then as we go further down the process, we're looking for specific people to fill specific roles in our building that would be a good fit and along that way we bring in other, other members of our staff, we do the demo lessons and I include other teachers in those demo lessons as well to observe. I feel like that's been a really important part of the process and I feel like we have made some very good hires.

Researcher: Okay, perfect. Then if possible, what would you change in your hiring process if you had to change something and why? I know you said you've been improving yours.

Principal 1: I think it's sometimes it is difficult to quantify cultural fit and we as a district have been trying to attract a more diverse pool of candidates and it's difficult because we get a lot of candidates that have similar backgrounds and as long as we
continue to recruit candidates like that or to attract candidates like that, we're not
going to have the breadth of diversity that we would really like to have. I'm not
sure how to change that. I think that's a bigger issue about just the way that school
districts are kind of profiled and that certain, I think there are certain candidates
that don't submit applications to us because they think of us as a certain type of
district and, and these are assumptions I'm making. I don't know. I mean I've been
doing it for a long time, but I feel like we want to bring in people of color or
people with some diversity, but we just don't see to attract those candidates and
I'm not entirely sure how to remedy that.

Researcher: I understand that as well. This question, and you might've answered this, but in
case you want to think of something different, it says, what aspects of the
interview process do you think is the most predictive in hiring an effective
teacher? And so I have listed here lesson demonstration, portfolio, years of
experience or the interview questions.

Researcher: So of those four which do you?

Principal 1: I would say the lesson demo.

Principal 1: So every step of the process is important and you look for different things at each
stage of the process and I think the hard part is, as I said, sometimes quantifying
that those intangible qualities are hard. You can look for specific components of
it, of a question. The answer that you're looking for to see if they understand what
differentiated instruction means, for example, or they understand how to
implement guided reading or whatever it is that you're asking and they can tell
you technically what those things are. But you also look for more. You look for
those intangible qualities that's as I said before, what kind of a fit will they be for
our district, for our building? What kind of energy and enthusiasm do they bring
to the table? What's their level of cultural sensitivity?

Principal 1: There's a lot of those kinds of questions and I think in years past we may be, and I
think because there was such an abundance of teacher candidates several years
back, that we could be very, maybe too discriminating in the first round in terms
of screening out people that had below say a 3.9 in their undergrad and what have
you. Or that they had to have a master's degree and that's not necessarily going to
give you the best candidate.

Researcher: Right.

Principal 1: You can have that somebody who maybe was a fair to middle end student in
college, but is just dynamite in the classroom and so how to filter those initial
screening process to get those candidates is kind of a challenge and so I tried to
cast a wider net and really kind of dig into the resumes and the cover letters to see
if you can hear the voice of that teacher and obviously experience counts for a lot.
But then there's also something to be said for having someone who is fresh out of
school and although we typically would prefer to give someone fresh out of school, a long term sub position if we think they have potential, because again, it's such an investment to hire a teacher with contracts. You really want to have an opportunity to kind of give them that real longterm audition and that process has been very helpful for us.

Researcher: Right, right. Well that sounds wonderful. Now, have you worked in other districts that have utilized a different hiring process than what you're currently using, or have you always worked at Mount Lebanon?

Principal 1: I've worked in Mount Lebanon for 15 years and prior to that I worked in an approved private school. So different process altogether.

**Phone Interview Two**

Researcher: So the first question is: what is the most impactful part of the interview process as an indicator of an effective teacher?

Principal 2: For me, it's when teachers do demonstration lessons with age appropriate students, and then, that they're provided with a learning objective. So that way, the teacher understands.

Principal 2: What they're teaching. They know they have five students, and I think that's the most authentic part of the interview process.

Researcher: Some of these questions are a little bit the same, number two: besides the interview questions, what else is the most critical part of the interview process?

Principal 2: I think trying to decipher a candidate's disposition, and trying to figure out, I think, some of the salient answers throughout the interview processes. Is this person conducive to teaching? Can they make relationships with students, teachers, colleagues, and parents? And then, ultimately, is this a person that I can see myself working with? Some of the, not just the instructional knowledge that the candidate brings, but, really, can you decipher whether they actually have a true disposition to teach or not.

Researcher:Okay, perfect. Number three: do you think that your current interview process has resulted in hiring the most effective teachers for your district?

Principal 2: I'm going to say yes, because we have an unbiased towards disposition that we elicit from teacher interview process. It's complex. It's not just a 30 minute interview and then we make a recommendation. It's a 45 minute discussion.
There's multiple administrators involved. We interview together as an elementary team. We decide on the candidates together because the teacher might be in multiple buildings. And then we do demonstration lessons. Then they actually get interviewed again by our superintendent, and then finally the superintendent and the process as well. So there's multiple layers, and at the end of the day, you're looking for good people to, it's the knowledge component and disposition to be part of our district, part of our team, and then finally, do they fit in the overall picture of the district, the kind of climate, culture that was established?

Researcher: Okay, perfect. Number four: if possible, what would you change in your hiring process? If there is anything, and why?

Principal 2: I think what I would like to see is a change in some of the questions that we use. Just to see the quality of candidates coming through, not just on a 30 minute interview, but, if there's a way to do some surveys or some pre-interview type screenings where you can kind of gauge, based on the answers to pre-screening, whether it's a potential candidate or not. So, a way of going through and eliminating some people that automatically aren't going to be good fits.

Researcher: I'm going to give you four choices, for the interview process which do you think is the most predictive in hiring an effective teacher? Would you say that lesson demonstration, portfolio, years of experience, or just the interview questions?

Principal 2: For me it's the lesson, the...

Researcher: Demonstration.

Principal 2: Thank you. Yeah, there we go, the demonstration.

Researcher: Okay. And then the last question: have you worked in other districts that utilize, maybe, a different hiring process, and if so, what aspects do you think would make it, make for choosing an effective teachers or ineffective teachers?

Principal 2: I've been in other districts in Pennsylvania where there was no structured interview process, and I have to say that it greatly impacted my ability to make recommendations. And I know I didn't have as much confidence in my recommendation, so when the process is left to one individual, maybe just a select group, I think that increases your chances of hiring an ineffective teacher. I think I have group processes, structured approach to it with specific types of questioning, and then specific demonstration lessons offers you the greatest chance of hiring the most effective teachers.
The transcribed interviews used the REV translation service and coded using emerging themes as the data was analyzed. The codes were collapsed and formed into categories, which were based on similarities. As a final analysis, the researcher examined the principals’ responses and concluded that three themes emerged, which included the demonstration lesson, demeanor, and a fit of the candidate into the school district culture.

Both participants agreed that the demonstration lesson was found to be of most importance. The administrators indicated they would invite the most promising candidates to teach a demonstration lesson to students. With limited research on the demonstration lesson, it would behoove administrators to consider the qualities and characteristics of effective teachers when interviewing for an open position. Additionally, the principals stated that it is difficult to see professionalism during an interview. The principal needed to make inferences from the candidate’s answers to get a feeling that related to their personal demeanor in reference to professionalism. Likewise, the theme of having a gut feeling emerged from the categories. The principals cited this “gut feeling” is often used for their final decision. In addition, principals stated that they were looking for a fit for the personality and culture of the building. Lastly, the principals wanted to be sure the candidate they selected would contribute to the school and the community.
Chapter 5

Discussion of the Findings

The purpose of this study was to analyze the researched-based questions used during the hiring process. Effective schools are able to attract and hire excellent teachers, which is one of the most important factors found to facilitate student learning (Loeb, Kalogrides, & Beteille, 2011). School administrators can control the quality of the teaching staff at their school by hiring high-quality teachers (Loeb et al, 2011). Excellent teachers are capable of inspiring significantly greater learning gains in their students (Sawchuk, 2011). Although factors such as family background and economic situations continue to impact student achievement, teacher quality is the most important factor affecting student achievement (Sawchuk, 2011). From a theoretical perspective, both research and common sense indicate that there should be consistency between how administrators hire and evaluate teachers. Through identifying the gap between hiring criteria and a school administrator’s understanding of how to screen for qualified teacher candidates using common research-based questions, this study may provide recommendations for improving the screening process to attract candidates with qualities that correlate to effectiveness in the classroom.

This study contributes to the existing research and makes a theoretical contribution to studies using a cognitive frame to understand the hiring process used by the top 100 elementary schools in Pennsylvania. Although the response rate was low, the researcher believes that the data collected raises valid questions about the hiring of effective teachers and hopes that the data may help to inform hiring practices and policies throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. At present, there is very little data in the teacher quality research that helps to explain what
accounts for differences in administrators’ ideas of teacher quality (Ingle, K., Rutledge, S., & Bishop, J. 2011).

**Contributions to the Field of Educational Leadership**

Darling-Hammond (2010) reiterated and agreed with policymakers, parents, and principals, placing effective and highly qualified teachers in all classrooms is the key to improving public education. Her research investigated the practical set of standards and assessments that are needed for teachers to be well prepared and equipped to teach. The research questions explored include: 1) How to measure teacher effectiveness? and 2) How do administrators decipher the ways in which assessments of teachers can both reflect and predict a teachers’ success with children? One important finding from her study is that teachers are the fulcrum determining whether any school initiative tips toward success or failure. As educational standards rise and the diversity of the student body increases, the level of highly skilled teachers becomes even more important.

The researcher’s study examined the coherence or lack of coherence between the criteria for identifying effective teachers and the criteria for interviewing perspective candidates. For this research principals from the top 100 school districts in Pennsylvania were surveyed to shed light on their hiring process and criteria. Specifically, their sense of the connection between the process of evaluating candidates and the qualities of effective instruction as identified.

An underlying purpose of this study is to aid school districts in their efforts to hire the most effective and qualified teachers. Absent from the field of research on the screening process for hiring effective teachers is the most effectively used criteria for screening teacher candidates. Also present in previous research are explicit references to criterial criteria by which those
teachers will subsequently be evaluated on. In sum, this study sought to find the most effective processes in the hiring of the most successful teachers.

**Recommendations and Implications for Educational Leadership**

This research study offers interesting insight into the perceptions of principals regarding the hiring process of effective teachers. With the educational arena in constant search of ways to attract and retain quality teachers, the first step is to improve the efforts to find and keep teachers through the hiring process using research-based interview questions and procedures. Based on the existing research and the results of this study, it is recommended that school districts examine the teacher interviewing process for fidelity in order to establish a solid process that will ensure the hiring of effective teachers.

Based on the review of the research, literature, and results of this study, the following conclusions and implications for administrators and school districts can be deduced:

1. Administrators need to develop a procedure for evaluating the credentials that is consistent and reduces the level of uncertainty.
2. Administrators need to create a team to facilitate the hiring and interview process to reduce bias and to have a variety of input into selecting the most qualified candidate.
3. Administrators and their team need to develop a list of characteristics wanted in an effective teacher before the selection process begins.
4. Administrators need to interview their own staff for their buildings and conduct their own screening.
5. Administrators need to start the selection process early in the hiring timeframe when the size of potential candidates is large.
Limitations

This study only focused on the top 100 elementary public schools in the state of Pennsylvania. Charter, private, cyber, and parochial schools were not included in this study. To include these non-traditional schools in this study, the results may have produced significantly different results due to their organizational structures, which include teacher salaries and limited resources. However, a growing body of research (Bickel & Iriti, 2009) indicates the innovation of hiring practices from the non-traditional schools should cause administration to analyze their current procedures, which include “at-will employees” (p. 5), evaluation linked to performance, and performance interviewing.

Noted in the methods section and alluded throughout the discussion section, findings are further complicated by the limited sampling frame (a Southwestern area of Pennsylvania) and a small sampling rate (10%). Although the researcher cannot claim the themes presented in this study sufficiently represent all school districts, they provide a unique glimpse into the hiring process. Moreover, the reported findings of this research offer a context to a topic often presented in sterile quantified detail. Additionally, public school districts are free to create their own screening and interviewing processes, and therefore many districts may not be aware of the current research on the qualities of effective teachers and how to select candidates who possess these characteristics.

Furthermore, limitations of this study involve the usual reliability issues with survey research, as well as the limitation of the generalizability to Pennsylvania elementary schools. A larger pool that is more balanced among demographic variables of school size and school type may provide a stronger ground for generalizations and recommendations. The results of this study may not be generalizable to all public school districts in the state of Pennsylvania due to
the amount of teacher hiring within each public school district and the hiring processes used within each district.

**Implications for Leadership Agenda and Growth**

The pressure on principals and teachers to produce student achievement scores is not likely to dissipate any time soon. Louis, K., Leithwood, K., Wahlstrom, K., and Anderson, S. (2010) suggest that principals have the capacity to influence student outcomes and the actions of others within schools. Evaluating and hiring teachers are integral to establishing positive school environments conducive to learning. My findings underscore the complexity of the hiring process, the importance of contextualizing decisions with the district and the policy context in which they occur and the important role of the principal therein.

While there is no conclusive evidence about what attributes school districts should screen for, the findings highlight the importance of continuing to collect data on and monitor the effects of changes in the hiring practices. Effective teaching, however, has not been settled among the experts as to what is involved and would constitute as successful. Thus, monitoring and adjusting the hiring process over time can go beyond improving the overall teacher and student outcomes, and begin to raise student achievement for all students. In summary, the practices and thought processes that effective teachers consider when organizing their classrooms, preparing and implementing their lessons, and monitoring progress are crucial to student success. “Merging teacher selection practices and research regarding qualities of effective teachers can help to ensure that effective teachers are hired” (Grove, 2009). Classroom size, student attendance, and curriculum are important factors that affect student achievement, but these factors cannot compare to the impact of an effective teachers’ influence on student performance.
The small sample size means that the results of this research may not be generalizable to highly effective teachers in the general populations, however, the findings can be useful as a foundation for continued research. The analysis used to determine the sample size for this sample size of N=100 participants, but the sample for this study was N=10. A small simple size for hypothesis could create type II errors that create false positives or negatives. This study was conducted over an eight-month period, with several attempts to gain more responses without avail. The study was closed and ended with a small response rate. The email addresses of possible participants who had moved to another district or changed careers could have increased the scope of participants.

Administrators must hire effective teachers for their classrooms the first time for if ineffective teachers can lead to increased dropout rates, achievement gaps, and juvenile delinquencies (Shultz, 2014). Research using a large sample size is needed to generalize the results and theoretically substantiate the research. However, the findings provide administrators with valuable questions to use during their hiring of effective teachers. The findings in this study should only be used to identify potential effective candidates and not as an exclusionary tool. Administrators should not exclude candidates based solely on the findings of this study, as the findings are not fully generalizable to all settings. The researcher concludes that variant pages of documents, ranging from the Danielson teacher evaluation tool to the common application created in 1996, to differing expectations during the various decades, in which they were implemented, do not address the current research in the field of identifying the most effective teacher candidate.
Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of this study suggest that there is not one set of researched-based questions that can lead to hiring an effective teacher. It would be advantageous for administrators to understand the dynamics of asking the questions that would lead to hiring the most effective teacher. Likewise, administrators should consider combining this with a commercially designed hiring tools to select the teacher candidate to best fit the culture of a school district. This study adds to the body of literature that addresses the characteristics of an effective teachers and the influence that they have on student achievement. Districts may want to provide training for administrators on the characteristics of effective teachers. Moreover, in the literature review, many studies found that principals hire on a “gut feeling” or for the “right fit” for their schools. When administrators understand the impact of effective teachers on the achievement of students, the training may help screen applicants more effectively and yield more positive results.

Most administrators screen applicants for their educational background, certification, and experience. National Board Certification is also recognized, but none of the administrators mentioned that it is an important factor when screening teacher candidates. All of the administrators surveyed stated that they wanted to read letters from previous supervisors and put stock into the letters that revealed the ability of the teacher to instruct effectively and connect with students. By utilizing the qualities of effective teachers throughout the screening and interviewing process, decisions will result in the hiring of a candidate who has the potential to be an effective teacher.

One actionable step that I can implement is to submit a proposal for a state or local conference, such as National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) conference or the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) conference, to present
my findings for hiring the most effective teachers. After presenting my data, I would like to hold a roundtable discussion with administrators in attendance. This discussion would allow us to gain more insight into the processes that principals use to select the most effective teachers for their districts. Using this type of forum to collaborate with other principals from local, state, or national districts, will provide valuable insight into the hiring processes used across districts. This collaboration among administrators could add to the depth of research that is already available. The roundtable discussion could help in developing a model that can be utilized in the interview process of all districts who attend. As leaders in the community, this will allow us to opportunity to network and share our resources and create partnerships to enhance our current interview protocols. Finally, this type of discussion will be a powerful mechanism for engaging administrators with their own learning and development of the most effective hiring protocols.

**Conclusion**

While several attributes have been examined to describe an effective teacher, high expectations, student behavior, and differentiating instruction remain the top sought out characteristics of an effective and outstanding teacher. The role of the teacher in the teaching-learning context is still sacrosanct. Haertel (2013) supports this thought when he claimed that teachers matter enormously.

In addition, researchers, policymakers, and practitioners are looking at several policies and practices that have the potential to improve student outcomes, especially in schools where students are struggling academically. Of these various reforms, teachers and teaching practices are consistently identified as areas that can significantly help improve student outcomes. Consequently, making decisions regarding which teachers should be hired is an important step on the road to improving student achievement. This study provides a window into the hiring
process of the top 100 elementary schools in Pennsylvania and one school district, Brentwood Borough School District in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Using the findings and recommendations from this research and study, educational leaders can use the sources for guidance when conducting the most important task under their purview. While there is no conclusive evidence about what attributes a district should screen prospective teachers for, these findings highlight the importance of continuing to collect data and monitor the effects of changes in hiring policies and practices. Thus, monitoring the hiring process over time can go beyond improving the overall teacher effectiveness and student achievement, and begin to target the schools and students that need the most support. The recent research has shown that the current teacher hiring process is not successful in identifying the most effective teachers. The recommendations suggest that reframing the interview process and collecting data on the process will find and retain more effective teachers. Furthermore, the revised interview questions that will be used in the hiring process at Brentwood Borough School District should be tracked and data collected on their effectiveness in hiring the most qualified teacher from the pool of applicants received.
References


Washington, DC: Heritage Foundation.


*Principal* (January/February 2008, p. 44-47).


http://www2.learningpt.org/catalog/item.asp?SessionID=81254479&productID=3


Haberman Foundation (2007). On-line interview with Dr. Martin Haberman, professor of Education at the University of Wisconsin and Milwaukee.

[http://www.habermanfoundation.org](http://www.habermanfoundation.org)


Pennsylvania Act 107 of 1996 (24 P.S. 12-1204.1)


STANDARD APPLICATION
For Teaching Positions in Pennsylvania Public Schools

(PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE)

POSITION(S) DESIRE

NAME

Last               First               Middle   Professional Personnel ID

PRESENT ADDRESS

Street

City               State               (Area Code) Telephone

Zip Code

PERMANENT ADDRESS

Street

City               State               (Area Code) Telephone

Zip Code

E-MAIL ADDRESS (IF AVAILABLE)

LIST, IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE, THE GRADES, SUBJECTS AND/OR POSITIONS FOR WHICH YOU ARE APPLYING:

1. ___________________________  2. ___________________________  3. ___________________________

CERTIFICATION

(List all areas in which you hold valid Pennsylvania and/or out-of-state teaching certificates. Note: Applicants holding a certificate from another state must obtain a Pennsylvania Certificate in order to teach in Pennsylvania Public Schools.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA OF CERTIFICATION</th>
<th>ISSUING STATE</th>
<th>DATE ISSUED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</table>

Have you acquired tenure in Pennsylvania?

If yes, in what school district?

Date available for employment

If you are not employed full time, are you interested in being placed on our Substitute List?

Long-term [☐] Yes [☐] No

Short-term [☐] Yes [☐] No
## Educational Background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School or Institution and Location</th>
<th>Major/Minor</th>
<th>Degrees or Credits Earned</th>
<th>Grade Point Average (GPA)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>College/University</td>
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<tr>
<td>College/University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate Study</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate Study</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Experience

(Present or Most Recent First)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Name of Employer and Address</th>
<th>Your Title</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From</td>
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<tr>
<td>To</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Work Performed: ____________________________
Reason for Leaving: ________________________

(Area Code) Telephone: ____________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Name of Employer and Address</th>
<th>Your Title</th>
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Work Performed: ____________________________
Reason for Leaving: ________________________

(Area Code) Telephone: ____________________

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<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Name of Employer and Address</th>
<th>Your Title</th>
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Work Performed: ____________________________
Reason for Leaving: ________________________

(Area Code) Telephone: ____________________

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<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Name of Employer and Address</th>
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<td>To</td>
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</table>

Work Performed: ____________________________
Reason for Leaving: ________________________

(Area Code) Telephone: ____________________

Please list activities that you are qualified to supervise or coach:

______________________________
If you have not been previously employed in a teaching position, please complete the following:

**STUDENT OR PRACTICE TEACHING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE OR SUBJECT TAUGHT</th>
<th>NAME AND ADDRESS OF SCHOOL</th>
<th>1. COLLEGE SUPERVISOR</th>
<th>2. COOPERATING TEACHER</th>
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</table>

**Student Teaching References:**
Please attach photocopies of letters of reference and/or evaluations from college/university student teacher supervisor and cooperating teacher(s).

**REFERENCES**

References should include superintendents, principals or professors who have first-hand knowledge of your professional competence and your personal qualifications. Experienced teachers should include the superintendent and principal of the two most recent schools in which employed. If any person(s) listed should not be contacted for reference at the present time, indicate in the left-hand margin the date contact(s) may be made.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>POSITION</th>
<th>ADDRESS</th>
<th>TELEPHONE</th>
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**OTHER QUALIFICATIONS**

Summarize special job-related skills and qualifications acquired from employment or other experiences (including U.S. military service) and/or state any additional information you feel may be helpful in considering your application, i.e. honors, awards, activities, technology skills or professional development activities.
GENERAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

You must give complete answers to all questions. If you answer "Yes" to any question, you must list all offenses, and for each conviction provide date of conviction and disposition, regardless of the date or location of occurrence. Conviction of a criminal offense is not a bar to employment in all cases. Each case is considered on its merits. Your answers will be verified with appropriate police records.

Criminal Offense includes felonies, misdemeanors, summary offenses and convictions resulting from a plea of "nolo contendere" (no contest).

Conviction is an adjudication of guilt and includes determinations before a court, a district justice or a magistrate, which results in a fine, sentence or probation.

You may omit: minor traffic violations, offenses committed before your 18th birthday which were adjudicated in juvenile court or under a Youth Offender Law, and any convictions which have been expunged by a court or for which you successfully completed an Accelerated Rehabilitative Disposition program.

Were you ever convicted of a criminal offense? □ Yes □ No
Are you currently under charges for a criminal offense? □ Yes □ No
Have you ever forfeited bond or collateral in connection with a criminal offense? □ Yes □ No
Within the last ten years, have you been fired from any job for any reason? □ Yes □ No
Within the last ten years, have you quit a job after being notified that you would be fired? □ Yes □ No
Have you ever been professionally disciplined in any state? □ Yes □ No

Professional disciplined means the revocation, revocation or suspension of your teaching certification or having received a letter of reprimand from an agency, board or commission of state government, such as the Pennsylvania Professional Standards and Practices Commission.

Are you subject to any visa or immigration status, which would prevent lawful employment? □ Yes □ No

Note: If you answered "Yes" to any of the above questions, please provide a detailed explanation on a separate sheet of paper, including dates, and attach it to this application. Please print and sign your name on the sheet, and include your social security number.
ACT 34 Clearance (PA State Police Criminal Background Check)
Each applicant must submit with his/her employment application a copy of a Criminal History Record from the Pennsylvania State Police. Prospective employees must submit ORIGINAL report, which may not be more than one (1) year old.

===============================================

ACT 114 (Federal Criminal History Record)
Each applicant must submit with his/her employment application a copy of a Federal Criminal Record from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Prospective employees must submit ORIGINAL report, which may not be more than one (1) year old.

===============================================

ACT 151 Clearance (PA Child Abuse History Clearance)
Each candidate must submit with his/her employment application a copy of an official clearance from the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare. Prospective employees must submit ORIGINAL report, which may not be more than one (1) year old.

===============================================

ESSAY
Please write an essay as described on page six. For your convenience, you may attach a sheet; however, your essay may not exceed one page. At the bottom of the attachment, please print and sign your name.

===============================================

CERTIFICATION AND RELEASE AUTHORIZATION

I certify that all of the statements made by me are true, complete and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief, and are made in good faith. I further certify that I am the sole author of the essay. I understand that any misrepresentation of information shall be sufficient cause for: (1) rejecting my candidacy, (2) withdrawing of any offer of employment, or (3) terminating my employment.

I hereby authorize any and all of my previous employers and/or supervisors to release any and all of my personnel records, and to respond fully and completely to all questions that officials of (school district) may ask regarding my prior work history and performance. I will hold such previous employers and/or supervisors harmless of any and all claims that I might otherwise have against them with regard to statements made to this school district. I further authorize these officials to investigate my background, now or in the future, to verify the information provided and release from liability all persons and/or entities supplying information regarding my background. However, I do not authorize the production of medical records or other information, which would tend to actually identify a disability nor do I authorize inquiries which would include information related to any medical condition or medical history. Further, I do not waive any rights which I may have under state or federal law related to my right to challenge the disclosure of unlawful or inaccurate information, whether by the school district or by entities or persons providing such information to the school district, including any and all claims concerning allegations of employment discrimination because of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, ancestry, age or disability.

[Signature]
Signature of Candidate (in ink)
[Must be original]

[Date]

Pennsylvania school districts shall not discriminate in their educational programs, activities or employment practices based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion, ancestry or any other legally protected classification. This policy is in accordance with state and federal laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Sections 501 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act. Information relative to special accommodation, grievances procedures, and the designated responsible official for compliance with Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504 may be obtained by contacting the school district.
ESSAY

We are interested in your ability to organize and express thoughts on a specific topic in a succinct manner. Please select one of the following topics and write an essay in the space provided on this page.

1. The Most Important Qualities of an Outstanding Educator.
2. My Philosophy of Student Discipline.
3. The Importance of Continuing Professional Development and How I Plan to Incorporate It Throughout My Career.
4. Essential Elements of Instruction, Administration or Area of Certification.
5. How Information Technology (i.e., computers, Internet) Can Be Integrated into the Instructional Process and Curriculum.

Signature __________________________ Name __________________________

Note to applicants: This application can be downloaded from the Department of Education's home page which is accessible at: http://www.state.pa.us.

This application was developed, in accordance with Section 1206.1 of Act 107 of 1994, by the Pennsylvania Department of Education in consultation with organizations representing school administrators, including personnel administrators, teachers and school boards. Questions should be referred to PDE School Services Office at Voice Telephone (717) 787-3660, TTY Telephone TTY (717) 787-6665 or FAX (717) 787-6902. If you need accommodation in completing this application, including alternate format, please contact the school district.
Dear Elementary Principal,

I am sending this invitation to participate in a research study. I am a doctoral candidate in the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership program at Duquesne University. The focus of my research is identifying the top interview questions that will help to select the most effective teachers from the candidates that apply for an open position.

You are invited to participate in an online survey that will ask you to rank research based interview questions and ask for volunteers for a follow up phone interview. The platform used for the survey—SURVEY MONKEY—ensures that your responses will be completely anonymous. You may choose to participate in only the survey by checking no to the interview in the survey.

As stated in the informed consent statement that is located at the beginning of the response form located on SurveyMonkey, you are under no obligation to participate in this study and are free to withdraw consent to participate. You may refuse to participate or refuse to complete and share your response at any time prior to submitting your completed survey. I will not know who participated and who did not, as your name, email, or IP address will not be connected to your response. Furthermore, if you participate in the phone interview, you will not be identified by your voice.

The survey will collect some general demographic information along with asking you to rank questions and to add any additional questions you may use. It will take you approximately 15 minutes to complete.

If you have any questions related to the research or the response form, please contact me. Kindly complete the survey by July 31, 2019. If you choose to participate in the phone interview, it will be completed within the following weeks. Your input in this initiative is extremely valuable. Thank you in advance for helping to increase our understanding of the valuable of selecting the most effective teachers.

Sincerely,
Barbara Pagan
APPENDIX C
Survey Form for Participants

Part I: Demographic Information

1. What is your job title?
   □ Elementary Principal
   □ Elementary Assistant Principal

2. What grade levels do you currently have in your building? Check all that apply.
   □ K □ 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6

3. How many years have you been in your current position?
   □ 1-5
   □ 6-10
   □ 11-20
   □ 21-29
   □ 30+

4. How many years have you been a principal?
   □ 1-5
   □ 6-10
   □ 11-20
   □ 21-29
   □ 30+

5. How many years have you been in education?
   □ 1-5
   □ 6-10
   □ 11-20
   □ 21-29
   □ 30+

6. Which degrees/certifications have you earned or are currently working towards?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Certification</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Year Obtained/Expected Date of Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood</td>
<td>B.A./B.S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M.S./M.Ed.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D. Ed./PHD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>B.A./B.S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M.S./M.Ed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D. Ed./PHD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>B.A./B.S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Are you willing to participate in a follow up phone interview to discuss your interview process? The interview will be approximately 10 minutes.

☐ Yes
☐ No

Part II: Ranking of 15 Interview Questions from one being the most important to fifteen the least.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Describe how you would set up your classroom or a classroom you have taught in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Describe the routines and classroom procedures you would have in place to create an inclusive, safe, challenging, and positive classroom environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Describe the classroom management system that you would use or presently have in your classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Give an example of a time you had difficulty with a student’s behavior and how you addressed it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Give one example of a lesson that you thought went well and how you knew it was a success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Give one example of a lesson that you thought did not go well and how you knew it was not successful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Explain how you would differentiate your instruction and assessment to meet the students’ needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Give an example of how you would use technology in a lesson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe how you promote high expectations during instruction and in your classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe how you have or would use student data in planning for instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When a large group of students do poorly on an assessment, what is your next step?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe a formal and informal assessment you have implemented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you communicate with parents and how frequently would you do so?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain how the standards have or will guide your instruction and planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give me an example of how you have or will accommodate a student’s learning needs in the classroom.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional questions used during your interview process:

1. ____________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________
Elementary Principal Phone Interview Questions

1. What is the most impactful part of the interview process as an indicator of an effective teacher?

2. Besides the interview questions, what is the most critical part of the interview process?

3. Do you think that your current interview process has resulted in hiring the most effective teachers for your district?

4. If possible, what would you change in your hiring process? Why?

5. What aspect of the interview process do you think is the most predictive in the hiring of an effective teacher?
   a. Lesson Demonstration
   b. Portfolio
   c. Years of experience
   d. Interview questions

6. Have you worked in other districts that utilized a different hiring process? If so, what aspects do you think made it effective or ineffective?
APPENDIX E

DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

TITLE:
Analysis of the Hiring Process to Ensure that the Best Teacher Candidate is Chosen for a Small Southwestern Pennsylvania School District

INVESTIGATOR:
Mrs. Barbara Pagan, M.Ed., Doctoral Candidate, Department of Foundations and Leadership, Duquesne University,  paganb@duq.edu

ADVISOR:
Dr. Carol Parke, Ed. D. Department of Foundations and Leadership, Duquesne University, 412-396-4038, parke@duq.edu

SOURCE OF SUPPORT:
This study is being performed as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctoral degree in Department of Foundations and Leadership at Duquesne University.

STUDY OVERVIEW:
The purpose of this research is to determine which researched based questions would predict high levels of effective teachers, which includes a survey response and an open-ended component for additional responses. Participants will be invited to participate in a follow up phone interview. The follow up phone interview is not required to complete the survey. The follow up phone interview is separate from the survey. If you are willing to participate in a follow up phone interview it will be conducted by phone with the Rev transcription service, which is an online recording transcription service and will be completely confidential.

PURPOSE:
You are asked to participate in a research project that seeks to gain insight into the hiring processes that assist in selecting the most effective teacher for an open position. It is my hope that the information from the survey and phone interviews will contribute to a better hiring process in selecting candidates. I would appreciate your knowledge and experience in the process of hiring to help me become more effective in my practice.

In order to qualify for participation, you must be:
• An Elementary Principal from the top 100 school districts, as stated in the Best Schools in Pennsylvania report based on the 2017-2018 school year test scores.
• 18 Years of age or older

PARTICIPANT PROCEDURES:

If you provide your consent to participate, you will be giving consent to both the survey and the phone interview, even if you only choose to complete the survey and not the phone interview. You will be asked to complete an online survey that includes questions to rank in order of importance during the interview process. You will also be given an opportunity to add additional questions that you may use during the hiring process. You will complete the survey form once, and you will have two weeks to complete. The response form should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. You are not required to participate in the phone interview.

You will be invited to participate in a phone interview as a follow up to the survey. You may choose to participate in only the survey by checking no to question 7. If you choose to participate in the phone interview, I will be using Rev online voice transcribing services to record the conversation. You will remain anonymous in the transcription.

RISKS AND BENEFITS:

There are minimal risks associated with participating in this study, but no greater than those encountered in everyday life.

COMPENSATION:

There will be no compensation for participating in this study. Participation in this project will require no monetary cost to you.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Your participation in this study and any personal information that you provide will be kept confidential at all times and to every extent possible. Your name will never appear on any response form or research instrument. All written and electronic forms and study materials will be kept secure.

Your response(s) will only appear in statistical data summaries. Any study materials with personal identifying information will be maintained for three years after the completion of the research and then destroyed.

Your completed survey form will be received by the investigator without identifying data using Survey Monkey’s anonymous response format. Under this format responses are stripped of first name, last name, email address, and IP address, so that all submissions are completely anonymous.
RIGHT TO WITHDRAW:

You are under no obligation to participate in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any time prior to completing the response form. Since the completed response forms are received without identifying information it is not possible to retrieve your responses once they are submitted.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS:

A summary of the results of this study will be provided to you at no cost. You may request this summary by contacting the researcher and requesting it. The information provided to you will not be your individual responses, but rather a summary of what was discovered during the research project as a whole.

FUTURE USE OF DATA:

Any information collected that can identify you will not be used for future research studies, nor will it be provided to other researchers.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT:

I have read this informed consent form and understand what is being requested of me. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, for any reason without any consequences. Based on this, I certify I am willing to participate in this research project.

I understand that if I have any questions about my participation in this study, I may contact Dr. Carol Parke, Dissertation Chair at 412.396.6101. If I have any questions regarding my rights and protections as a subject in this study, I can contact Dr. David Delmonico, Chair of the Duquesne University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at 412.396.1886 or at irb@duq.edu.

This project has been approved/verified by Duquesne University’s Institutional Review Board.

Proceeding to the next page indicates your voluntary consent to participate in this study.
APPENDIX F

Demographic Data Analysis

What is your job title?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Principal</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Assistant Principal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What grade levels do you currently have in your building?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How many years have you been in your current position?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of Years</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - 5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 +</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How many years have you been a principal?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of Years</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – 5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 – 20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 – 29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 +</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How many years have you been in education?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of years</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – 5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 – 20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 – 29</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 +</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which degrees/certifications have you earned or are currently working towards?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degrees</th>
<th>B.A./B.S.</th>
<th>M.S./M.Ed.</th>
<th>D.ED./PHD</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>