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PERCEPTIONS OF HIGH ACHIEVING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS REGARDING
THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF TEACHING AND THEIR INTEREST IN
BECOMING TEACHERS

A Dissertation Submitted
to the Graduate College
Arkansas Tech University

in partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

in School Leadership

in the Center for Leadership and Learning
of the College of Education

December 2021

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Bachelor of Arts, University of South Carolina, 2010
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Dedication

To all of my students with eternal gratitude for allowing me to serve as your teacher. I see countless faces in my mind as I reminisce with gratitude. My educational worldview is forever shaped by your brilliance.

Acknowledgments

To all of my hardworking colleagues, near and far, who have fought with tireless resilience for educational equity. I have grown simply by being proximate to your lives. In every passionate conversation or proclamation about the future of education, I have become more emboldened to do better. Thank you.

Abstract

This study was designed to highlight the factors that contribute to high-achieving high school students not deciding to join the teaching profession. There is growing evidence to indicate that the teaching profession is comprised mostly of educators in their first five years in the profession and educators with more than 25 years of teaching experience. Increasing numbers of educators are leaving the profession within their first five years in a classroom. On the other end of the spectrum, as teachers with more than 25 years of experience ultimately retire, the question remains about the viability of the profession for younger generations. This study, and the accompanying research, pinpoint the student perceptual factors contributing to this trend. The research participants are high school juniors and seniors within the top 20% of their classes from one school district in Arkansas. The survey instrument is online and includes Likert-like scales which allow for qualitative and descriptive analysis. Areas for analysis in the survey are licensing and credential levels, induction and mentoring programs for entrants, professional development opportunities and participation, specialization, authority over decision-making, compensation levels, and prestige and occupational social standing.

Keywords: professionalization, teaching, perception, high school students

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background of the Problem

The professionalization of teaching has had a long-standing history in the discourse of education reform. Before delving into the recommendations and efforts made to professionalize teaching, it is necessary to examine the various explanations as to why teachers have not been ascribed full professional status and continue to be considered semi-professionals. In 1967, sociologist Amitai Etzioni coined the term, “semi-profession” to describe the predominately female occupations, such as teachers, social workers, and nurses. According to Etzioni (1967), the characteristics of these groups (e.g., low-level of group autonomy, hierarchical organization, and minimal formal schooling) starkly contrast those of the “elite” professions, such as doctors and lawyers (Etzioni, 1969). Many education sociologists associate the characteristics of semi-professions as the consequences of workplace feminization and the bureaucratization of the public school system (Tyack, 1974).

In the nineteenth century, the majority of teachers had only completed grammar school, with the exception of a minority of urban teachers who had achieved a high school degree. Therefore, education level became a distinguishing characteristic between female teachers and male administrators who had access to higher levels of formal schooling (Lortie, 1969; Tyack, 1974). Thus, in an era of industrialization and bureaucratic rationalization, school organizations would require a hierarchal form of occupational control (Tyack, 1974). The hierarchal “One Best System” of schooling as Tyack (1974) describes, requires subordinate occupants to “execute the behests of the supreme intelligence” (Tyack, 1974, p. 76), the supreme intelligence being

that of the privileged white male. In other words, to meet the demands of a growing society and secure the hierarchy of school bureaucracies, women became the ideal low-cost subordinate occupants for schools.

Although there has been significant advancement of women in the workplace, several researchers have adopted critical-feminist perspectives to examine how gender-power dynamics account for why teaching has not achieved the professional status experienced by the paradigm professions, such as law and medicine (Acker, 1994). While critical feminism plays a significant role in the literature on professionalization, this research will limit its examination of professionalization to a view through a sociological lens. Education sociologists examine the professional status of teaching as to how attributes of the profession compared with those of the paradigm professions.

It is important to note that the focus of this investigation was concerned with *professionalization*, which sociologists describe as the structural criteria and processes that distinguish an occupation from a profession. This term is not to be confused with *professionalism*, which sociologists identify as the attitudes or psychological attributes of professionals (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2011). Since the turn of the 20th century, education reformers have determined the professionalization of teaching through, “reasoning by analogy” (Rowan, 1994, p. 5). That is, education sociologists commonly determine the degree of professionalization of teaching by comparing attributes of the occupation to those of paradigmatic professions, such as doctors and lawyers. Within this lens, sociologist Brian Rowan (1994) reviews the professionalization of teaching by comparing and analyzing the work of teachers to the work conducted in other occupations.

To measure and compare the complexity of teachers' work with those of other occupations, Rowan (1994) analyzed findings from the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* (DOT), a data source that utilizes various metrics to assess the "substantive complexity" in a line of work (Rowan, 1994, p. 5). Through his DOT analysis, Rowan (1994) found that teaching ranks lower in professional status than other occupations. He largely attributes this to the lack of formal technical language that guides practice, as well as the low levels of formal pre-service training required for certification (Rowan, 1994). Rowan (1994) suggests that the professionalization and improvement of the social standing of teaching heavily relies on increasing the complexity of teachers' work. To increase the complexity of teachers' work, Rowan (1994) recommends a restructuring of the traditional divisions of labor in schools by increasing the functions and roles of teachers, as well as the rigor in training and teacher education.

Recommendations to professionalize teaching, similar to Rowan's (1994), are guided by the assumption that professionalization will increase job satisfaction, teacher efficacy, and the retention of highly effective teachers, thus resulting in the improvement of teaching practices and subsequent increase in student achievement (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2011; Rowan, 1994). These assumptions underlying the professionalization of teaching, however, are not immune to criticism from some scholars in the education research community. Opponents of professionalization are unconvinced that professionalization of teaching can be achieved due to skepticism that teaching and pedagogy can ever truly be guided by a scientific rationale (Rowan, 1994). Others argue that the use of broad occupational titles lends itself to the negative consequences of reasoning by analogy (Rowan, 1994). For example, Robert Welker (1991) argues that

comparing teaching to the paradigm professions severely distorts the moral and social responsibilities underlying teachers' professional work (Welker, 1991).

While arguments in opposition of comparing teachers' work to that of other professions exhibit merit, Rowan (1994) justifies why broad occupational labels are necessary for discussing the nature of teachers' work. Without broad occupation labels, how else would teachers' work be compared and classified? Additionally, Rowan (1994) characterizes views on professionalization, such as Welker's (1991), as "cynical" (Rowan, 1994, p. 12) because they overlook theories that substantiate the position that successful teaching requires a high level of rationale and abstract knowledge. Therefore, while professionalizing teaching does accrue societal prestige, it also serves a functional purpose in the workplace of teachers (Rowan, 1994).

Given the functional rationale behind professionalization, conceptions of professions, semi-professions, and non-professions are used to justify and rally support behind education reforms, which have significant implications on the nature of teachers' work. Since Rowan's publication (1994), few researchers have recently gathered empirical data on the professionalization of teaching. Due to the scarcity of empirical research on the professionalization of teaching, education sociologists Ingersoll and Merrill (2011) conducted a study that used various indicators to measure the current professionalization of teachers.

Ingersoll and Merrill (2011) determined the occupational status of teaching by analyzing the occupational and organizational attributes it shares with characteristics of the "professional model" (p. 185). The following characteristics that make up the professional model were used to measure the professionalization of teachers: (a) licensing

and credential levels; (b) induction and mentoring programs for entrants; (c) professional development opportunities and participation; (d) specialization; (e) authority over decision-making; (f) compensation; and (g) prestige and occupational social standing (Ingersoll & Merrill 2011, p. 186).

Using these indicators, Ingersoll and Merrill (2011) found that there is a degree of variability to which elementary and secondary schools demonstrate some aspects of professionalized work environments. However, an empirical analysis revealed that nearly every school either lacked or had few of the criteria associated with professionalization (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2011). Therefore, Ingersoll and Merrill (2011) conclude that the treatment of teachers' work portrays an unpromising future for professionalization, and thus teaching continues to be considered as a "semi-profession" (p. 194).

Statement of the Problem

Declining interest in teaching as a career is the central problem addressed in this study. The study sought to address how young high achieving students perceive the teaching profession. The primary significance of the findings was to identify the professionalization categories, as defined by Ingersoll, which hinder high achieving students from being interested in teaching as a potential profession. From there, analysis of implications and recommendations were drawn about what practices or initiatives the broader education field can enact to recruit and persuade high achieving students—especially in the targeted school district—into the teaching profession.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the current reality of student perceptions of the teaching profession in one Arkansas school district using the following

criteria: (a) licensing and credential levels; (b) induction and mentoring programs for entrants; (c) professional development opportunities and participation; (d) specialization; (e) authority over decision-making; (f) compensation levels; and (g) prestige and occupational social standing. The study identified perceptions regarding professionalization of teaching and the likelihood of entering the teaching field as gauged by survey data from one Arkansas school district's high school juniors and seniors in the top 20% of their respective classes.

Significance of the Problem

The researcher attempted to ascertain student perceptions of teaching and the perceived professionalization of the teaching field. Then, the likelihood of entering the teaching field was determined using a Likert Scale with open-ended questioning. Each survey question encapsulated a different professionalization area. The heart of the study was to better understand if, and in what ways, high-performing students view teaching as a desirable profession. This provided a springboard for the analysis of implications and recommendations using qualitative analysis. Results from this study could provide information about specific professionalization measures that can be employed to better recruit high-achieving students into the profession—especially in the school district investigated in this study.

Research Question

The essential question that guided this research study was:

- What are the perceptions of high achieving high school students in one Arkansas school district regarding teaching as a profession?

Definition of Terms

- AYP - Annual Yearly Progress; progress metric determined by No Child Left Behind legislation which required all public schools and school districts to report and assess progress toward student proficiency in content areas.
- Codified Practitioner Knowledge Base - Knowledge that is job-specific and represented through technical language and terms
- Critical Feminism - A perspective that considers issues of power within a gender-specific context as well as bringing out elements of affect, social justice, marginalization, and contextual links among both students' and instructors' social, political, historical, and cultural locations.
- De-professionalization - The process of a profession becoming less likely to be considered a profession in the future based on factors of perceived skill and comparison to other professions
- DOT - The Dictionary of Occupational Titles; a data source that utilizes various metrics to assess the complexity in a line of work
- Elite Professions - Professions that have the highest level of perceived professionalization and elite status
- ESSA - Every Student Succeeds Act. The 2015 legislation replaced and updated the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) which was signed into law in 2002. Like NCLB, ESSA reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965.
- Hierarchical Structure of Authority - Refers to an organization's chain of command, typically from senior management and executives to general

employees; this structure applies to organizations with a sole leader and a flow of subordinates underneath them

- High-achieving Students - Students who are academically within the top 20% of their classes
- Intensification Theory - Explains how increases in external demands and standardized accountability policies expand the roles of teachers outside of the classroom domain, causing them to focus on the most pressing tasks, which in most cases do not improve instructional practice
- Leadership Ladder - Leadership structure that is hierarchical or “top-down” in nature, with one leader at the top and a clear internal accountability system with subordinates
- Leadership Lattice - Leadership structure with varying points of leadership designed to increase productivity by empowering multiple leaders in multiple departments; leadership is less hierarchical and spread more widely across the organization
- National Board Certification - Certification through the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards where a teacher is required to pass standardized metrics demonstrating increased levels of competency
- NBPTS - National Board for Professional Teaching Standards; an independent and non-profit organization with the expressed mission of working to advance accomplished teaching for all students by maintaining high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do, providing a national voluntary system certifying teachers who meet these standards, and

advocating related education reforms to integrate National Board Certification in American education and to capitalize on the expertise of National Board Certified Teachers.

- NCLB - No Child Left Behind; the 2002 legislation intended to be an update of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act—effectively scaling up the federal role in holding schools accountable for student outcomes.
- Non-professions - Jobs that are not considered a profession based on occupational standards and perceived job skill levels
- Non-system Actors - Participants in education that are not included inside of the field of education directly; third-parties
- Paradigm Professions - Professions listed generally in the same professional context, with similar education and skill level required as another profession (ex. doctors, lawyers, teachers, accountants, etc.)
- Phenomenological Research Design - Seeks essentially to describe rather than explain, and to start from a perspective free from hypotheses or preconceptions
- Professional Model - Model used to determine the perceived professional status of a job or occupation; The following criteria were used to determine the professionalization level of teaching: (1) licensing and credential levels, (2) induction and mentoring programs for entrants, (3) professional development opportunities and participation, (4) specialization, (5) authority over decision-making, (6) compensation levels, and (7) prestige and occupational social standing

- Professionalization of Teaching - The process through which teaching is, or is not, considered a profession based on standards set within the teaching field itself
- SBR - Standards-based Reforms; birthed out of increased accountability for student outcomes and the need to tie standards to outcomes for students
- Semi-professions - Jobs that are partially considered a profession based on occupational standards and perceived job skill levels
- Specialization - The areas of expertise within a profession that require increased professional development and are specific and not general in nature
- Teacher Autonomy - The level at which a teacher can make decisions about varying aspects of teaching that impact student learning
- Teacher Efficacy - The level of belief in an individual teacher's capabilities to bring about desired outcomes in student learning
- Teacher Turnover - The process of teachers leaving a school, or the profession itself, which requires new teachers to be hired
- Threat Rigidity - The belief that when under threat or in crisis, companies are inclined to more firmly focus on the one thing they do well, stop doing other things, and become more hierarchical and top-down in terms of management control.
- Workplace Feminization - The process of a profession gaining increasing numbers of females in the workplace

Assumptions

A few basic assumptions are embedded in this research study. At its core, the study hinged on principals, or other school leaders, at the participating campus to provide

time and structure for the designated students to complete the survey. Moreover, this required counselors—or other professionals with access to student transcripts—to be able to identify the top 20% of both the junior and senior classes. Then, after this bedrock structure was secured, students must have honestly answered each survey question. The final, and most uncontrollable assumption for this study, was that students must have enough context and exposure to the teaching profession—and other professions-- to make an objective assessment about their likelihood of becoming a teacher. The researcher is aware that the survey was a snapshot in time for the participating students.

Limitations

A few limiting factors were considered by the researcher. A subtle limitation, which was nonetheless considered, was the inability to determine if the students who participated in the survey had access to quality teachers in their educational careers. In this vein, a student's access to quality teachers could have directly impacted a student's response to the questions related to professionalization in teaching. In turn, this could have affected a student's likelihood of viewing teaching as a worthwhile career.

Delimitations

Only one district was included in the study. The participating district was under state control for academic underperformance. Overall, the demographics of the school in the study were not representative of the state of Arkansas as a whole or the nation at large. This reality made it difficult to draw conclusions across the entire profession. Because the study was delimited in terms of participants and settings, the results of this study cannot be considered generalizable to other students in other locales.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

Teaching is an increasingly complex and demanding profession; however, alternative certifications for prospective educators are on the rise. Revolving accountability policies create more scrutiny for schools in the public. As teachers stand before students daily, they bring this reality with them, and their chief observers are their students. Their students, whether they are consciously aware or not, are making assessments about how they view the teaching profession. In today's context, high achieving high school students in many high schools do not project to be teachers in the future. This issue resonated with the researcher. As a high school student, the researcher was encouraged to be a lawyer because of their diligence, wit, and articulation. At the core, this is the disconnection. A diligent, quick-witted, and articulate student with academic aptitude is exactly who should teach the next generation of students. Contrastingly, the very educators who stood before the researcher discouraged them from being a teacher. This is the paradox. This is the pathos of the study. Why do educators make intentional efforts to persuade high achieving students to become anything but teachers? And harder to answer still, how does this reality affect the overall professionalization of teaching?

Chapter two includes literature and critiques of the trends in teacher staffing and accountability. The literature discloses a close examination of how, at times, teaching has been labeled a "semi-profession." This labeling, in some contexts, led to practices that prompted one researcher to coin the phrase "the de-professionalization" of teaching. The chapter is organized to strengthen the reader's historical understanding of the plight of teaching in an increasing standards-based field with limited attempts to build efficacy

across the entire profession. Such a stark reality led the researcher of this study to investigate the effects of teaching shifts on students: the ones with the front row seat to the drama enacted using education politics. The hypothesis was clear: the increasingly complex profession of teaching, coupled with limited efficacy, will lead to fewer and fewer high-achieving students who consider the profession viable.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Addressing the members of the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards on July 29, 2011, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan stated, “Teaching must be one of the nation's most honorable professions...Picture a day when teachers are evaluated like other professionals, using multiple sources of evidence about their success on the job. This professional transformation won't happen unless teachers own this and drive this” (Duncan, 2011). Duncan's call for the “professional transformation” of teaching echoes much of the rhetoric from the past several decades on the improvement of teacher competence through increased accountability and professional expectations. Duncan's mention of teacher evaluation systems similar to those of “other professionals,” has been a driving rationale for the movement of standards-based accountability policies in recent years. While standards-based reform intends to increase teacher quality, many argue the stringency and sanctions imposed by such accountability policies have yielded several unintentional consequences for teacher practice. These consequences have particularly manifested themselves in the years following Congress’ passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001 and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015. Supporters of the professionalization of teaching have questioned whether the professional transformation Arne Duncan spoke of can occur within the context of rigid accountability policies.

Advocates of the professionalization of teaching, the process through which a line of work acquires the structural characteristics of a profession that distinguishes it from an occupation (Goldstein, 2007; Ingersoll & Merrill, 2011), argue that professionalizing teaching is a crucial aspect of improving the long-term quality and retention of the

teaching force (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2010; Ingersoll, 2007; Rowan, 1994). Standards-based accountability policies and evaluation systems, similar to those mentioned by Secretary Duncan in the aforementioned speech, are arguably mechanisms for professionalizing teachers. Several researchers, however, found that the unintentional consequences of rigid accountability policies federally mandated by NCLB and ESSA undermine the professionalization of teaching, thus jeopardizing the quality of teaching practice that the policy sought to rectify (Apple, 2007; Ballet et al., 2006). As Ingersoll (2007) articulates, “The accountability movement often involves the wrong diagnoses of, and prescriptions for, problems of teacher quality” (p. 21). Therefore, this literature review investigates the scholarship on the professionalization of teaching and how the previous context of NCLB, and presently ESSA, accountability policies has deterred current efforts to successfully professionalize teaching.

This chapter addresses the concerns of policy makers, school leaders, teachers, and the research community. It examines how the broader context of federal education policy influences district and school-level decision-making and how these actions can produce negative consequences for teaching practices. A thorough evaluation of the unintended consequences of NCLBs and ESSAs standards-based accountability policies can provide policymakers with valuable insight on how federal mandates potentially undermine teacher quality. Addressing this disparity not only synthesizes research on accountability policies and professionalization but can potentially influence how school leaders can mitigate the negative consequences accountability policies impose on teacher practice.

Furthermore, the professionalization of teaching, or lack thereof, has been offered as a plausible explanation for the increasing rates of teacher turnover in most recent years (Smith & Kovacs, 2011). Some researchers argue that the increased control of administrators over curriculum and instruction in response to high-stakes accountability policies is directly linked to why teachers leave the profession (Hamilton et al., 2008), especially in low-income, underperforming schools (Smith & Kovacs, 2011). While the limits of this research do not afford an examination of the role of professionalization and teacher retention, this study can serve as a foundation for future research.

Given the broad scope of this topic, the literature review will draw from several sources regarding professionalization, standards-based reform, and national accountability policies. This chapter begins with a brief background on the history of the professionalization of teaching, and why historically, teaching has been considered a “semi-profession” (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2010; Etzioni, 1969; Goldstein, 2010; Ingersoll, 2007, 2011). It then moves to a review of the rationale, process, and recommendations for teacher professionalization. The first section concludes with a brief discussion on how teacher autonomy is a central facet of the process of professionalization. The chapter then examines the movement of standards-based reform and how it has served as a framework for NCLB and ESSA. Drawing from several mixed-methods empirical studies on the effects of national accountability systems on teacher practice, this literature review specifically examines how system-wide alignment in response to accountability policies has affected teacher professionalization. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the extent to which the unintended consequences

of standards-based accountability policies have de-professionalized teachers and minimized autonomy.

Background on Teaching as a Semi-Profession

The professionalization of teaching has had a long withstanding history in the discourse of education reform. Before delving into the recommendations and efforts made to professionalize teaching, it is necessary to examine the various explanations as to why teachers have not been ascribed full professional status and continue to be considered semi-professionals.

In 1967, sociologist Amitai Etzioni coined the term, “semi-profession” to describe the predominately female occupations, such as teachers, social workers, and nurses. According to Etzioni (1967), the characteristics of these groups (e.g., low-level of group autonomy, hierarchical organization, and minimal formal schooling) starkly contrast those of the “elite” professions, such as doctors and lawyers (Etzioni, 1969). Many education sociologists associate the characteristics of semi-professions as the consequences of workplace feminization and the bureaucratization of the public school system (Tyack, 1974).

In the 19th century, the majority of teachers had only completed grammar school, with the exception of a minority of urban teachers who had achieved a high school degree. Therefore, education level became a distinguishing characteristic between female teachers and male administrators who had access to higher levels of formal schooling (Lortie, 1969; Tyack, 1974). Thus, in an era of industrialization and bureaucratic rationalization, school organizations would require a hierarchal form of occupational control (Tyack, 1974). The hierarchal “One Best System” of schooling requires

subordinate occupants to “execute the behests of the supreme intelligence” (Tyack, 1974, p. 76), the supreme intelligence being that of the privileged white male. In other words, to meet the demands of a growing society and secure the hierarchy of school bureaucracies, women became the ideal low-cost subordinate occupants for schools.

Although there has been significant advancement of women in the workplace, several researchers have adopted critical-feminist perspectives to examine how gender-power dynamics account for why teaching has not achieved the professional status experienced by the paradigm professions, such as law and medicine (Acker, 1994). While critical feminism plays a significant role in the literature on professionalization, this chapter will limit its examination of professionalization to a view through a sociological lens. Education sociologists examine the professional status of teaching by how attributes of the profession compared with those of the paradigm professions. The following section of this chapter will review the literature on how educational sociologists determine and explain the professionalization of teaching.

Professionalization of Teaching

Rather than delving into a lengthy discussion of the theoretical assumptions behind the professionalization of teaching, this section will draw from the sociology of education to explain why many believe that teaching has yet to achieve the full status of a profession, what distinguishes occupation from a profession, and what rationale drives the assumption that teaching should be professionalized. It is important to note that this research is concerned with *professionalization*, which sociologists describe as the structural criteria and processes that distinguish an occupation from a profession. This

term is not to be confused with *professionalism*, which sociologists identify as the attitudes or psychological attributes of professionals (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2011).

Since the turn of the century, education reformers have determined the professionalization of teaching through, “reasoning by analogy” (Rowan, 1994, p. 5). That is, education sociologists commonly determine the degree of professionalization of teaching by comparing attributes of the occupation to those of paradigmatic professions, such as doctors and lawyers. Within this lens, Rowan (1994) reviews the professionalization of teaching by comparing and analyzing the work of teachers to the work conducted in other occupations.

To measure and compare the complexity of teachers work with those of other occupations, Rowan (1994) analyzed findings from the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* (DOT), a data source that utilizes various metrics to assess the “substantive complexity” in a line of work (Rowan, 1994, p. 5). Through his DOT analysis, Rowan (1994) found that teaching ranks lower in professional status than other occupations. He largely attributes this to the lack of formal technical language that guides practice, as well as the low levels of formal pre-service training required for certification (Rowan, 1994). Based on these findings, Rowan (1994) suggests that the professionalization and improvement of the social standing of teaching heavily relies on increasing the complexity of teachers' work. To increase the complexity of teachers' work, Rowan (1994) recommends a restructuring of the traditional divisions of labor in schools by increasing the functions and roles of teachers, as well as the rigor in training and teacher education.

Recommendations to professionalize teaching, similar to Rowan's (1994), are guided by the assumption that professionalization will increase job satisfaction, teacher

efficacy, and the retention of highly effective teachers, thus resulting in the improvement of teaching practices and subsequent increase in student achievement (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2011; Rowan, 1994). These assumptions underlying the professionalization of teaching, however, are not immune to criticism from some scholars in the education research community.

Opponents of professionalization are unconvinced that professionalization of teaching can be achieved due to skepticism that teaching and pedagogy can ever truly be guided by a scientific rationale (Rowan, 1994). Others argue that the use of broad occupational titles lends itself to the negative consequences of reasoning by analogy (Rowan, 1994, p. 5). For example, Robert Welker (1991) argues that comparing teaching to the paradigm professions severely distorts the moral and social responsibilities underlying teachers' professional work (Welker, 1991).

Specifically, Welker (1991) argues the professionalization of doctors has led to a dangerous monopoly of medical knowledge that places the consumers of medical service in a position of vulnerability. Supporters of the professionalization of teaching argue that its success rests on the conception that teaching and pedagogy are guided by a codified expert language (Hiebert et al., 2002; Lortie, 1969) which according to Welker, largely undermines the fact that an occupation whose work is guided by a moral and social responsibility cannot be guided by technical expertise (Welker, 1991). Furthermore, Welker (1991) argues that increasing the formal reasoning in practice serves to advance the social prestige, power, and legitimacy of an occupation, rather than increasing the technical aptitude or outputs produced by the profession, which in the case of teaching is student achievement.

Conclusively, Welker (1991) urges the scholarly community to rethink the “questionable metaphor” of “teacher as expert” (p. 29). However, he does not offer viable solutions on how to resolve the issue of poor teacher quality. Moreover, he argues efforts to professionalize teaching through standardizing teacher education, undermine the degree of flexibility teachers must possess to make instructional decisions that are best for their students. In essence, Welker (1991) argues that teacher autonomy over instructional decisions is imperative to teachers’ ability to deliver quality instruction. Welker’s (1991) apparent support for teacher autonomy seems to contradict his opposition to professionalization, as autonomy is considered a salient feature of professionalization (Apple, 1996; Finnigan & Gross, 2007; Goldstein, 2007; Ingersoll, 2007; Smith & Kovacs, 2011). This contradiction in Welker’s argument, as well as the absence of concrete suggestions to resolve poor teacher performance, partly account for why professionalization of teaching through reasoning by analogy continues to dominate the discourse on education reform.

While arguments in opposition of comparing teachers’ work to that of other professions exhibit merit, Rowan (1994) justifies why broad occupational labels are necessary for discussing the nature of teachers’ work. Without broad occupation labels, how else would teachers’ work be compared and classified? Additionally, Rowan (1994) characterizes views on professionalization, such as Welker’s (1991), as “cynical” (Rowan, 1994, p. 12) because they overlook theories that substantiate the position that successful teaching requires a high level of rationale and abstract knowledge. Therefore, while professionalizing teaching does accrue societal prestige, it also serves a functional purpose in the workplace of teachers (Rowan, 1994).

Given the functional rationale behind professionalization, conceptions of professions, semi-professions, and non-professions are used to justify and rally support behind education reforms, which have significant implications on the nature of teachers' work. Since Rowan's publication (1994), few researchers have recently gathered empirical data on the professionalization of teaching. Due to the scarcity of empirical research on the professionalization of teaching, education sociologists Ingersoll and Merrill (2011) conducted a study that used various indicators to measure the current professionalization of teachers.

Ingersoll and Merrill (2011) determined the occupational status of teaching by analyzing the occupational and organizational attributes it shares with characteristics of the "professional model" (p. 185). The following characteristics that make up the professional model were used to measure the professionalization of teachers: (1) licensing and credential levels, (2) induction and mentoring programs for entrants, (3) professional development opportunities and participation, (4) specialization, (5) authority over decision-making, (6) compensation levels, and (7) prestige and occupational social standing (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2011, p. 186).

Using these indicators, Ingersoll and Merrill (2011) found that there is a degree of variability to which elementary and secondary schools demonstrate some aspects of professionalized work environments. However, an empirical analysis revealed that nearly every school either lacked or had few of the criteria associated with professionalization (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2011, p. 194). Therefore, Ingersoll and Merrill (2011) conclude that the treatment of teachers' work portrays an unpromising future for professionalization, and thus teaching continues to be considered as a "semi-profession" (p. 194). Given the

prevailing semi-professional status of teaching, the next section of this chapter will examine common reform efforts aimed at increasing the aggregate professionalization of teaching through the adoption of various characteristics of the professional model.

Professionalization Through Teacher Education and Certification

In his sociological study of teaching, *School Teacher* (1975), Dan Lortie writes that teaching has not achieved full professional status partly because teachers already enter the profession with 13,000 hours of classroom experience as students; having accomplished what he calls an “apprenticeship of observation.” Unlike the professional fields of medicine or law, the majority of the population, as Lortie (1969) notes, has experienced the apprenticeship of observation of teaching. Thus, many in our society believe the teaching profession does not require rigorous training or expert practitioner knowledge (Lortie, 1969, 1975). In efforts to reverse the societal sentiments of the complexity involved in teaching while increasing the preparedness and effectiveness of teachers, some professionalization efforts have targeted pre-service teacher education and certification reform.

Both doctors and lawyers must complete at least three years of schooling, complete extensive clinical experience, and undergo intensive board examinations before receiving their practitioner license. As such, education reformers have rationalized an increase of intensity and quality for pre-service teacher education programs. For example, some universities have adopted five-year models of pre-service teacher education that couples rigorous pedagogical coursework with intensive clinical classroom experience (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002). Along with more intensive teacher education programs,

some efforts to professionalize teaching attempt to do so through higher standards for certification.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) encompasses a landmark attempt to professionalize teachers through rigorous assessments of teacher competence that measure performance and impact beyond the scope of standardized test scores (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2010; Dilworth & Aguerrebere, 2006). Efforts to professionalize teaching through National Board Certification are guided by the rationale that professional occupations possess a distinctive expert knowledge base and restrictive access to receiving licensure (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2010; Etzioni, 1969). However, researchers have found that the NBPTS has produced inconsistent perceptions among teachers as to whether Nationally Board Certified teachers are exemplary compared to their traditionally certified counterparts, or if the NBPTS merely represents an effort to establish status distinctions among teachers (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2010). While the extent to which NBPTS has achieved this goal is highly debated among the education research community, establishing an expert practitioner knowledge base is a prevailing rationale among other efforts to professionalize teaching.

Professionalization Through Codified Practitioner Knowledge

Lortie (1969) argues that teachers have not achieved a culture of professional growth and development that encourages practitioners to exchange information with colleagues or lend credence to information circulated among teachers. He states, “Lacking the clear autonomy which leads to the assurance that professional knowledge will provide a basis of action, teachers have not developed codified and systematic bodies of professional knowledge; lacking that knowledge, their stance vis-a-vis laymen is, in

turn, weakened” (Lortie, 1969, p. 24). In other words, for teachers to be distinguished as professionals, teaching needs to adopt a codified body of practitioner knowledge, similar to the systemized body of scientific knowledge that characterizes the work of doctors and lawyers (Lortie, 1969; Rowan, 1996).

Similar to Lortie (1975), Hiebert et al. (2002) argue the circulation of knowledge is fundamental to the work of professions, and is essential, therefore, to the professionalization and instructional growth of teachers. While Hiebert et al. (2002) are guided by a similar rationale underlying the efforts of the NBPTS, they propose the establishment of a shareable network of practitioner knowledge that can be accessed by all teachers. The authors argue that in both medicine and law there are existing databases with specific reports and cases that lawyers can reference when interpreting the law, or that doctors can consult when refining ways of addressing specific illnesses (Hiebert et al., 2002). Therefore, Hiebert et al. (2002) propose that teachers create a similar codified “practitioner knowledge base” that demonstrates the same level of credibility and extensiveness as researcher knowledge. This retrievable, specific, and codified knowledge base, they argue, must be created by teachers and for teachers (Hiebert et al., 2002). While the age of the Internet has allowed teachers to share various instructional resources, these efforts have yet to influence and extend beyond localized efforts (Hiebert et al., 2002).

The aforementioned reforms are just a few of the efforts made to increase the professional status of teaching and subsequent improvement of K-12 educators. These reform efforts support the assertion that teaching requires complex knowledge. Therefore, teaching needs to undergo the process of professionalization to increase the quality of

teachers, while also reversing the occupational sentiments society holds regarding the complexity of teachers' work (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2010). Despite these ongoing efforts, results from professionalization reforms have shown notable variability and inconsistency with implementation (Rowan, 1994). Education sociologists explain this variability by analyzing the distribution of control in schools as a result of the organization and structure of the U.S. public school system.

Variability of Professionalization and Press for Autonomy

Although the American education system is decentralized, sociologists agree that actual school institutions are not, as they are largely centralized around a hierarchal structure of authority (Ingersoll, 2007). Ingersoll (2011) explains, "The degree of power and control practitioners hold over workplace decisions is one of the most important criteria distinguishing the degree of professionalization and the status of a particular occupation or line of work" (p. 102). Thus, professionalization largely rests on the amount of control, power, and authority an administration grants its teachers and how school leaders mitigate the effects of bureaucratization on teachers' instructional practice (Ingersoll, 2007; Tschannen-Moran, 2009).

In many schools, there is a disparity between how teachers prepare to be certified professionals with the autonomy they are granted by school leaders to use their acquired expertise to inform school-wide decisions that affect classroom practice. This discrepancy can account for why the previously mentioned efforts to professionalize teaching have yet to yield the transformative results desired by advocates. For example, to equip novice teachers with the strategies and knowledge to make effective instructional decisions when placed in the classroom, intensive teacher education programs require

student teachers to study pedagogy extensively or complete several hours of clinical classroom experience. However, it cannot be assumed that this level of autonomy is automatically transferred when a teacher enters the classroom upon completing his or her pre-service program. In the same regard, the NBPTS has no discretion over who gets certified, hired, or fired in school districts (Lortie, 1969), and thus does not promise to grant teachers more autonomy than they would have without National Board Certification.

In efforts to legitimize an occupation as a profession, Anagnostopoulos et al. (2010) explain how efforts to professionalize teaching, such as those undertaken by NBPTS, seek external support through professional associations to restrict and control the credentialing process. While this is viewed as an attempt to claim control over the status of the profession, Anagnostopoulos et al. (2010) explain how teaching has historically been more concerned with maintaining internal autonomy and control over classroom practices. Thus, the inability for NBPTS to widely attract teachers to National Board Certification reflects teachers' beliefs that undergoing a rigorous certification process will not necessarily secure the internal autonomy that they feel is required to perform quality instruction (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2010).

While professionalization entails the adoption of various traits associated with the paradigm professions, professionalization ultimately rests upon trusting teachers with the discretion and autonomy to make the instructional and curricular decisions they were trained or certified to make. Since the turn of the century, the conception of teachers' work has been regarded with high governance of autonomy. Behind closed doors, teachers could exercise their instructional discretion based on the needs of their students

(Lortie, 1969, 1975). Although research has shown teaching lacks many of the criteria that distinguish a profession from an occupation (Ingersoll, 2007), instructional autonomy has remained relatively secure.

Tschannen-Moran (2009) describes teacher autonomy as the hallmark of professional practice as teachers need to take the diversity of students' needs and circumstances into consideration when exercising professional discretion. Therefore, autonomy over classroom decisions seems to be a fundamental criterion that not only retains teachers in the "semi-professional," rather than "non-professional," category but is critical in their ability to adapt instruction to the variable needs of a diverse student body. As such, it is reasonable to assume that decreasing instructional autonomy could be detrimental to professionalization, as it is the most secured criterion that traditionally has allowed teaching to retain some aspect of a profession (Crocco & Costigan, 2007).

In most recent years, some education researchers have gone as far as to say that, in light of recent education reforms, teaching is unintentionally becoming de-professionalized (Ballet et al., 2006; Finnigan & Gross, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007; Valli & Buese, 2007). Given this claim and the variability of professionalization, it would be useful to examine the current context of standards-based reform that drives today's discourse over teacher quality and professionalization.

Standards-Based Reform (SBR) and Accountability

This section begins with a descriptive account of the background of standards-based reform and the advent of NCLB and ESSA accountability policies. It then moves to a more specific discussion of the theory and contention behind standards-based reform as a means for improving teacher quality and professionalization.

The 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk* released by President Ronald Reagan's National Commission on Excellence in Education, claimed there was a significant decline in student achievement since the launch of Sputnik in 1957 (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Although the document was not bound to any federal legislation, it sparked a nationwide call to end the "rising tide of mediocrity" (p.3) by reforming the quality of teaching and learning in U.S. schools (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Since its publication, this pivotal report has spurred reform efforts and research regarding the upgrading of teacher quality and competence through standards-based reform.

In response to the debates on education reform that burgeoned from the release of *A Nation at Risk*, several schools raised student expectations by raising graduation requirements, purchasing curricular materials, and increasing advanced course options (Hamilton et al., 2008). Although these reforms demonstrated incremental changes for some schools, they did not produce the large-scale improvement policy makers and education leaders desired (Hamilton et al., 2008). Consequently, policy makers and education reformers were increasingly interested in the adoption of system-wide standards and reform efforts.

By mandating states to develop accountability systems attached to standardized test scores, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, signed into law by President George W. Bush, signified a monumental attempt by the federal government to improve teaching practice through strict accountability policies tied to standardized and measurable student outcomes. While NCLB mandated several directives, its tightening of standards-based accountability policies has left a particularly enduring and controversial impact on

education reform. Now, ESSA, the 2015 replacement of NCLB, provides for more state flexibility in accountability; however, annual testing and performance reporting are still required for all states. ESSA, more so than NCLB, brought about a rise in educators teaching in an area for which they are not certified (Ingersoll, 2019).

In theory, the standards-based accountability policies of NCLB promoted a tradeoff between federally directed standards adoption with increased teacher autonomy over instructional and curricular decisions (Hamilton et al., 2008, p. 5). Then ESSA provided more flexibility for states to address accountability reporting. Annual testing was still required, but states could choose individualized metrics for progress monitoring. Accountability was now the chief job of the state. State-adopted standards would be used as a benchmark of achievement, but ultimately teachers would retain instructional and curricular discretion over how to meet those benchmarks (Hamilton et al., 2008). However, researchers found this was not necessarily the case in practice as NCLB and ESSA standards-based accountability policies were swiftly implemented in classrooms across the U.S. The authors of a 2008 RAND review state, “SBR [standards-based reform] allocates responsibility in ways that can conflict with traditional educational governance” (Hamilton et al., 2008, p. 5). In their discussions, educators and policy makers have addressed the lack of progress in student achievement for over three decades. With the higher learning standards and postsecondary readiness requirements, there is consensus on developing new approaches for more effective educational accountability (Darling-Hammond et al., 2016).

Due to the surmounting pressure to meet academic growth, states and school-wide leaders have an increasing stake in the outcomes of standardized test scores goals, leading

to rapid system-wide standards alignment and the consequential erosion of teacher autonomy (Hamilton et al., 2008; Olsen & Sexton, 2009). In other words, opposition to NCLB does not necessarily involve the theory of standards-based reform but rather finds the effects of its implementation problematic (Hill & Barth, 2004; Smith & Kovacs, 2011). ESSA is a natural extension with more flexibility on the state level. This flexibility breeds pressure for states to correct the gaps in teaching and learning, which often manifests in shortsighted accountability measures, similar to NCLB (Ingersoll, 2016).

While professionalization and standards-based reform are often considered divergent approaches to resolving poor teacher quality (Anagnostopolous et al., 2010; Hamilton et al., 2008; Tschannen-Moran, 2009), standards-based accountability policies arguably represent a macro-level attempt to professionalize teachers (Anagnostopolous et al., 2010). Tightened accountability as an effort to professionalize teaching is driven by the logic that the professions of law and medicine are held to high standards of performance and accountability. If doctors and lawyers do not meet standards of practice or engage in forms of malpractice, they face strict sanctions imposed by professional boards, and in extreme cases, the forced relinquishment of their practitioner license. In this regard, tightened accountability and increased standards of performance are meant to motivate and retain committed teachers, funnel out those who are consistently ineffective, and subsequently strengthen teaching as a profession.

While these assumptions hold merit, the effects of NCLB and ESSA on teacher autonomy have left many in the education community to question whether standards-based accountability policies have de-skilled or de-professionalized teachers (Apple, 1996). In this regard, rigid control over student outcomes decreases teacher autonomy, a

fundamental characteristic of teacher professionalization. This posed somewhat of a paradox for standards-based accountability policies. On one hand, ESSA represented an attempt to professionalize teaching through higher standards of performance accountability with local accountability; while on the other hand, several researchers argue that it has de-professionalized teachers and subsequently decreased the quality of classroom instruction. Accordingly, it is necessary to examine the empirical research on the effect of NCLB and ESSA policies on teacher professionalization to offer an explanation as to why the alleged disparity exists between the theories of standards-based accountability versus its implementation.

NCLB, ESSA, Threat Rigidity, and System-Wide Alignment

Organization sociologists describe school leaders' responses to federal policies as the result of "threat rigidity" (Olsen & Sexton, 2009, p. 14). Although it's a term primarily used in business management studies, threat rigidity effects are described as the micro-level responses of organizations to meet their goals and remain afloat when in the crisis of facing sanctions or potential closure (Olsen & Sexton, 2009). Olsen & Sexton (2009) use threat rigidity theory to explain how federal policy influences school-wide decision-making that subsequently affects and controls teachers' work. In other words, to avoid the sanctions imposed by NCLB accountability policies, several district and school leaders devoted resources to the development and implementation of standardized curricular and instructional resources in an attempt to "teacher-proof" (Crocco & Costigan, 2007; Olsen & Sexton, 2009; Tschannen-Moran, 2009) ineffective teaching practices (Olsen & Sexton, 2009). Further, ESSA's flexibility led many states to establish A-F grading for districts and schools. This grading, in most cases, is tied directly to

annual testing with limited inclusion of other metrics such as service-learning. The reduction of school quality to a single mark is the purpose of A-F school rating systems. The argument is that a grade will signal a level of quality and make it difficult for low-rated schools to escape scrutiny. Advocates of such rating systems use terms such as “simple,” “clear,” and “transparent” to describe them, and frequently cite competition and subsequent improvement as key outcomes (Tanner, 2016).

Tschannen-Moran (2009) explains how the rigid threats imposed by rapidly implemented accountability policies can be counterproductive for schools adapting to change. She states:

As such, schools are currently experiencing a perceived threat to their legitimacy, with the accountability movement and the enforcement of No Child Left Behind legislation. Becoming rigid will likely be counterproductive, however. In the face of a changing environmental forces, schools need to become flexible, innovative, and adaptive to respond to change external circumstances. (Tschannen-Moran, 2009, p. 224)

Rather than focusing on the improvement of the technical core of teaching (instruction), school and district-wide leaders responded to the perceived threat of increased accountability policies by adopting curricular and instructional resources that were believed to increase student outputs. Consequently, standards-based reform rang synonymously with test-based reform, as instructional and curricular resources were aligned to the standardized test, rather than the standards themselves (Hamilton et al., 2008). This was especially prevalent in high-poverty underperforming schools where making Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) constituted very high-stakes in determining

secured school funding or the imposition of sanctions (Valli & Buese, 2007). The same phenomenon is present under ESSA. The onus, however, is now on the state to create the accountability progress monitoring metrics. The same culture of high states testing, born during NCLB, exists with ESSA.

Through an analysis of various mixed-methods studies, the next section of this paper will examine how alignment and autonomy evolved into competing goals following the enactment of NCLB and later ESSA (Hamilton et al., 2008). Specifically, this next section addresses how the “alignment of curriculum and instruction” and “alignment of professional development” affect instructional autonomy and the professionalization of teaching.

Alignment of Instruction

I am treated as if I don't know how best to attend to the needs of my students. I am handed scripted lessons as if I lacked the ability to assemble my own...I am told how to structure my lessons. I am told how to comment on a student's paper. I am treated as if I were incapable of doing these things on my own.

-A middle school English Teacher (Crocco & Costigan, 2007, p. 521)

As the above middle school teacher conveys, the rigidity of instructional alignment greatly impacted teachers' instructional practice. Several researchers have reported that due to national accountability policies, teachers were required to frequently assess students and devote a significant amount of instructional time to test preparation (Crocco & Costigan, 2007; Finnigan & Gross, 2007; Smith & Kovacs, 2011; Valli & Buese, 2007).

At the end of NCLB's fifth year, Smith & Kovaks (2011) surveyed K-8 teachers at one school district, where over half the teachers surveyed had 10 or more years of teaching experience. While most of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with NCLB policies on instructional practice, a majority (54.2%) concurred that standardized testing was ancillary to school improvement (Smith & Kovaks 2011, p. 210).

Despite this agreement, Smith and Kovaks (2011) found, "71.1% [of respondents] believe that preparing students for standardized testing is reducing the quality of instruction they are able to provide for students...60.3% felt there was less room for innovation in their classrooms compared with five years ago" (p. 210). These survey results indicate that teachers are not wholly opposed to standardized testing as a measure of student achievement; rather, they have contempt for how high-stakes testing has standardized instructional practice and eroded instructional innovation in favor of increased test preparation. Given the alleged shift in instructional discretion five years before the enactment of NCLB, as cited by the respondents of the Smith & Kovaks (2011) survey, it would be useful to investigate the findings from a longitudinal study that captures this shift in instructional practice and perceived autonomy following the implementation of NCLB.

In a five-year mixed-methods longitudinal study that evaluated 200 teachers' perspectives regarding the impact NCLB had on teaching practices, Crocco and Costigan (2007) found that pedagogical improvement was no longer perceived to be at the core of teachers' work. One teacher characterized the experienced decrease in instructional autonomy as the "shrinking space" for pedagogical creativity (p. 525). Crocco and Costigan (2007) elaborate on the causes of this shrinking space: "Standardized

approaches to teaching colluded to shrink the space afforded them for devising personal solutions to problems encountered in their classrooms” (p. 522). The study found that the reported shrinking space for instructional innovation was strongly related to the increase of externally prescribed curriculum. If standards-based reform intends for teachers to retain instructional autonomy while meeting standards, then what occurred in its implementation to significantly erode the professional autonomy and classroom innovation of educators? Given that teachers view themselves as having a prominent influence on student outcomes, it follows that they should play a large role in determining how that improvement and performance are measured (NNSTOY, 2020).

Researchers have studied the extent to which national accountability policies have influenced the decisions made about school curriculum. Generally, this line of research describes the impact as the “narrowing of curriculum” (Crocco & Costigan, 2007; Hamilton et al., 2008; Smith & Kovacs, 2011), which involves two different effects: (1) increased attention focused on reading and math at the cost of other non-tested subject areas and (2) the emphasis on the prescribed curriculum in the classroom (Crocco & Costigan, 2007; Smith & Kovacs, 2011; Valli & Buese, 2007). The next section focuses primarily on the latter.

Alignment of Curriculum

Proponents of NCLB and ESSA policies visualized a balanced dynamic between autonomy and accountability (Hamilton et al., 2008). Although NCLB and ESSA do not technically require districts to adopt external curriculum programs, research indicates that several districts implemented such approaches to improving student outcomes (Crocco & Costigan 2007; Ballet et al., 2006; Smith & Kovaks, 2004; Valli & Buese, 2007). As a

result, many teachers felt compelled to adapt and limit instructional practices to the specific objectives present in the standards and assessments (Hamilton et al., 2008; Valli & Buese, 2007). Consequently, schools increasingly held teachers accountable for the implementation and use of prescribed standards-aligned curriculum resources, regardless of the outcome such programs had on student achievement (Crocco & Costigan, 2007; Smith & Kovaks, 2011; Valli & Buese, 2007). One English teacher described the effect prescribed curriculum has on practice: “I do not like the new curriculum. I do not like being told how to teach. I feel that the scripted program is a pseudo-progressive program, disguising itself as an innovative trend-setting curriculum when it is anything but” (Crocco & Costigan, 2007, p. 522). Education researchers Valli and Buese (2007) found system-wide alignment of curriculum and instruction not only affected teachers’ classroom instruction but even caused teachers to doubt their pedagogical expertise.

Valli and Buese (2007) conducted a longitudinal qualitative study from 2001 to 2005 in which they evaluated how NCLB policies affected perceptions of teacher practice within the first four years of the policy's implementation. During the 2001 to 2002 school year, the research indicated that differentiation was primarily left up to teachers’ discretion. One of the principals interviewed had stated, “They [teachers] should not be left with the decisions that someone else made” (Vallie & Buese, 2007, p. 535).

However, as pressure to meet Annual Yearly Progress mounted, the perception of school leaders that teachers should have control over decisions that affect their classroom instruction shifted. By the fall of 2002, the district adopted a new curriculum, and by the 2003 to 2004 school year, teachers were mandated to implement specific curriculum programs and pre-made interim assessments (Valli & Buese, 2007). Due to the rapid

curriculum turnover, teachers reportedly felt overwhelmed by the amount of instructional adaptation that was required of them and obligated to halt the delivery of inquiry-based instruction (Valli & Buese, 2007). As a result, teachers not only experienced a loss of autonomy over curricular decisions but started to question their instructional expertise as schools across the United States increasingly adopted externally created “teacher-proof” (Crocco & Costigan, 2007; Tschannen-Moran, 2009) curriculum materials (Valli & Buese, 2007).

Similarly, Olson and Sexton (2008) describe how the adoption of supplemental curriculum materials affected teachers’ confidence in delivering instruction: “Not only did the teachers believe that the curricular maps constrained their teaching work, but they also believed that their professional autonomy suffered and their expertise was slighted” (p. 25). The research demonstrates how the system-wide alignment through prescribed curriculum distances a teacher from instructional expertise, as they morph into facilitators of purchased curriculum programs. This attrition of curricular and instructional autonomy poses significant implications for the professionalization of teachers. The next section of this paper will show how system-wide alignment not only affected teachers’ direct classroom autonomy but also restructured the professional development opportunities that teachers were required to engage in outside of the classroom.

Alignment of Professional Development

As previously mentioned, researchers found that pedagogical improvement was no longer the focus of teachers’ instructional practice (Crocco & Costigan, 2007). This was also particularly evident in the arrangement of professional development. One study concluded that about 70-80% of teachers were experiencing an increase in professional

development focused on test preparation and data analysis (Smith & Kovacs, 2011, p. 12). While some researchers supported that teachers did collaborate more in the NCLB context (Finnigan & Gross, 2007; Valli & Buese, 2007), several researchers found that professional development focused on work of “dubious value” (Valli & Buese, 2007, p. 21), such as alignment, curricular adaptation, data analysis, and paperwork (Crocco & Costigan, 2007; Finnigan & Gross, 2007; Smith & Kovacs, 2011; Valli & Buese, 2007). The focus of teachers’ professional development no longer revolved on the exchange and adoption of effective pedagogy but rather centered around developing teachers into “data managers” (Valli & Buese, 2007, p. 537), as they spent a considerable amount of time administering tests and analyzing multiple sets of student data (Tschannen-Moran, 2009; Valli & Buese, 2007).

Along with a loss of autonomy over how they collaborated with colleagues during professional development, teachers had little discretion over the arrangement of professional development. Professional development was commonly pre-determined by district school boards and school administrators and facilitated by external agencies (Finnigan & Gross, 2007). Allocating control over professional development to outside agencies, or “nonsystem actors” (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2010, p. 343), results in a breakdown of trust between teachers and administrators (Tschannen-Moran, 2009). This is attributed to the perception that nonsystem actors are more concerned with regulative actions and coercive pressure, rather than the improvement of quality instructional practices (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2010). In other words, system-wide alignment consequently erodes teacher autonomy over activities both inside and outside the classroom that are meant to improve their instructional practice. As a result, decisions

that directly affect the delivery of instruction are increasingly removed from the locus of teachers' control. The next section of this paper will examine the culminating effects on instructional, curricular, and professional development alignment from national accountability policies on the intensification of teacher roles and conceivable de-professionalization of teachers.

Alignment, Intensification, and De-Professionalization

The unintended consequences from system-wide alignment have culminated in what some researchers describe as an environment of “intensification” (Apple & Jungck, 1986; Ballet et al., 2006; Valli & Buese, 2007). Intensification theory explains how increases in external demands and standardized accountability policies expand the roles of teachers outside of the classroom domain, causing them to focus on the most pressing tasks, which in most cases do not improve instructional practice (Apple & Jungck, 1996). Ballet et al. (2006) elaborate on how the decisions of policy-makers, particularly regarding evaluation and tightened accountability, cause an over-extension of teachers' roles from the classroom. Thus, teachers are faced with greater responsibility and an expanding workload without the autonomy that allows most professionals to effectively do their work (Ballet et al., 2006). Consequently, teachers develop an over-reliance on externally prescribed curriculum, a loss of curricular and pedagogical autonomy, and are de-professionalized (synonymously referred to as “de-skilled”) as teacher practitioners (Apple & Jungk, 2006; Ballet et al., 2006; Crocco & Costigan, 2007; Hamilton et al., 2008; Tschannen-Moran, 2009).

Delegating greater responsibility to teachers can be regarded as an effort to professionalize teaching, as previously conveyed by Rowan's (1994) argument that

professionalization rests on increasing the complexity of teachers' work. However, several researchers assert that quality instruction requires teachers to operate in an environment where they are subscribed professional autonomy over decisions that affect the classroom (Apple & Jungck, 1996; Finnigan & Gross, 2007; Ingersoll, 2007, 2011). Ingersoll (2007) elaborates on this premise: “It makes no sense to hold people accountable for something they do not control or to give people control over something for which they are not held accountable. Accountability without commensurate power is unfair and can be harmful” (p. 5). As articulated by Ingersoll (2011), an increase in responsibility and accountability must be coupled with an increase in autonomy to buffer the threat of de-professionalization.

Based on the research presented in this review, the impact NCLB and ESSA accountability policies have on teachers' autonomy does not paint a promising future for teacher professionalization. Although the literature presented does not represent *all* schools and *all* teachers, it does substantiate the position that many teachers are experiencing a degree of de-professionalization, as the act of teaching is reduced to a series of seemingly endless technical tasks. Regardless of the negative implications national accountability policies have on professionalization, it does not appear that accountability policies will lessen in the coming years. ESSA reinforces this assumption. In fact, tightened accountability policies seem to steadily increase and remain a topic of contention in today's education reform agenda. As such, the following section will briefly discuss how education scholars recommend professionalization efforts to proceed in an education policy era driven by standards-based accountability.

Synthesis of the Research Findings

Researchers recognize that teachers' roles may inevitably intensify or expand to get students to meet globally competitive levels of intellectual attainment, while also meeting measures of accountability (Apple, 2007; Tschannen-Moran, 2009). How then do school leaders buffer the threat of intensification on professionalization?

Contrary to Apple and Jungck (1997, 2007), some researchers argue that intensification of a teacher's work environment does not necessarily always negate professionalization (Ballet et al., 2006; Finnigan & Gross, 2007). According to this line of research, the degree to which teachers experience the adverse effects of intensification is dependent upon the extent to which school leaders mitigate the negative impact policy can have on teacher professionalization (Ballet et al., 2006; Finnigan & Gross, 2007; Tschannen-Moran, 2009).

For example, instead of increasing teachers' professional development with work of "dubious value" (Valli & Buese, 2007, p. 538), professional development should center around the collaboration and exchange of instructional strategies and planning for effective curriculum. Additionally, if administrators adopted the role of an "instructional leader" (Elmore, 2000, p. 130) they would be more thoroughly equipped with the skills that would combat the threat of intensification from the technical core of teachers' work (Elmore, 2000; Tschannen-Moran, 2009). In this regard, administrators would buffer non-instructional issues from teachers and allocate power to teachers to collaborate over the design of professional development and adoption of curricular and instructional resources and strategies (Elmore, 2000).

Summary

The accountability policies of NCLB and ESSA as an approach for alleviating poor teacher quality, pose somewhat of a paradox. While the approach attempts to professionalize teachers through higher standards of evaluation, the research presented throughout this review demonstrates how the policy undermined the fundamental criteria of professionalization: autonomy. Although both the research and policy community acknowledge the substantiated drawbacks NCLB and ESSA accountability has had on teaching practice, standards-based accountability policies prevail in today's education policy agenda. Thus, this paper poses two recommendations for future research on professionalization within the current context of standards-based accountability policies.

First, this literature review recommends that further research should be conducted on how the organization of schools affects the professionalization of teachers. For example, is professionalization even possible in a rationalized bureaucratic system of education? Characterized by a hierarchal form of occupational governance, the bureaucratic organization of schools explains why most school-wide decisions were beyond the scope of autonomy subscribed to teachers and left up to the discretion of district board members and school administrators.

While it is irrefutable that there are underperforming teachers in our schools, Richard Ingersoll (2007) underscores the significant impact organization and school management have on the problem of teacher quality. He states, "The data show that the high degree of centralization in schools and lack of teacher control of their work—and not the opposite—often adversely affect how well schools function. Top-down accountability reforms may divert attention from the organizational sources of school

problems” (Ingersoll, 2007, p. 4). This raises the question of whether teachers will ever achieve professionalization in schools that are managed around a centralized authority.

While the last several decades have been characterized by education reforms targeting teacher quality, these reforms rarely target the organization of schools themselves (Chubb & Moe, 1988). Do other forms of school organization or non-linear forms of school leadership characterized by shared-decision making processes allow for the successful convergence of accountability and professionalization? Research that addresses these questions can offer valuable insight as to whether or not accountability and professionalization can coexist in bureaucratic school organizations.

The final recommendation of this literature review regards school leadership. District governing boards and school principals have a substantial amount of authority over decisions that affect teachers’ instructional practice (Ingersoll, 2007). However, principals have traditionally been fairly removed from classroom activities and their professional development and training largely center on organizational management, rather than instructional leadership (Elmore, 2000). Therefore, it is unsurprising that principals feel compelled to adopt “teacher-proof” curriculum resources, which may not ultimately support teachers’ pedagogical improvement. The replacement of NCLB with ESSA has not changed this reality. While there is yet to be a consensus on what distinguishes a successful school leader, it is necessary to examine how school leaders successfully preserve and improve the quality of instruction in a somewhat unpredictable education policy context. It is important to keep in mind how the oversimplification of the diagnosis for poor teacher quality can result in policy prescriptions that can further contribute to teacher ineffectiveness.

The purpose of this literature review was to investigate how standards-based accountability policies affect teacher professionalization, particularly in regards to autonomy. Drawing from various mixed-methods studies, this chapter examined how system-wide alignment of curriculum, instruction, and professional development in response to the threat of not meeting Annual Yearly Progress, or poor marks on A-F grading, has resulted in a significant loss of teacher autonomy over decisions that affect classroom instruction. This chapter concludes that the intensification and expansion of teaching tasks, prescription of curriculum, and erosion of autonomy over curriculum and instruction have caused teachers to experience a degree of de-professionalization. The unintended consequences of national accountability policies offer an explanation as to why teachers have yet to achieve professionalization.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of the study was to investigate current high school students' perceptions of the professionalization of teaching and gauge their potential for joining the teaching profession in the future. A questionnaire developed by the researcher was used to gather perceptual data based on the following categories from the professionalization model developed by Ingersoll and Merrill (2011): (a) licensing and credential levels; (b) induction and mentoring programs for entrants; (c) professional development opportunities and participation; (d) specialization; (e) authority over decision-making; (f) compensation levels; and (g) prestige and occupational social standing.

This qualitative research study had one all-encompassing question to guide the development of the design. The question is: What are the perceptions of high achieving high school students in one Arkansas school district regarding the professionalization of teaching?

Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative phenomenological research design to reveal the perceptions of participating students in the top 20% of their high school class regarding the professionalization of teaching and to determine their receptiveness to choosing teaching as a career option. Phenomenology was the preferred design in this study because it allowed the researcher to learn from the participants' experiences during a lived event. By collecting data from these participants, the researcher extracted the richest meaning and understanding of the event (Creswell, 2013).

Participants

The participants in this study were high school juniors and seniors within the top 20% of their high school classes in the participating school district during the 2020-2021 school year. Even though perceptions of students in other demographic groups could be relevant, this research study only sought the perceptual data from students graduating with high academic merit within the targeted school district. The participating school district has 2,981 students in K-12 education. The district also has 200 pre-school students enrolled; however, preschool enrollment is not a statistical metric reviewed by Arkansas accountability systems for average daily attendance. The student population in the participating school district had the following demographics; 97% are African-American, and 92% of students are classified as “low income” as determined by the Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

Data Collection

The primary source for data collection was a researcher-developed questionnaire administered to the participants through an online survey software program, QuestionPro® (See Appendix A). The researcher sought permission from the appropriate agent (superintendent) in the participating school districts to conduct the study. Also, before the questionnaire was administered the researcher sought permission from the Arkansas Tech University Institutional Review Board (IRB) (See Appendix B).

Once permission was obtained from the school district, the researcher gained the assistance of the school-level principal and counselors in the high school to identify the top 20% of students in the eleventh and twelfth grades. To maintain confidentiality and abide by consent protocol, the survey link was provided to students only after consent

was obtained by their parent or guardian. Because of the structure of the survey, the researcher did not learn the identity of any of the participants.

The QuestionPro® software had the capability of compiling the responses and downloading the results so that the researcher could analyze the descriptive results. The response rate for online surveys has been noted in the research literature to be lower than other data collection methods. However, since all data collected are considered to be qualitative the response rate was not a deciding factor as to the validity of the study.

The questionnaire used in this study included Likert-type items that allowed the researcher to analyze the degree to which participants believed that their likelihood of entering the teaching profession was influenced by identified professionalization metrics. The researcher gathered demographic data related to each student's gender, grade level, and perceived belief that their high school has prepared them for college.

Instrument

Data was collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire with open-ended sections that allowed the participants to expand on their responses. This provided richer and deeper contexts to the student responses (See Appendix A). Although the questionnaire contains Likert-type items that will require the participant to select a numbered response for each item, these responses were considered qualitative in nature. The numbers in Likert items simply identify the level of response or a ranking of their perception of the item. Therefore, the numbers do not identify scale or magnitude and are irrelevant as measures. Because the data are considered qualitative, the questionnaire in this study did not require the usual validity and reliability identifiers. The study did not seek statistical significance and it is noted that generalizability of the results to other

districts was not sought. The results are strictly snap-shot responses from the participants themselves.

However, the questionnaire was vetted through a peer-review process that established the trustworthiness of the data. The process included sharing the items with five current or former district superintendents for feedback and recommendations for changes if needed. The researcher also provided the questionnaire to members of the dissertation committee for their review.

All peer review members completed doctorate degrees in educational leadership and served, or serve, in senior leadership in school districts. Their intimate knowledge of qualitative survey methodology made all of the peer review members expert panelists to provide feedback for this questionnaire. Additionally, each member has experience in recruiting teachers to school districts. Their experiences aided in fine-tuning the instrument to better align with the research question and purpose. This review process added trustworthiness to the researcher-created questionnaire.

Descriptive statistics were applied to the research analysis using the Kruskal-Wallis Test to ascertain differences in the items based on gender, grade level, and school attended. In descriptive statistics, “the researcher only attempts to describe what the data shows. The descriptive nature of the study spurred the researcher to make meaningful conclusions from the broad data sets within a relatively small sample size. This was helpful as the researcher investigated open-ended and Likert Scale responses” (Trochim, 2020). The Kruskal-Wallis Test was best applied to this research study because of “four basic assumptions: 1) The survey methodology included ordinal variables such as a Likert Scale; 2) Two or more categorical groups; 3) No participant was in more than one

group; and 4) Close analysis of the distribution scores of each group for accurate analysis based on the mean scores of each group” (Laerd, 2020). Again, no correlation was made in this study.

Data Analysis

The data collected in this study consisted of numbered responses to Likert-type questionnaire items and textual data from responses to open-ended questions that accompany the Likert items. The analysis of the numeric data consisted of descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and percentages, to provide an overall description of the participants’ responses.

The textual data obtained from the participant responses to the questionnaire items were analyzed using the constant comparative method (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The constant comparative method uses a system referred to as unitizing and categorizing the data. After reviewing these units of data multiple times they are placed in a category. After all of the data have been processed in this way, the categories form the basis for themes that emerge and tell the story that has been lived by these participants. In turn, this provides a better understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Ethical Considerations

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Arkansas Tech University reviewed all required documents before the survey was conducted. Additionally, permission from the IRB was granted before data collection began (See Appendix B). The confidentiality of each participant was of high priority because each of the participants was a high school student. The survey was voluntary but highly encouraged. Parental/guardian consent was obtained before the student completed the survey. Participants were not able to access the

survey in QuestionPro® after completion, therefore ensuring one response per participant.

Summary

This chapter outlined the research methods, procedures, and data analysis that were used to synthesize information regarding the perspectives of high achieving high school students within one Arkansas school district related to teacher professionalization and the participants' likelihood of entering the teaching field. Qualitative research methods with descriptive survey questions were deemed the most appropriate due to the flexibility within the constant comparative method to identify themes that might emerge to fully contextualize the frequencies and percentages of responses to the Likert-scaled items.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

The purpose of this study was to investigate the current reality of student perceptions of the teaching profession in one Arkansas school district using the following criteria: (a) licensing and credential levels; (b) induction and mentoring programs for entrants; (c) professional development opportunities and participation; (d) specialization; (e) authority over decision-making; (f) compensation levels; and (g) prestige and occupational social standing. By analyzing the survey results, the researcher was able to draw conclusions regarding high achieving students' perceptions of the teaching profession and the likelihood of high achieving students entering the teaching field.

The study was guided by the following research question: What are the perceptions of high achieving high school students in one Arkansas school district regarding teaching as a profession? The perceptual data drawn from the survey was multi-faceted and included open-ended responses from students. This chapter contains an overview of the data collection process and analysis of the study. The researcher was able to draw themes and conclusions based on the students' responses.

Participants

The participants in this study were high school juniors and seniors within the top 20% of their high school classes in the participating school district during the 2020-2021 school year. Even though perceptions of students in other demographic groups could be relevant, this research study only sought the perceptual data from students graduating with high academic merit within the targeted school district. A total of 28 students completed the survey. The researcher sent the survey to 59 students after parental consent forms were received. This response rate was lower than expected; however, COVID-19

and virtual instruction placement were complicating factors for receiving consent forms and survey completion.

Data Collection

Data were collected using the online platform *QuestionPro*. An email was sent to the parents of all students in the top 20% of their junior or senior class. The email explained the process for data collection and included a link for a consent form through *DocuSign*. The survey was sent to students only after consent was received from their parent/guardian. The parents and students were assured that the information from the survey would be anonymous and no identifiable information would be shared. The actual student survey data collection began on March 12, 2021, and continued through April 6, 2021. Four email reminders were sent to both parents and students.

Survey Results

The participants in this study included 28 students in the top 20% of their junior or senior class at the participating Arkansas high school. The survey instrument included 31 questions. Of these questions, 11 included an open-ended section where participants could provide greater depth for their responses. These 11 open-ended question responses, combined with the students' multiple choice answers, allowed the researcher to determine trends in perceptions regarding the teaching profession (see Appendix A for the complete survey instrument).

The first two questions of the survey asked for participants' gender and grade level, respectively. Only 26 of the 28 students completed the gender portion of the questionnaire. Of these respondents, 69% were female and 31% were male. All 28

students completed the portion of the survey indicating grade level. Of these respondents, 54% were 11th graders while 46% were in the 12th grade.

Questions three through five asked for the participants to identify if they planned to attend college. Furthermore, students were asked to qualify the extent to which their high school had prepared them for post-secondary education. Additionally, an open-response section was included to provide context for the researcher. The results indicated that 89% of respondents planned to attend college, but 63% of respondents believed that their school had not prepared them for college. Specifically, question five asked students to comment on the level that their school had prepared them for college. Of the 63% of students that felt that their school had not prepared them for college, one student responded, “I have not had a proper math teacher since 9th grade... I have been given substitutes and unqualified people to teach me the skills and give me the foundation I need for math in college.” Another participant commented, “I feel as if teachers focus more on grades and other things than their students.” A third student mentioned, “I still find myself worrying about how to write a good college-level essay. I don’t know how to manage my time, stress, or money.” One of the most direct responses indicated, “Throughout my high school experience, I have had very few teachers who actually knew the material that they taught.” Consistent trends regarding teacher preparation and curricular breakdowns emerged from these responses.

Questions six and seven were designed to determine the extent to which the respondents had considered being teachers in the future. Of these respondents, 82% responded, “not at all”, and only 10% considered being a teacher to some degree. Only 7% of students in the study had “strongly considered” becoming a teacher. These data

became further contextualized through question seven, an open-response item. Responses included, "...teachers simply do not get paid enough" and "I don't have the patience to do it." Still, one student posited, "I would like to give another generation the enjoyment of English, reading, and writing that I have." Students articulated the importance of quality teachers, but overall the participants did not see teaching as desirable for their career choice.

Questions eight through ten requested that students provide information regarding how important salary is in their future profession. Students were asked about their knowledge of teacher salaries and how their knowledge impacts their desire to become a teacher. Lastly, an open-response question was included for qualitative analysis. Of the responses to these questions, 86% indicated that salary is either "extremely important" or "important" for their future profession. Furthermore, 86% of students also indicated that their knowledge about teacher salaries was either "extremely negatively" or "negatively" impacted their desire to become a teacher in the future. Responses included, "As useful as they are, teachers are severely underpaid" and "... their salary isn't enough to live on and most have family they have to support. Also, having to find a job in the summer is kind of bewildering."

Questions 11 through 13 asked about the importance of credentialing and licensure in a future profession. Of these responses, 79% indicated that pathways for credentialing or licensure were important for a future career and 54% indicated that what they knew about teacher licensing and credentialing "extremely negatively" or "negatively" impacted their desire to become a teacher. Responses included, "It's not that much as compared to a doctor or a lawyer" and "It does not seem to be hard to become a

teacher.” Other perspectives included, “... it may be tough but worth it...” and “The process of becoming a teacher can be very simple.”

Questions 14 through 16 addressed mentoring in a profession and students’ perceptions of teacher mentoring. The participants were asked to indicate how their knowledge of teacher mentoring impacted their desire to become a teacher in the future. Of these responses, 86% responded that being mentored in their future profession is either “extremely important” or “important” and 52% answered that their knowledge of teacher mentoring either “extremely negatively” or “negatively” impacted their desire to become a teacher. It is noteworthy that 48% of students answered “extremely positively” or “positively” in regards to perceptions of teacher mentoring and its impact on becoming a teacher in the future. This is in stark contrast to other sections, such as salary. Positive responses such as: “... teachers exchange information and skills with beginners to help them teach their students, which I believe is very helpful” were countered by opinions like, “I have witnessed a first-year teacher not be mentored in the way they were supposed to, and be fired because of it.” Overall, the section regarding teacher mentoring offered divergent responses from students.

Survey questions 17 through 19 addressed professional development and students’ perceptions of teacher professional development. Consistent with the structure of the survey, an open-response section was included to determine how student knowledge of teacher professional development impacted their desire to become a teacher. Of the responses received, 86% indicated that professional development opportunities were important in a future profession. However, only 39% of students stated that their knowledge about teacher professional development “extremely

positively” or “positively’ impacted their desire to become a teacher. This noteworthy finding was not the most disparate gap between positive and negative perceptions of students, but the implications were numerous. One student indicated, “Working together on a team of educators is a necessity in ensuring bright and well-rounded generations or students, which is what learning is all about.” Still another perspective can be represented by, “With all of the “professional development” that teachers are going through, it is still not helping. In order for a child to learn they need to have a clear mind and that is where most fail...” A particularly pithy student replied, “It doesn’t.” No one perspective presented itself in this section.

Questions 20 through 22 pertained to specialization within a profession and the impact of teacher specialization on students’ desire to become a teacher in the future. An open-ended section was included. Of these responses, 93% indicated that the ability to specialize in one or more areas was important in a future profession. Interestingly, 61% of students listed that their knowledge about teachers being able to specialize in differing areas “extremely negatively” or “negatively” impacted their desire to become a teacher. While it is not the largest gap in student perception, it is important to note that almost all of the student respondents believe that specialization is important in the desired profession. Student answers included, “You study only one subject and can only teach that subject” and “Even though a teacher knows how to teach multiple things, they don’t get paid for it in the end. So it doesn’t matter.” A more complete listing is included in Chapter Five.

Questions 23 through 25 asked students to identify how important authority over decision-making is in their future profession and analyze how their knowledge of teacher

authority over decision-making impacts their desire to become a teacher in the future. Of these responses, 89% indicated that authority over decision-making is important to their future profession. Interestingly, 71% of students answered that their knowledge of teacher authority over decision-making either “extremely negatively” or “negatively” impacted their desire to become a teacher in the future. This percentage is qualified by open-response items, such as, “From what I have seen, teachers do not get a say. They get a command...” and “I don’t think teachers’ opinions are taken into much consideration during important decision-making processes.” Respondents also commented that teachers are capable of good decisions in their profession but are overlooked at times, “Teachers are equipped to make good decisions” and “A lot of teachers have no voice, which doesn’t seem productive, and it doesn’t seem like it would positively impact a workplace.” Further analysis and summary of the qualitative findings regarding authority over decision-making are presented in Chapter Five.

Questions 26 through 28 were designed to determine participants’ perceptions of social status and prestige in their future professions. Furthermore, students were asked to indicate how their knowledge of the prestige and social standing of teachers impacts their desire to become a teacher in the future. An open-ended section was included as well. Of these responses, 75% answered that prestige and social status are important in their future profession and 64% of students also responded that their knowledge of the social status and prestige of teaching “extremely negatively” or “negatively” impacted their desire to become a teacher. One participant responded by saying, “Teachers are very disrespected and looked down on.” Providing additional context, one student replied, “Surgeons get recognized when they do well but no one knows about the teachers who taught them. In

one particularly career-affirming opinion, one respondent stated, "... I think teachers get a lot of respect from society because of their career." Student perspectives were disparate in this section. The prestige and social status portions of the survey yielded rich qualitative data with room for interpretation. More interpretation regarding this topic is presented in Chapter Five.

Questions 29 and 30 asked students to respond to their likelihood of becoming a teacher. An open-ended section for qualitative analysis was also included. Of the responses, 82% of students in this study indicated that it was "extremely unlikely" or "unlikely" that they would become a teacher in their future profession. Only one participant listed that it was "extremely likely" that they would become a teacher in the future. The open-ended responses of the students indicated that salary, social status, and authority over decision-making were the three largest deterrents for becoming a teacher in the future. One respondent commented, "Teachers do not receive the income for the life that I want to live." Another said, "I want control over what I do and want to be able to care about students' mental health and not just their work."

Lastly, question 31 asked students to list the professions that they have considered for their futures. Predominantly, desired future professions pertained to the medical field. Nurse, doctor, veterinarian, physical therapist, and psychologist were mentioned throughout the survey. In every case that teaching was mentioned in student responses, it was in a series with other professions. Not one response had teaching as a stand-alone and singular choice.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

This qualitative study was conducted to answer a central research question: What are the perceptions of high achieving high school students in one Arkansas school district regarding teaching as a profession? The following characteristics that make up the professional model were used in the survey for the qualitative study: (a) licensing and credential levels; (b) induction and mentoring programs for entrants; (c) professional development opportunities and participation; (d) specialization; (e) authority over decision-making; (f) compensation; and (g) prestige and occupational social standing (Ingersoll & Merrill 2011, p. 186).

Survey research methods were used to gather perceptions of high achieving juniors and seniors in one Arkansas high school. Consent from parents or guardians was obtained before students completed the survey. Consent forms were sent to the parents or guardians of 79 students. 59 parents replied with consent. Of those 59 parents or guardians, 28 of their students completed the survey. While the researcher would have preferred a greater completion rate, numerous electronic reminders were disseminated. The online survey included a Likert scale to determine students' perceptions of the teaching profession. Additionally, 11 open-response questions enabled respondents to provide explanations for their answer choices. The researcher was able to gain greater insight and pinpoint trends because of the open-response portions of the survey.

Chapter Five includes a summary and interpretation of the research findings. Implications are drawn from the data. However, the analysis is not meant to be causal in nature. Additionally, the findings cannot be extrapolated for correlational purposes because the sample size was limited to one high school.

Summary of the Findings

The purpose of this research study was to determine how high achieving high school students view the teaching profession. Furthermore, through the survey methodology, the researcher examined which factors of professionalization were most closely considered by the student participants. Extensive prior research about student perceptions of the teaching profession is limited, with none in Arkansas, specifically. Moreover, the previous research did not include past perceptual surveys focusing explicitly on professionalization metrics as a tool to discern high achieving students' opinions regarding teaching as a profession. The nature of the findings may bring greater discourse concerning the level of teacher capacity building and efficacy in the district. Retention and recruitment considerations are embedded within the research conclusions.

The focus areas for the survey were: (a) licensing and credential levels; (b) induction and mentoring programs for entrants; (c) professional development opportunities and participation; (d) specialization; (e) authority over decision-making; (f) compensation; and (g) prestige and occupational social standing. Students were also asked to determine their overall likelihood of becoming teachers in the future. Students were asked to determine how they felt their high school had prepared them for college. Participants also listed preferred professions for the future. The open-response portions of the survey allowed the perceptual data to have context using the participants' own words. Overall, the survey results did not show a favorable perception of the teaching profession by the high school's high achieving juniors and seniors. Only five of the respondents even considered becoming a teacher, with only one of those students listing

teaching as a “highly likely” career choice. The reasons for this phenomenon are numerous and are outlined in this chapter.

Interpretation of Findings

The first data point that provides immediate context to the survey pertains to the extent that the participants had considered becoming a teacher. A majority (82%) of participants had “not at all” considered becoming a teacher. Further, only 7% of students in the survey “strongly considered it.” The tone of the research findings can be summarized from this data set. The high achieving students in this study do not consider teaching to be a profession worthy of their time or effort. At face value, it is intriguing information, but the true depth of the perception gap cannot be determined until looking at the open-response question related to this item. Salary, autonomy over decision-making, and social status are overtly presented by the participants as limiting factors. An altruistic and aspirational slant regarding teaching was described by students in the survey, however, ultimately, for the respondents, teaching was on the losing end of a cost/benefit analysis where factors of compensation and social disregard are poignant reminders of the “de-professionalization” of teaching. In one of the best cases, teaching was viewed as a profession to consider if a student’s “higher hopes” for themselves fail to come to reality. Teaching is not a “dream career” as some respondents mentioned. On the contrary, the responses indicate that teaching could potentially be a career safety plan if their aspirations fail to materialize.

For the students in this research study, the salary was a clear factor in considering teaching as a career choice. Of those responding, 86% said that their knowledge of teacher salaries negatively impacted their desire to consider teaching as a profession in

the future. In thinking about future career prospects, high-achieving students in this study displayed a clear perspective that teachers did not make enough money to consider it as a viable option. Within the open-responses, students displayed a tone of exasperation regarding the daily job of a teacher: 1) “I know teachers don’t get paid much and in my opinion teachers have to deal with entirely too much to get paid what they do;” 2) “Too low of pay for such an important job;” 3) Being a teacher is a good job, but they don’t get paid as much as people think. They should be paid more;” 4) “... they don’t get paid for the extreme conditions they’re put through sometimes;” and 5) “... teachers are not paid enough to the lengths they go through for their students. They work hard to make sure they instill the knowledge that is needed no matter what, but they don’t get the pay they deserve to show for it.” The commentary is clear. The pay is not enough for the tasks of being a professional educator.

The researcher was unsure if credentialing and licensure were areas that students would have enough background knowledge for cogent responses. The majority of the respondents listed pathways to earn a credential or license as important for their future profession. However, just 54% said that their knowledge of teacher pathways for licensure or credentialing negatively impacted their desire to become a teacher. In analyzing the open-responses, the data came alive: 1) “It doesn’t seem that hard to become a teacher;” 2) “It is not that much, as compared to a doctor or lawyer;” 3) “The process of getting a teaching license can be very simple;” and 4) You only have to have a four-year degree to become a teacher and take the test needed but I still wouldn’t want to become a teacher.” A number of the responses were neutral in their perception of credentialing in teaching, and that was reflected in open-response answers such as, “It

doesn't impact my desire to become a teacher... I don't have a desire to become a teacher."

Teacher mentoring presented itself as a possible redemptive quality in how high achieving students view the teaching profession. The vast majority viewed mentoring as important in their future profession, and just over half of the respondents felt that their knowledge of teacher mentoring had a negative effect on their desire to become a teacher in the future. Despite this seemingly positive data set, responses were mainly theoretical and non-specific in their scope: 1) "I chose positively because teacher mentoring is effective and helps aspiring teachers grow;" 2) Teacher mentoring is extremely important for those who want to go into that field. You need some type of role model to look up to;" and 3) "During teacher mentoring, teachers exchange information and skills with beginners to help them better teach their students, which I believe is very helpful."

Teacher mentoring is a topic that can best be known by someone inside of the profession. For students, unless they experience co-teaching or other collaborative team structures in their classrooms, they may not witness the benefits of teacher mentoring. Further, still, students may believe that mentoring is an inherent part of becoming a teacher. If they have not observed it first-hand, students may be more likely to believe that mentoring is good and would aid in their journey to the classroom. On the contrary, novice teachers often find that mentorship lacks practical benefits. As the number of career educators has diminished over the years, teacher shortages and poor retention are exacerbated by gaps in mentoring for new teachers.

Another area of hope in student perceptions was professional development. While 86% of respondents believed that professional development is important in a future

profession, 39% of students had a positive perception of how teacher professional development impacted their desire to be a teacher in the future. This compared favorably to other metrics with more negative perceptions. Professional development, along with credentialing and mentoring, appeared as a potential highlight. When discussing professional development, respondents mentioned that it "...is highly recommended" and "provides teachers with better methods to help them become better teachers." A consistent response for this section can be summarized through one student's response, "I do not want to be a teacher." Professional development could be considered a neutral factor for high-achieving students. Overall, the students in this study were mainly disinterested in becoming teachers. Students were not able to overlook the key issues of compensation, autonomy in decision-making, and social status when thinking about teaching as a profession.

The researcher did not anticipate that specialization in a future profession would matter to high achieving students. However, 93% of students felt it would be important in a future field. Also, only 61% of students in the study had a negative view of how teacher specialization would impact their desire to become a teacher in the future. Overall, students felt that specializing in more than one area is good for everyone— students, teachers, and even the school. Still, the main perspective for this response item was negative due to the overall lack of student desire to become a teacher in the future. One respondent provided the most thorough and articulate example of high achieving student thinking from the survey, "It doesn't impact my desire to become a teacher, but it does give me an extra backup career option. I plan on majoring in architecture. If for whatever reason that profession doesn't work for me, I could get a non-traditional teaching license

and work as a teacher specialized in architecture.” Upon first glance, this can seem innocuous, but the implications are expansive. The belief that teaching can be a “fallback” plan has a historical context (See Chapter Two). Students are presented with many different teachers in their K-12 educational experiences. By simple observation, students develop varied opinions regarding the teaching profession based on the pedagogies, and overall effectiveness, of their teachers. If highly effective teachers are not consistently presented to high achieving students, these students may begin to view the teaching profession as a field that does not expect continued excellence. Stated another way, high achieving students may not begin to believe that teaching could be a viable option until they fail in their first career choice. This would be wildly problematic for ongoing recruitment into the field.

Autonomy over decision-making is a much-discussed component of teacher retention and recruitment. Conversely, as mentioned in Chapter Two, autonomy regarding decision-making is a foundational component of professionalization across career options. Consistent with this reality, 89% of students in the survey identified authority over decision-making as “important” or “extremely important.” When asked to answer questions about how their knowledge of teachers and their autonomy over decision-making impacted interest in teaching as a profession, 71% of respondents indicated “negatively” or “extremely negatively.” Furthermore, the open-response portion for this section provided dynamic answers that displayed strong student voice: 1) “Teachers have some sort of say in what goes on in the classroom, but they get told what to teach and how to;” 2) “Barely a say so if you ask me;” 3) Teachers have no authority over anything. Everything is ruled by the principal and the school board;” 4) Teachers

have to use a curriculum, so that's simply your superiors telling you what to teach along with how and when to teach it; and 5) "Because they don't make their own decisions they have to listen to somebody else."

While the above responses were representative of a coherent thread regarding autonomy in teaching, a more nuanced response provided this section with more grounding and provocation: "I want to have a say-so in what I get to teach in my class and how I get to teach them. I know that non-traditional teachers usually do not get to teach the way that they would like, and I do not want that for my class, because I plan on being a non-traditional teacher." Within this student's response, a consequence, sparked from the heightened accountability movement, became apparent. This student wants to become a teacher in the future, even if it is by "non-traditional" means. Their motivations, both intrinsic and altruistic, became obvious. Perception of a "traditional teacher" was either: 1) The language of "traditional teacher" was viewed as the opposite of "effective teacher" which means that, for this student, "traditional teacher" equals "undesirable profession;" or 2) Teaching is a backup plan for them. Although further questioning for this participant is required, this high-achieving student demonstrated a willingness to consider teaching but not as a first choice.

Prestige and social status seemed to be immensely factored into student responses. 75% of students mentioned that prestige and social status were important in their future profession. In that vein, 64% said that the prestige and social status of teaching negatively impacted their desire to become a teacher in the future. A commentary regarding altruism and perceived professional martyrdom pervaded the open-response section: 1) "Teachers should have a positive social status...;" 2) Surgeons

get recognized when they do well but no one knows about the teachers who taught them;”

3) “... teachers don’t really have, nor care about social status;” 4) “Teachers are very disrespected and looked down on;” 5) “Teachers are known to be underpaid;” 6) “teachers don’t need social status to be effective;” and 7) “Everyone knows teachers are underpaid and underappreciated (assuming they’re a teacher who actually does their job) and I’m hopeful people would exercise lenience because of this.”

The assumption in student responses was that teachers are under-appreciated and somewhat disrespected. Further, student responses indicated that teachers were aware of this underappreciation, and they do not care about social standing. Students in this study believed that teachers were in the field because of their internal compass, instead of extrinsic factors. This is a dangerous perspective that has crept into the psyche of the highest achieving students in the target high school of this study.

Overall, the results and their far-reaching implications are summed up in the following data set: 82% of students in the survey indicated that it was either “extremely unlikely” or “unlikely” that they would become a teacher in the future, and of the 18% that mentioned it was likely that they become a teacher in the future, only 4% of respondents indicated that it was “highly likely.” In interpreting these data points, the trend became undeniable: the high achieving students in this study did not want to become teachers because it did not fit their ideas of what their potential might be. The perception was that teaching was a stressful job with limited pay and limited authority to make decisions. Health and medical sciences were mentioned 19 times by students as the desired field. Creative arts was listed eight times. Education was only listed four times. The most academically accomplished students in the target school district seemingly

overlooked teaching as the desired field by using their negative first-hand observations as a guide.

Recommendations for Practice

This study had provided key context for the target school district in the study. Further, the findings point to a need for specific efforts to bolster perceptions of the teaching profession. As research in Chapter Two indicated, the steady de-professionalization of teaching has been an ongoing journey. The complications from high-stakes testing and accountability-first education politics have now impacted student perceptions of the teaching profession. Based on the research of this study, almost all of the respondents in the top 20% of their junior or senior classes do not plan to become teachers in the future. This provided the researcher some pause. These findings should instigate change for teacher preparation programs and local school district leadership, alike.

Specifically, teacher preparation programs should address the training and retention of quality teachers. Across all teaching universities, there is no uniform methodology or pedagogy in preparing future educators. Far too many novice teachers lack the experience or efficacy to provide solid instruction in their first years. Arkansas teaching universities could develop common standards for acceptance and completion. A dual vetting process for candidates, once in the initial phase of program acceptance and again upon graduation, would take disposition and mindsets into account. Graduates would then have extensive student-teaching experiences with mentors on the university and local school levels. Arkansas could adopt these standards while keeping the established four-year cohort model. In turn, Arkansas teachers could student teach for

three semesters before completion. The university and student-teaching sites would provide a mentor for each teaching candidate. Training programs would have common educational standards within the context of varied curricula.

Additionally, schools fit within the broader contexts of communities, states, and nations. In the present climate of testing and accountability, some schools lack the fortitude in leadership to teach the whole child—focusing only on summative test scores. This impacts students’ perceptions of the teaching profession. Any organization that fails to empower the lives of its members is destined to fail. American public education prepares students to live, work, and grow in a persisting democracy. The school as an organization must shift to a lattice instead of a ladder in leadership structuring. A lattice builds responsibility in employees while fostering autonomy in job satisfaction. The lattice depends on employees to take formal and informal leadership roles. More importantly, in the lattice, leadership efforts from employees are supported in multiple ways. More autonomy and support lead to greater career satisfaction—leading to greater results. Contrarily, a ladder thrives on job accountability and inherent power delineations defined by job titles. Schools should be corporations relying on people, not just numbers. Then, students could begin to view teaching as a profession with autonomy in decision-making, and not just a top-down managed occupation.

Teacher pay is an ever-evolving topic. Unfunded mandates for increased compensation packages continue to persist in state legislatures across the country. Arkansas is no exception. A pilot teacher compensation program would yield further research data regarding perceptions. If a district could pay teachers a professional wage, not just a “livable” wage, consistent with the expected complex job responsibilities of

teaching, then students could begin to witness teachers being respected as professionals. Compensation is not the only factor. However, in nearly every response from this research study, high achieving students perceived that teachers are underpaid.

Limitations

The research group for this study was limited. The population only included juniors and seniors in the top 20% academically from one high school. Additionally, the high school was not very diverse with 97% of students being African-American and 92% of students being classified as “low income” as classified by Arkansas DESE. Initially, the research goal was to survey, at minimum, 50 students for this study. The researcher only garnered 28 responses. This can be viewed as a limitation because a greater participant pool would have allowed for even richer responses

The period of the research study was also a limitation. February and March of 2021 included many COVID-19 restrictions for instructional delivery models. Additionally, 68% of students at the research high school received their daily academic instruction virtually. This meant that a majority of students did not participate in face-to-face onsite instruction. Due to this complication, consent forms and participation could have been negatively affected. In the original study design, a singular location would have been used for all students. This would have assisted with scheduling and survey completion. The high number of virtual-only attendance hindered greater participation.

Recommendations for Further Research

Additional research is needed to expand the potential correlational impact of poor professionalization practices on the teaching profession. Recommendations for further research could include:

1. Expand the scope to include high achieving juniors and seniors across the state of Arkansas
2. Focus on state-controlled school districts to gain a greater understanding of how state control and underperforming academic results impact high achieving students' desires to become teachers
3. Investigate the connection between high school class rank and future career choices. Research could be conducted to better determine what percentile rank is most likely to join the teaching force.

Conclusions

This qualitative research study extends, although in a limited scope, the overall body of knowledge regarding teacher retention and recruitment. If expanded, student perceptual surveys, especially those of high achieving students, would deepen the potential correlational ties between professionalization and attraction to the teaching profession. The unintended consequences of high-stakes testing and rigid accountability have overtaken the perceived enjoyment of teaching. To be sure, many high achieving high school and college students still join teaching as a profession. However, before they begin their first day on the job, they understand that: 1) pay will not be commiserate with complexity; 2) decision-making will be limited; and 3) society will view them as altruistic martyrs of sorts. Although system leaders already have access to the research to better understand this problem, they often perpetuate the issue by addressing symptoms instead of root causes.

To strengthen prestige and the social status of teaching, it does little good to lower the expectations of entry into the field. By opening even more pathways to alternative

teacher licensure, the system puts an undue burden on districts and schools to either “grow their own” or provide robust and comprehensive professional development to teachers regarding the basics of the profession. Even though student-teaching experiences are required by universities, the duration and frequency of high leverage coaching and development are inconsistent. As long as high achieving students, who are presumably diligent and conscientious learners, witness revolving doors of educators with limited experiences in teaching, they will continue to view teaching as second-rate. This phenomenon is compounded in underperforming schools where teacher and leader turnover is higher.

First-hand student experiences with K-12 teachers have the most potential to impact the desire to enter the field of teaching. Numerous news articles, blogs, and first-hand teacher stories highlight the need for educators to have second or third jobs to pay for their families’ expenses. Safety and financial security should be inevitable with a solid profession. For students in the modern K-12 system, there is a cognitive dissonance regarding teaching. Students feel the positive impact of high-quality teachers. They value and respect their most responsive teachers; however, the same students who respect their individual teachers, feel sorry for them as well. They love their teachers, yet students want to avoid a personal future that resembles their teachers’ lives. They do not want a teacher’s lifestyle for themselves. They want better.

It is important for national, state, and local education leaders to closely examine policies and their unintended consequences on student perceptions. As many political leaders have learned, taking for granted the perspectives of youth can ultimately make an idea, or a political party, obsolete in the future. This is happening before the eyes of

education leaders. Students are serving as witnesses to the failed policies that de-professionalize teachers, and ultimately, they are voting with their proverbial feet. They are leaving the K-12 system as students, going into career training programs, and only considering teaching as a backup plan. Despite this gap, some students still enter the field anyway, but as the current research trends indicate, their fervor and optimism grow weary within their first five years in the profession. Then, a new teacher is hired with the same optimism and perceived desire to change lives. Unfortunately, they are ill-equipped to manage the tasks of students' educational, social, and emotional needs. Within five years they "burn out." Yet still, somewhere in America, there are multitudes of professionals, who were once inquisitive and bright-eyed students. They would have become teachers if only the system did not show them the insidious devaluing of the teaching profession over time. They witnessed teaching become de-professionalized, year-by-year, until finally, their perception gave way to reality. Teaching is a backup plan, at best, for high achieving students. If retention and recruitment efforts are to be bolstered, leaders must closely analyze the perceptions of the most important stakeholders of all: the students.

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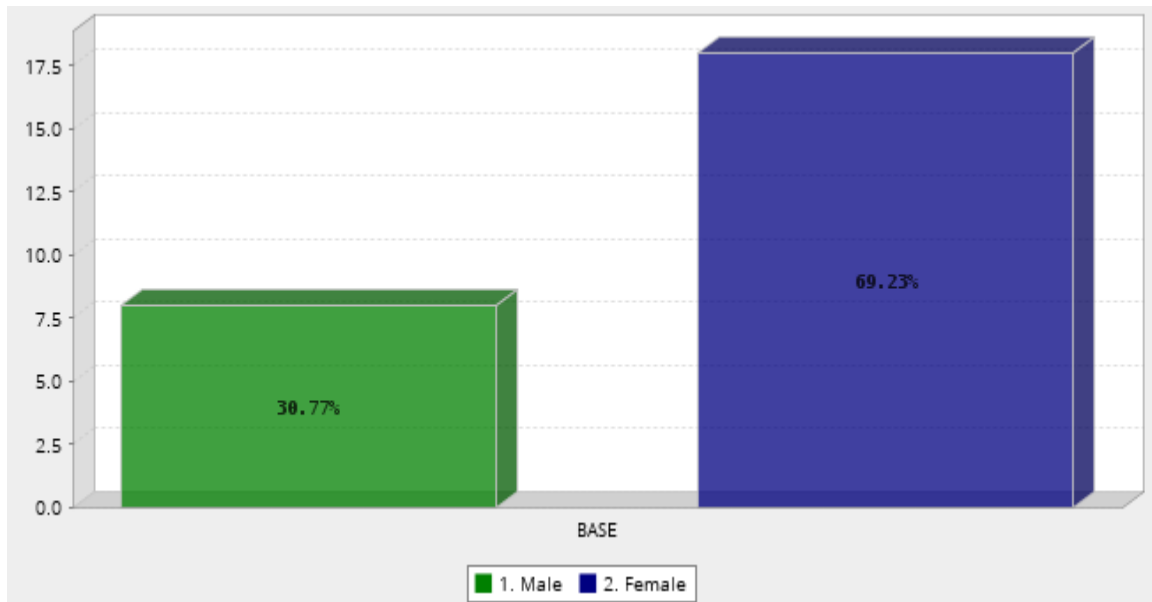
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Appendix A

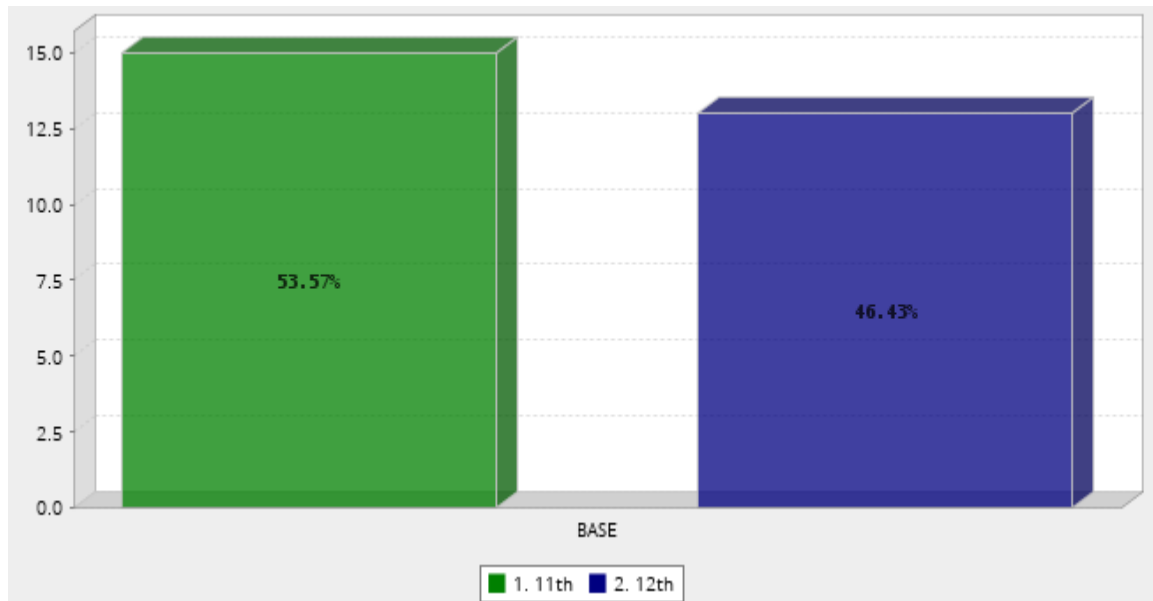
Survey Data

Q1. What is your gender?



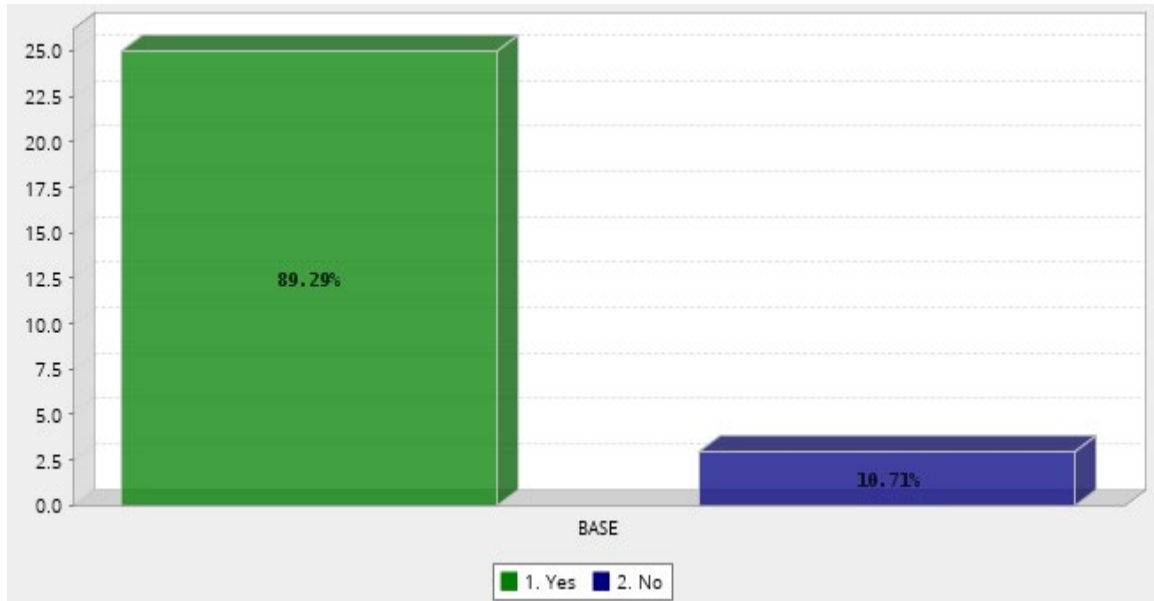
	Answer	Count	Percent
	1. Male	8	30.77%
	2. Female	18	69.23%
	Total	26	100%
Mean : 1.692	Confidence Interval @ 95% : [1.511 - 1.873]	Standard Deviation : 0.471	Standard Error : 0.092

Q2. What grade are you in?



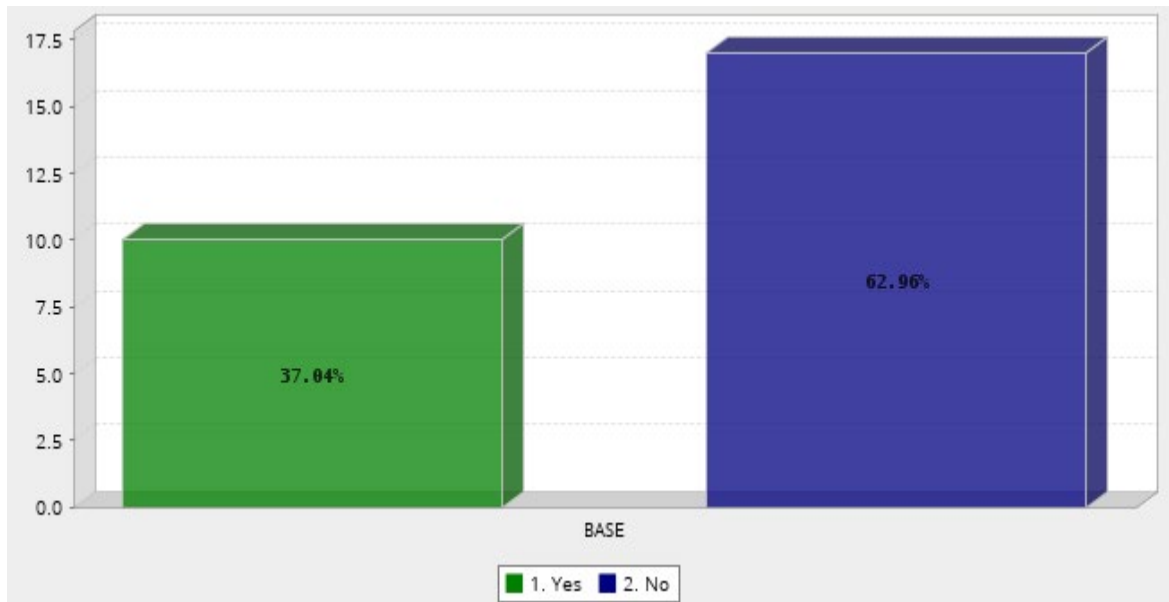
	Answer	Count	Percent
	1. 11th	15	53.57%
	2. 12th	13	46.43%
	Total	28	100%
Mean : 1.464	Confidence Interval @ 95% : [1.276 - 1.652]	Standard Deviation : 0.508	Standard Error : 0.096

Q3. Do you plan to attend college?



	Answer	Count	Percent
	1. Yes	25	89.29%
	2. No	3	10.71%
	Total	28	100%
Mean : 1.107	Confidence Interval @ 95% : [0.990 - 1.224]	Standard Deviation : 0.315	Standard Error : 0.060

Q4. Do you believe that your school has prepared you for college?



	Answer	Count	Percent
	1. Yes	10	37.04%
	2. No	17	62.96%
	Total	27	100%
Mean : 1.630	Confidence Interval @ 95% : [1.444 - 1.815]	Standard Deviation : 0.492	Standard Error : 0.095

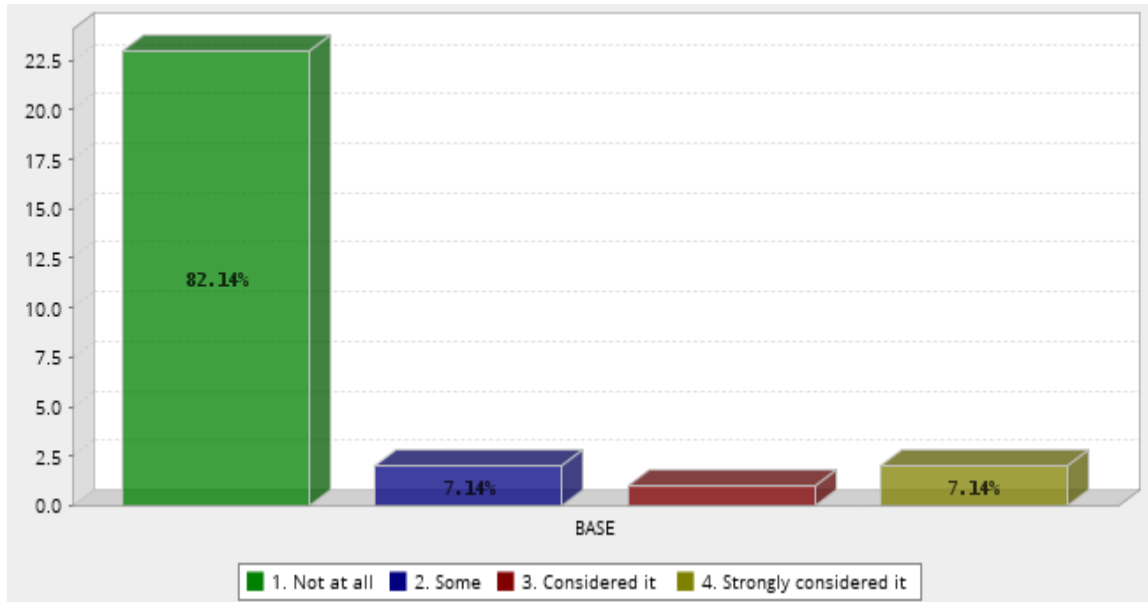
Q5. Why did you choose your answer?

42794421	I chose the answer no because I have not had a proper math teacher since 9th grade. The years after that teachers have been out of the classroom and I have been given substitutes and unqualified people to teach me the skills and give me the foundation I need for math in college. My AP US History teacher from the 11th grade just handed out assignment and gave us books never instructed us on anything. So I honestly overall can say I feel failed although I have had some good teachers.
42613240	Starting from my freshman year, all my classes had a real life aspect on what college life and work would be.
42110104	Because with all of this COVID19 interfering with my learning, I still believe there's more things I need to learn .
42103817	In some ways they have and in some ways they haven't. Pine bluff high is like tea. Half the time they listen to us and half the time they don't.
41993403	They have taught me all of the valuable skills and abilities needed to get into college and gave me resources to use to help me find a college of my liking.
41947063	Our school is behind on the curriculum
41930214	They have given me the academics and information I need and whether I use it is up to me, not them.
41922905	Because over the years there's been a lot of laziness & work ethic drought from a few of my teachers, especially this year during covid but this year was understandable, but being in a normal school year? It was VERY unacceptable.
41916944	My school is very unorganized and doesn't help at all the counselors do not talk to us about college opportunities or scholarships.
41913807	I chose the answer " No" for quite a few reasons . One to begin with is that I feel as if sometimes our teachers are more focused on grades and other things than their students. They're quick to put a F in the book instead of trying to help and I'm not saying all teachers are like that but some do this. They also at times don't seem concerned about students who at times may need extra help or extra life lessons, sometimes students can play around or just be playing. However. we all have potential to do and be something great and getting the proper help and learning from our teacher can fulfill into that, as well as ourselves. Another reason is I said this is because we are virtual, which is not the school's fault, however the way the virtual learning

	<p>is setup could be a little better organized. As in organize, I mean better learning programs to work through and things like that. For Instance. Edgenuity, say you want us all to stay at one pace and on one accord. This cannot be done in Edgenuity for the simple reason that Edgenuity assigns a date and you don't have to necessarily meet that date on that day but once you finish you are able to go ahead and complete other assignments and sometimes some students get finished before the others. Nothing's wrong with moving at a faster pace some times, though the problem comes in when you want everyone at the same pace. The last and final reason I said " No" would be that some of things we are taught in the school are not applied to life after high school in my opinion. We need more college ready courses taken and put in for students, we need to help students that need additional help so that they are college ready. There are steps that need to be taken for us to be prepared for college. I believe these problems or issues can be resolved and we can then be prepared for college. You can have yourself prepared college, learning is fundamental and research is helpful but with teacher it would be and our school I believe it would be absolutely better. I do hope we can get prepared for college soon as we have things we will need to be ready for and know.</p>
41912198	I've been taught college is hard the end.
41911695	I just don't believe that my school prepared me for college because I feel like I'm doing more of trying to get good grades than trying to be prepared. My family mostly helps me out with preparation.
41909362	I say that because I feel like my school's response to COVID was not the best, I feel as though there was little to no thought put into the choices at all.
41909257	School isn't helpful at all anymore
41761951	Because I still find myself worrying. I don't know how to write a good college level essay. I don't know how to manage my time, stress, or money.
41401660	We don't have no college prep classes . Our school does not inform us about the importance of it.
41382104	The majority of my teachers have done a great job teaching me, plus I put in the extra effort to prepare myself.
41229552	I feel like my school sometimes assisted me in school work too much and other times too little. Being helped or practically being given the answers to everything won't help you learn anything because then you'll expect to be told the answer all of the time & your grades won't line up with what you actually know. Being helped too little can cause unnecessary stress and confusion, a lot of teachers give a "How do you learn?" work sheet every year, knowing that no one learns the same. Teachers I have had only taught 1-2 different ways which leaves many children (sometimes including me) at awe about what's going in during class. They expect to teach something to

	you once and just hand class over to the students, & when some children ask for help they don't deliver because "they already taught that" or "you were taught that last year".
41220160	Being that I have taken advanced classes and programs since the second grade, and AP/Honors classes since the sixth grade, I feel that I am prepared for at least the basis of college. I compared my work to a friend's work, who is in college, and I knew how to do their work more than they did themselves.
41135646	My counselors send me as much info as possible about scholarships and different schools. Curriculums wise do I feel prepared?..I'm not sure because we are so behind
41123658	I don't believe college is necessary for my future.
41095905	I wished study for life pass college and I believe the school system has failed me on that.
41085357	Certain teachers care ,but for the majority everyone only cares about what we wear and how we look. In addition to that most of the teachers just bury us in work and if we don't meet the deadline we fail.
41081298	Throughout my high-school experience, I've had very few teachers who actually knew the material that they taught. Not only that, but I've always been more interested in the liberal arts field than the stem field or sports, and our school does not adequately prepare liberal arts students for college. For example, us only having a half semester offered of drama, and it being drama history instead of actual acting, doesn't really look great on the apps.
41079797	I believe that my school has prepared me for college
41079633	I chose yes because, 3 out of the 4 years that I have been at Pine Bluff High School I experienced the rigor and responsibilities I will possibly face at an university.
41079610	I don't feel as if our school is treating us how we would be in college. They should be preparing us for life after high school instead of just "college" we should have more opportunities to look into other than college. Them "preparing us" for college isn't an accurate statement because they don't allow us to be independent enough and this school year has completely changed my mind about school as a whole.

Q6. To what extent have you considered becoming a teacher?



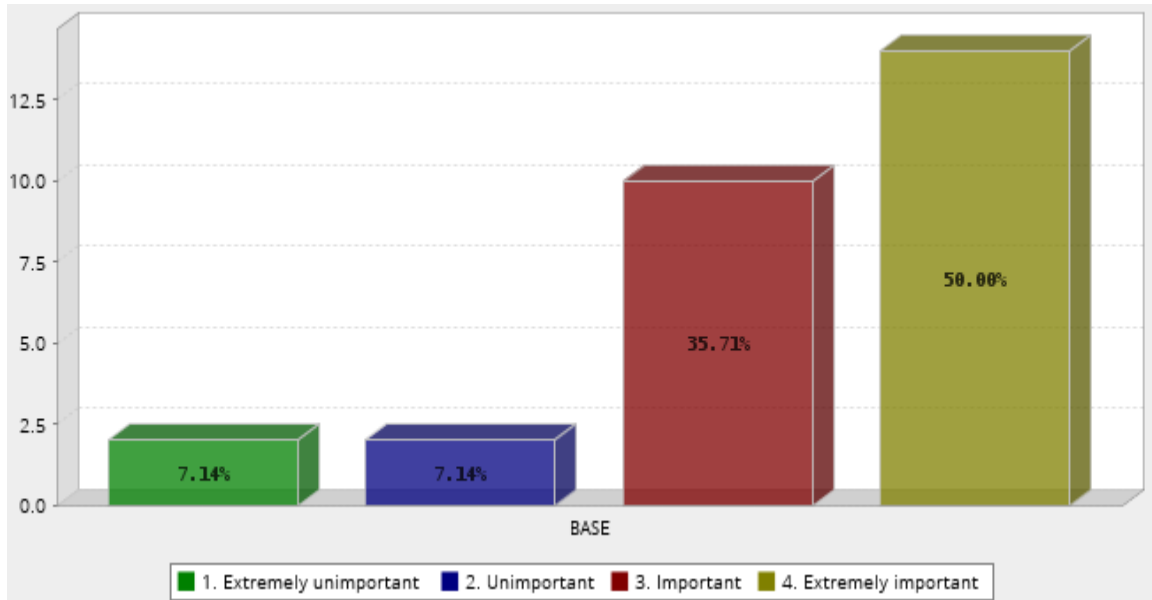
	Answer		Count	Percent
	1.	Not at all	23	82.14%
	2.	Some	2	7.14%
	3.	Considered it	1	3.57%
	4.	Strongly considered it	2	7.14%
	Total		28	100%
Mean : 1.357	Confidence Interval @ 95% : [1.035 - 1.679]		Standard Deviation : 0.870	Standard Error : 0.164

Q7. Why did you choose your answer?

42794421	I chose the answer not at all because teachers simply do not get paid enough.
42613240	Not my interest
42110104	It's not something I would like to do as a career.
42103817	I chose my answer simply because I don't have the patience to do it. Also I want to be a doctor.
42099543	Not a children's person, never had that interest
41993403	Being a teacher is not for me and is not my dream.
41947063	Teaching doesn't fit me
41930214	I am not great at helping others through something which is a great trait in a teacher so I don't see myself becoming one. I will help when needed but I am not going to enjoy doing it everyday as a teacher does.
41922905	Because I feel as if I have way more potential (not saying teachers don't have any less potential than I do), but I have higher hopes and dreams that I want to turn into a reality.
41916944	Disrespectful kids and you barely make money.
41913807	I choose my answer "some" because at one point I did consider being a teacher but not as much now. When I was little growing up, teaching was one of my second career choices that I would think about. I thought about it a lot. However, as I got older I just realized that's not something I really wanted to consider anymore. I am now more focused on nursing and that is now something I know I am going to do but I wouldn't count teaching out yet. I say this because we never know what the future holds and I could end up becoming both.
41912198	Because the education system is terrible.
41911695	Because I have other plans.
41909362	I don't want to be a teacher
41909257	Not my career choice
41761951	Because I see what the teachers go through with the kids and with the administration and with parents. And some teachers have said that they don't make that much money so for all the stuff they go through it doesn't seem like something that is worth my time

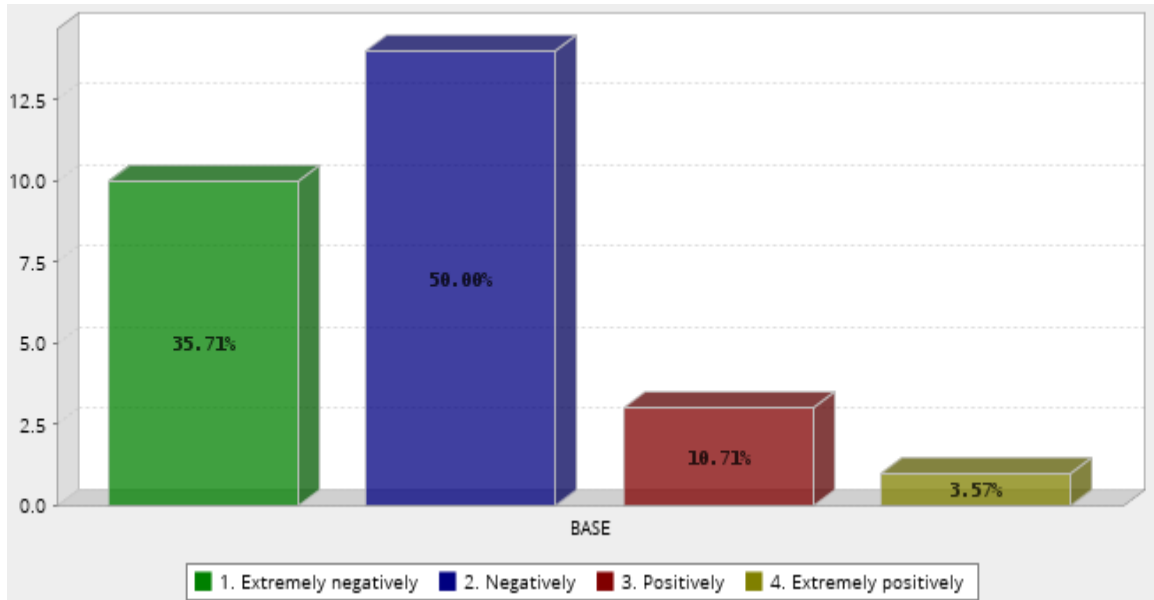
41401660	My teachers make the job look uninteresting. They always say they don't pay enough.
41382104	I have a hard time teaching others. I tend to get frustrated when people don't catch on.
41229552	I wouldn't mind being a teacher, but since I have a choice I'd go another route because in the teaching profession things & curriculum are always changing & that would be a burden on me & the children I teach.
41220160	Being under the supervision of a teacher all this time makes me want to be a teacher, a better teacher and to have better rules, and set my own classroom environment and make it fun. Now, that you've asked that question I have just considered the idea even more.
41135646	I never thought being a teacher to be honest. I am more military bound person
41123658	I am not interested in teaching.
41095905	From my own experience though school would never consider that and option.
41085357	That job position just doesn't interest me.
41081298	At some point (I'm not sure when) I would like to teach high school English. I'd like to give another generation the enjoyment of English, reading, and writing that I have.
41079797	I don't like the environment of the classroom.
41079633	I chose my answer because my dream career is to be an OBGYN.
41079610	Teachers don't have enough freedom and barely have a say so and I believe pbsd should include more than administration voice and students, teachers, and parents should have a say so in changes that's made.

Q8. For you, to earn a good salary in your future profession is:



	Answer		Count	Percent
	1. Extremely unimportant		2	7.14%
	2. Unimportant		2	7.14%
	3. Important		10	35.71%
	4. Extremely important		14	50.00%
	Total		28	100%
Mean : 3.286	Confidence Interval @ 95% : [2.954 - 3.618]	Standard Deviation : 0.897	Standard Error : 0.169	

Q9. How does what you know about teacher salaries impact your desire to become a teacher?



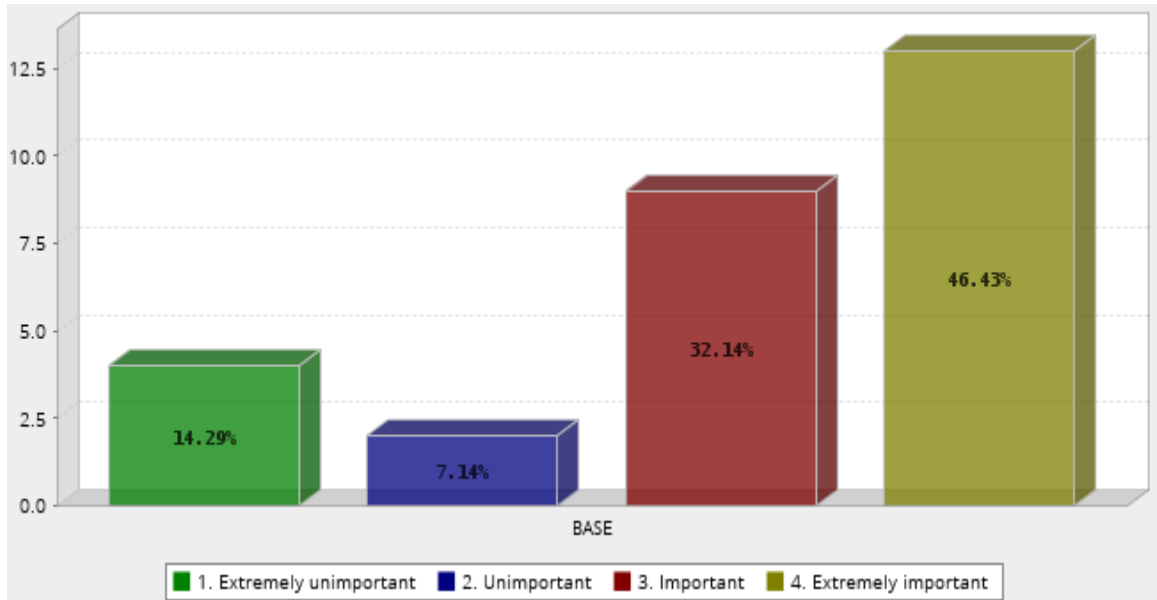
	Answer		Count	Percent
	1. Extremely negatively		10	35.71%
	2. Negatively		14	50.00%
	3. Positively		3	10.71%
	4. Extremely positively		1	3.57%
	Total		28	100%
Mean : 1.821	Confidence Interval @ 95% : [1.535 - 2.108]	Standard Deviation : 0.772	Standard Error : 0.146	

Q10. Why did you choose your answer?

42794421	I said negatively because in order to live comfortably and be able to make the financial decisions I want to make it is important to have a good source of income.
42613240	As useful as they are most teachers are severely underpaid.
42110104	Because my opinion teachers don't make nearly as much as they should. For all the things they go through, when they are the ones who are preparing others for their own careers.
42103817	It doesn't really impact me but it lets me know who's going to teach me vs. who is just there for the check. However the paycheck doesn't matter in some terms.
42099543	Too low is of a pay for such an important job
41993403	Being a teacher is a good job but they don't make as much money as people thing they should be paid more.
41947063	It doesn't impact me because I dont Wont to be a teacher
41930214	Even though I don't want to become a teacher, the fact that they don't make a lot of money doesn't help.
41922905	Because I know how much teachers are underpaid which is actually quite terrifying.
41916944	I want to live a good and comfortable life a teacher's salary can not provide me that.
41913807	I chose this answer because I'm really neutral about it. I am between negative and positive.
41912198	As many teachers have said before their salary isn't enough to live on and most have family they have to support. Also having to find a job in the summer is kind of bewildering.
41911695	One: The teacher route is not my plan, I have another career set for me. Two: Because teachers would usually make less money.
41909362	I know teachers don't get paid much and in my opinion teachers have to deal with entirely too much to get paid what they do.
41909257	IDK
41761951	Because it's true. I'm not finna deal with a lot just to get paid a little

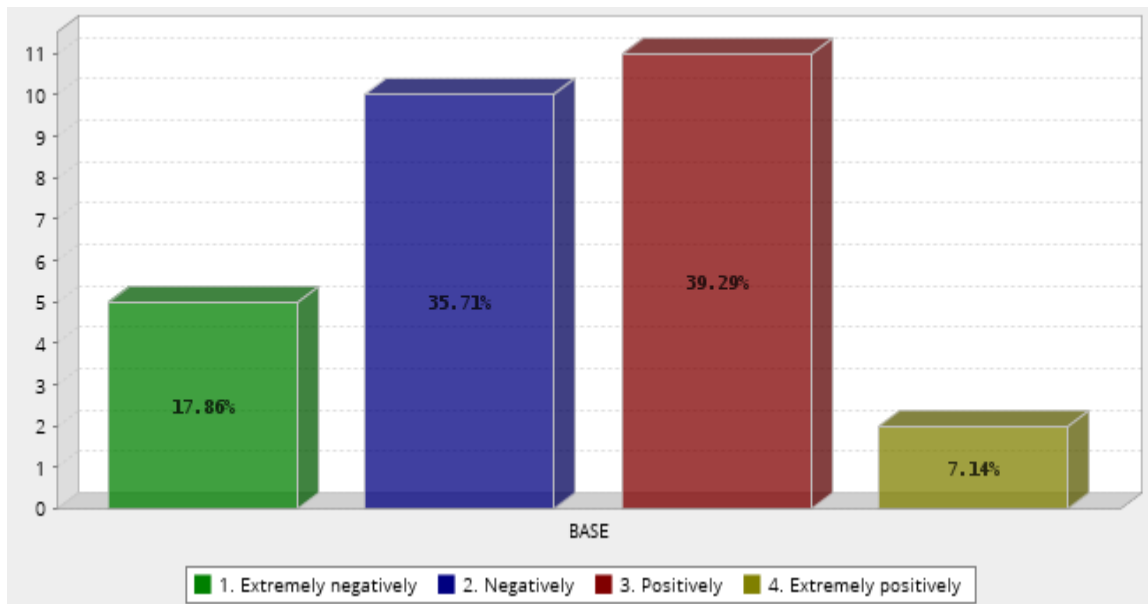
41401660	Most teachers don't get paid enough to deal with certain things.
41382104	From what I've seen, teachers work extremely hard but don't get paid enough for the extreme conditions that they're put through sometimes. Also, teachers are literally the foundation to all other professions but don't get the recognition and get paid way less than other professionals.
41229552	Teachers are not paid enough for the job they do ! They practically teach & babysit hundreds of students for 8-9 hours a day only to get paid a small amount of money.
41220160	The pay does not matter, I know teachers do not get paid alot and I do not plan on teaching for the money. I want to teach to help students and make an impact on my students' lives and learning environment.
41135646	I don't have an desire to be a teacher but if I did the salary wouldn't matter because you should love what do no matter the pay.
41123658	Teachers have low salaries.
41095905	I don't want to become a teacher.
41085357	The money is a plus because we all need money to have our necessities, but it's mainly about seeing a future in that career. Therefore, me knowing about their salary doesn't affect my opinion.
41081298	Teachers do a lot of work, and it seems to be a labor of love, rather than rewards. It's fine to do that, of course, but the wage/work ratio certainly doesn't add appeal to the profession.
41079797	Teachers don't make enough money for what they have to deal with.
41079633	I chose my answer because teachers are not paid enough for the lengths the go to for their students. They work hard to make sure they instill the knowledge that is needed no matter what, but they don't get the pay they deserve to show for it.
41079610	Teachers are some of the greatest hero's and don't get paid enough for it

Q11. For you, the pathway to earn a credential or license in your future profession is:



	Answer		Count	Percent
	1. Extremely unimportant		4	14.29%
	2. Unimportant		2	7.14%
	3. Important		9	32.14%
	4. Extremely important		13	46.43%
	Total		28	100%
Mean : 3.107	Confidence Interval @ 95% : [2.712 - 3.502]	Standard Deviation : 1.066	Standard Error : 0.201	

Q12. How does what you know about the pathway to earning a teaching credential or license impact your desire to become a teacher?



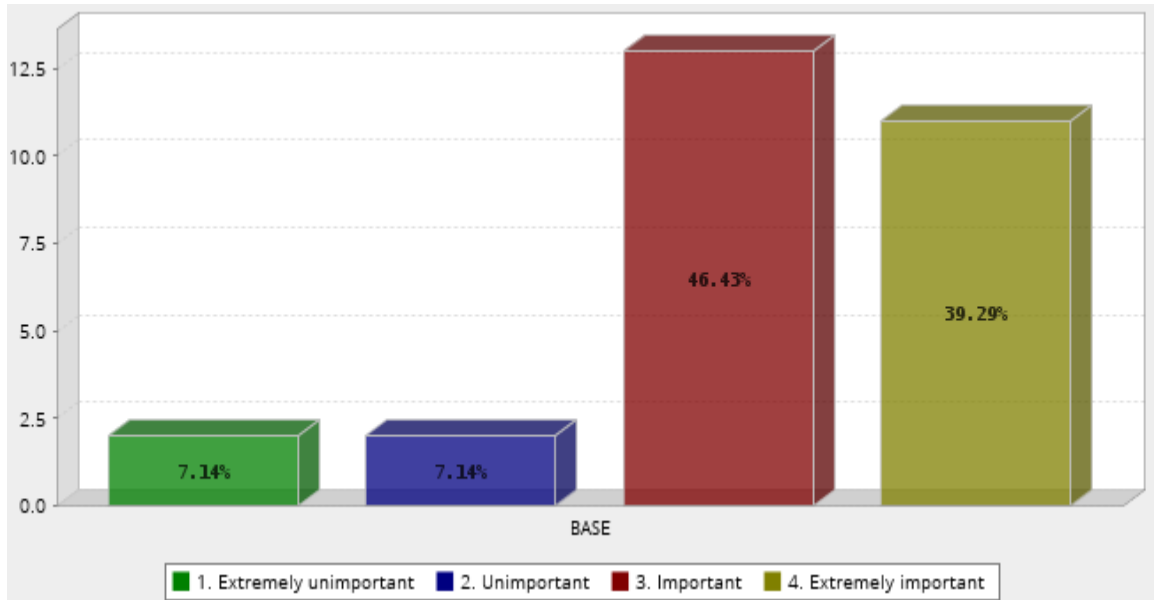
	Answer	Count	Percent
	1. Extremely negatively	5	17.86%
	2. Negatively	10	35.71%
	3. Positively	11	39.29%
	4. Extremely positively	2	7.14%
	Total	28	100%
Mean : 2.357	Confidence Interval @ 95% : [2.035 - 2.679]	Standard Deviation : 0.870	Standard Error : 0.164

Q13. Why did you choose your answer?

42794421	I chose the answer positively because to earn the credentials to become a teacher although it may be tough it worth it if used correctly because children benefit from it.
42613240	Not my interest to become a teacher.
42110104	I don't care to know anything about getting a credential or license in teaching generally because that's not something I want to do.
42103817	If I ever wanted to become a teacher it would give me the credentials to perform that task
42099543	It not THATTT much, as compared to a doctor , lawyer
41993403	I Dont want to be a teacher.
41947063	This day and time everyone is going to have to have some type of license or degree in their planned career
41930214	I want to become a surgeon so I guess the pathway is similar. I don't much about the pathway but I assume, its college before teaching school before some sort of on the job training. If so, it doesn't really affect my decision.
41922905	Because I don't really know anything about earning a credential license.
41916944	It doesn't seem that hard to become a teacher.
41913807	I choose this because it is extremely positive and important but it still doesn't change my opinion on being a teacher and etc..
41912198	It doesn't take much that's why pedophiles can become teachers and stay teachers after being exposed.
41911695	Bruh, you already know the answer.
41909362	As I previously stated, teachers get paid too little to have to deal with those things.
41909257	IDK
41761951	Because all that school and work shops cost money. Money that they not making back because most teachers spend their own money on their at students.
41401660	You only have to have a 4 year degree to become a teacher and take the test needed but I still wouldn't want to become a teacher
41382104	It doesn't impact my desire to become a teacher.

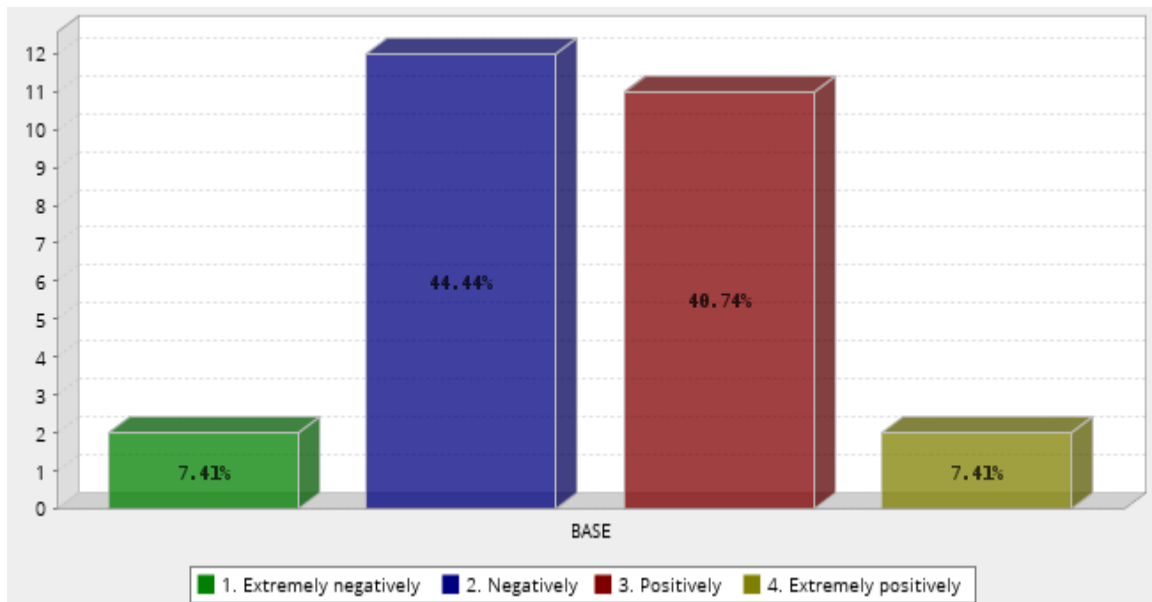
41229552	The pathway to earning teacher credentials isn't a huge problem, as I've said, it's the aftermath of it all. Those in the teaching profession don't get paid enough for the wonderful jobs they do.
41220160	I know that to be a teacher you need a license or sum sort of degree. I have always known that, and I want a degree in any profession I desire.
41135646	I don't have an desire
41123658	I am not interested in higher education.
41095905	I can't explain.
41085357	Knowing about how to get my credentials for teaching does not impact my desire to become a teacher. Becoming a teacher is not what i look forward to.
41081298	There's no neutral stands to pick, but the process seems pretty straight forward, and I don't know enough about the process to have any solid complaints.
41079797	The process of getting a teacher license can be very simple.
41079633	I chose my answer because I don't have any desire to become a teacher in the future.
41079610	My mother's experience/journey with teaching

Q14. For you, being mentored in your future profession is:



	Answer		Count	Percent
	1. Extremely unimportant		2	7.14%
	2. Unimportant		2	7.14%
	3. Important		13	46.43%
	4. Extremely important		11	39.29%
	Total		28	100%
Mean : 3.179	Confidence Interval @ 95% : [2.859 - 3.498]	Standard Deviation : 0.863	Standard Error : 0.163	

Q15. How does what you know about teacher mentoring impact your desire to become a teacher?



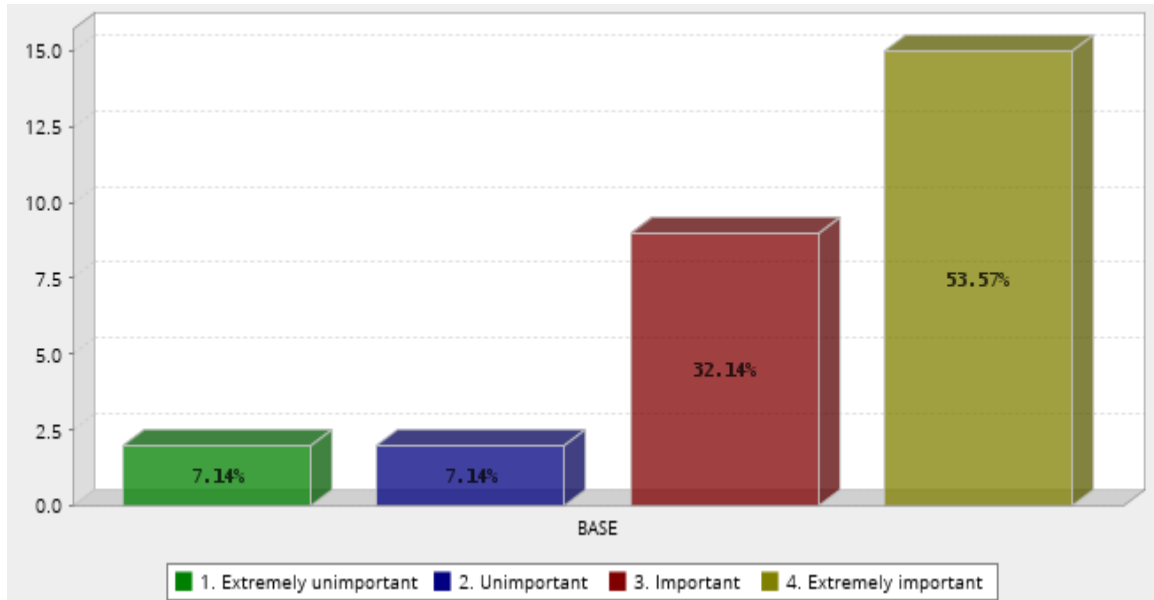
	Answer	Count	Percent
	1. Extremely negatively	2	7.41%
	2. Negatively	12	44.44%
	3. Positively	11	40.74%
	4. Extremely positively	2	7.41%
	Total	27	100%
Mean : 2.481	Confidence Interval @ 95% : [2.197 - 2.766]	Standard Deviation : 0.753	Standard Error : 0.145

Q16. Why did you choose your answer?

42794421	I chose positively because teacher mentoring is effective and helps aspiring teachers grow.
42613240	Not my interest to become a teacher.
42110104	I believe mentoring or guiding is very helpful and useful to those who'd love to take that route.
42103817	Teacher mentoring is extremely important for those who want to go In that field. You need some type of role model to look up to and teach you what they once were taught.
42099543	Teachers assistants , substitute, and other positions exist to help you
41993403	I just don't want to go into that field.
41947063	I don't know anything about teachers mentoring other students to become teachers
41930214	I don't know much about teachers mentoring but I can say the impact of some teachers on my life draw me to the profession.
41922905	Because I know how much disrespect can be thrown out at the mentor.
41916944	I don't know anything about teacher mentoring.
41913807	I choose my answer because I feel like that is important in mentoring for someone's desire to become a teacher.
41912198	I don't know anything about teacher mentoring.
41911695	..
41909362	Everyone likes things to run differently from others so your mentor might want things run one way and that way might be completely different from your's so you're taught to not like the way things are done.
41909257	IDK
41761951	Because I just don't wanna be a teacher
41401660	I don't know anything about that.
41382104	It doesn't impact my desire to become a teacher.
41229552	During teacher mentoring , teachers exchange information and skills with beginners to help them better teach their students, which I believe is very helpful.

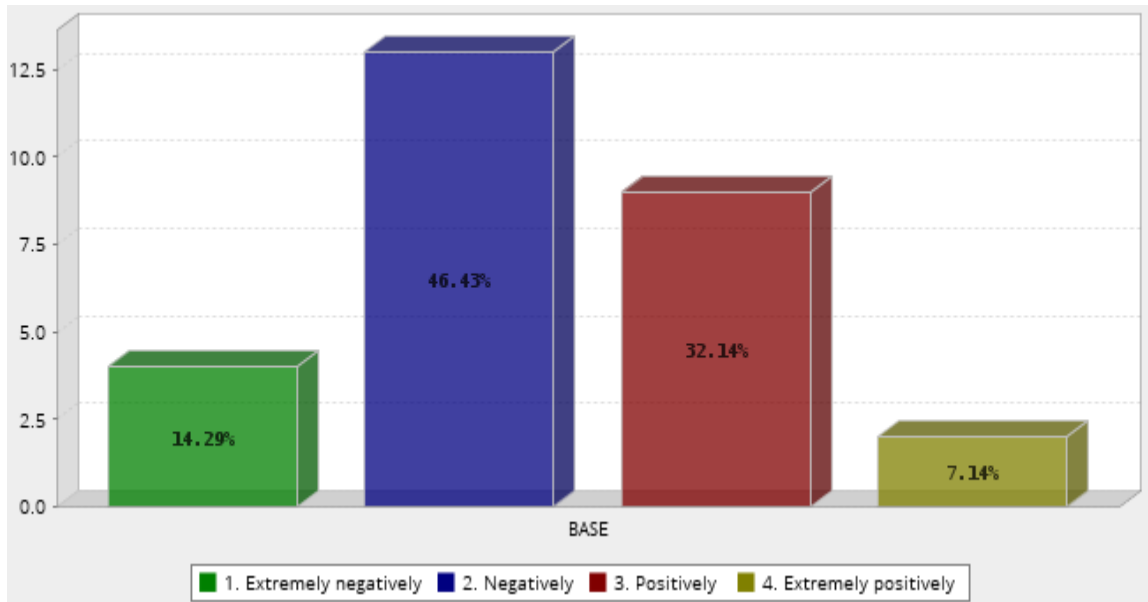
41220160	I would love to get the teaching experience before I become an actual teacher. I would feel more experienced and more comfortable in my credentials.
41123658	I am not interested in it.
41085357	Knowing about mentoring does not affect the desire I have about being a teacher.
41081298	I've witnessed a first year teacher not be mentored in the way they were supposed to, and be fired because of it, at the hands of PBSB.
41079797	I don't really know too much about this topic.
41079633	I chose my answer because I don't have any desire to become a teacher in the future.
41079610	The teachers that were able to mentor me I will cherish forever because they've helped me when no one else did and I'm still in contact with them til this day.

Q17. For you, professional development opportunities in your future profession is:



	Answer		Count	Percent
	1. Extremely unimportant		2	7.14%
	2. Unimportant		2	7.14%
	3. Important		9	32.14%
	4. Extremely important		15	53.57%
	Total		28	100%
Mean : 3.321	Confidence Interval @ 95% : [2.986 - 3.657]	Standard Deviation : 0.905	Standard Error : 0.171	

Q18. How does what you know about teacher professional development impact your desire to become a teacher?



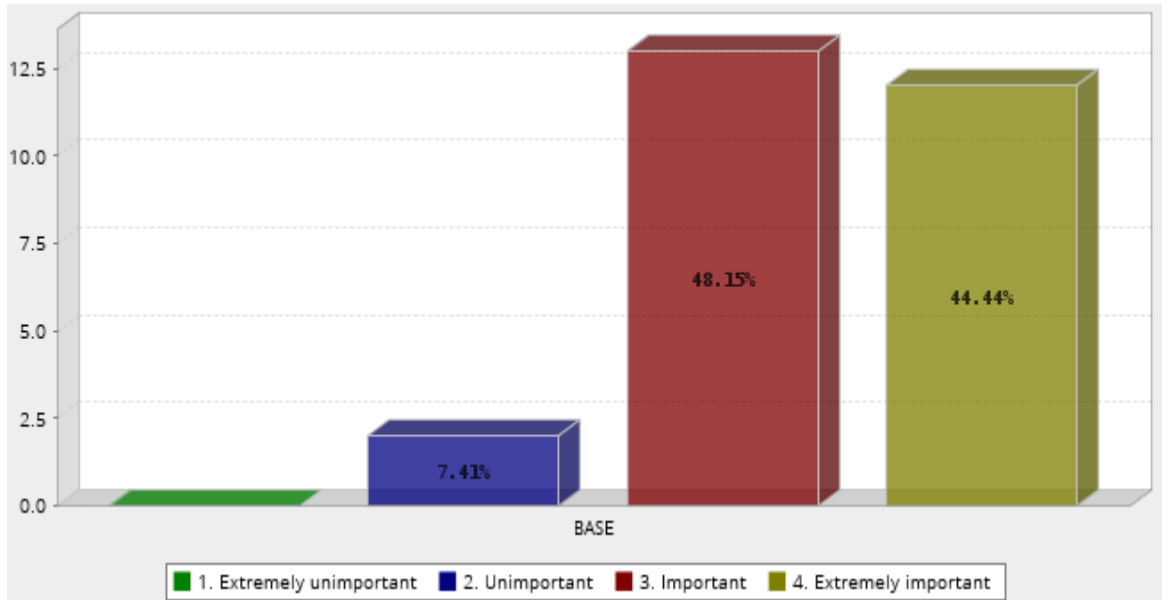
	Answer	Count	Percent
	1. Extremely negatively	4	14.29%
	2. Negatively	13	46.43%
	3. Positively	9	32.14%
	4. Extremely positively	2	7.14%
	Total	28	100%
Mean : 2.321	Confidence Interval @ 95% : [2.018 - 2.625]	Standard Deviation : 0.819	Standard Error : 0.155

Q19. Why did you choose your answer?

42794421	I do not know much about teacher professional development.
42613240	Not my interest to become a teacher.
42110104	the need of professional development is highly recommended in my opinion because to become an professional at some you will need to develop those skills and obstacles to do so .
42103817	It gives time to work on skills you need for the job
41993403	Don't want to be a teacher.
41947063	I won't need to take teacher development
41930214	I don't know much about it.
41922905	I don't know anything about teacher professional development.
41916944	I don't know anything about a teacher's professional development.
41913807	I just believe it is positively.
41912198	The directors of the program are very controlling.
41911695	BRUH
41909362	I don't want to be a teacher.
41909257	I do not want to be a teacher
41761951	I don't wanna be a teacher
41401660	It provides teachers with better methods and help them become better teachers.
41382104	It doesn't.
41229552	Teacher professional development allows staff to analyze student data & come up with solutions to better meet student expectations.
41220160	I do not know much about Professional Development, I think that it is used as like research to help improve teachers and help the students.
41123658	It is undesirable.
41095905	I don't want to become a teacher.
41085357	It does not affect me any.

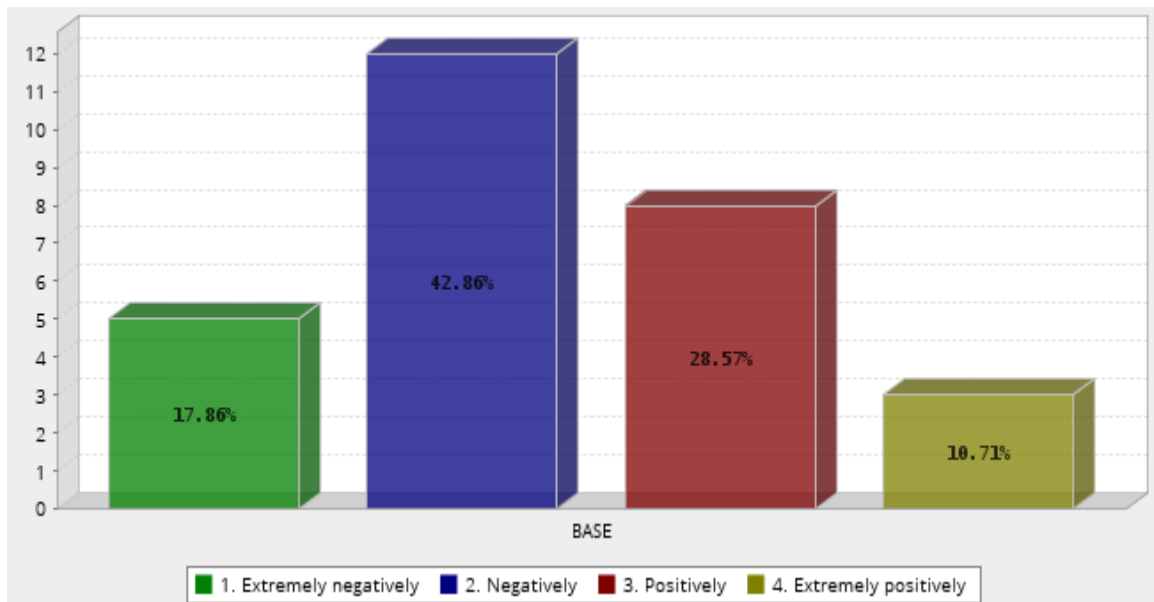
41081298	Working as a team of educators is a necessity in ensuring bright and well-rounded generations of students, which is what teaching is about.
41079797	I don't really know too much about this topic.
41079633	I chose my answer because I don't have any desire to become a teacher in the future.
41079610	With all the "professional development" our teachers go through it's still not helping. In order for a child to learn they need to clear mind and that's where most fail because all they care about is grades and work and not if a child wants to harm themselves or need a break or if things need to be modified.

Q20. For you, the ability to specialize in one or more areas of your future profession is:



	Answer		Count	Percent
	1.	Extremely unimportant	0	0.00%
	2.	Unimportant	2	7.41%
	3.	Important	13	48.15%
	4.	Extremely important	12	44.44%
	Total		27	100%
Mean : 3.370	Confidence Interval @ 95% : [3.133 - 3.608]		Standard Deviation : 0.629	Standard Error : 0.121

Q21. How does what you know about teachers being able to specialize in different areas impact your desire to become a teacher?



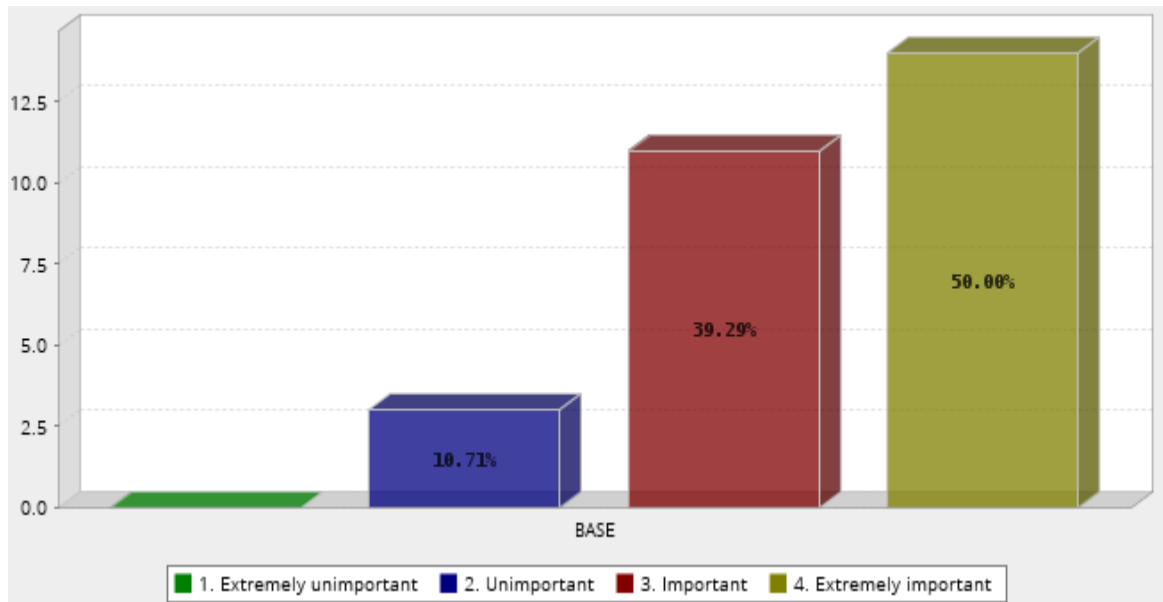
	Answer	Count	Percent
	1. Extremely negatively	5	17.86%
	2. Negatively	12	42.86%
	3. Positively	8	28.57%
	4. Extremely positively	3	10.71%
	Total	28	100%
Mean : 2.321	Confidence Interval @ 95% : [1.986 - 2.657]	Standard Deviation : 0.905	Standard Error : 0.171

Q22. Why did you choose your answer?

42794421	I chose positively because it is good to be flexible and be able to switch it up or be knowledgeable of different things.
42613240	Not my interest to become a teacher.
42110104	Because teachers should want to have the capability to specialize in different Incase they're needed else where .
42103817	At Pine Bluff high specifically speaking, we need teachers that can actually teach in every department. We have a few but it's not beneficial. Every time you look up one teacher is gone everyday in 6th period because of an unknown reason. Which strains our education because we can't get one. We need teachers that are going to take the time to work with us and not leave us for a whole year or two. (not saying all teachers just one or two specifically).
41993403	Don't want to be a teacher.
41947063	It is a good their our able to specialized in more than one area because there different areas that need to be taught
41930214	I would like to have a specialty so I am not all over the place.
41922905	Because I feel like people should be able to specialize in more than one thing.
41916944	You study one subject and can only teacher that subject.
41913807	It's accurate that's why and it helps a lot to specialize in things you know about with your ability to know it and be able to do it.
41912198	I had a teacher this year decide she wanted to become a AP United States History teacher and left her position as Ap Language and Composition so we as the student were left without an english teacher for a month.
41911695	LOOk, I dOnT wAnNa Be A tEaChEr
41909362	I don't want to be a teacher.
41909257	Same answer
41761951	That's more money that they can't replace
41401660	You never know if you'll get moved to teach another subject.
41382104	It doesn't impact my desire to become a teacher, but it does give me an extra backup career option. I plan on majoring in architecture. If for

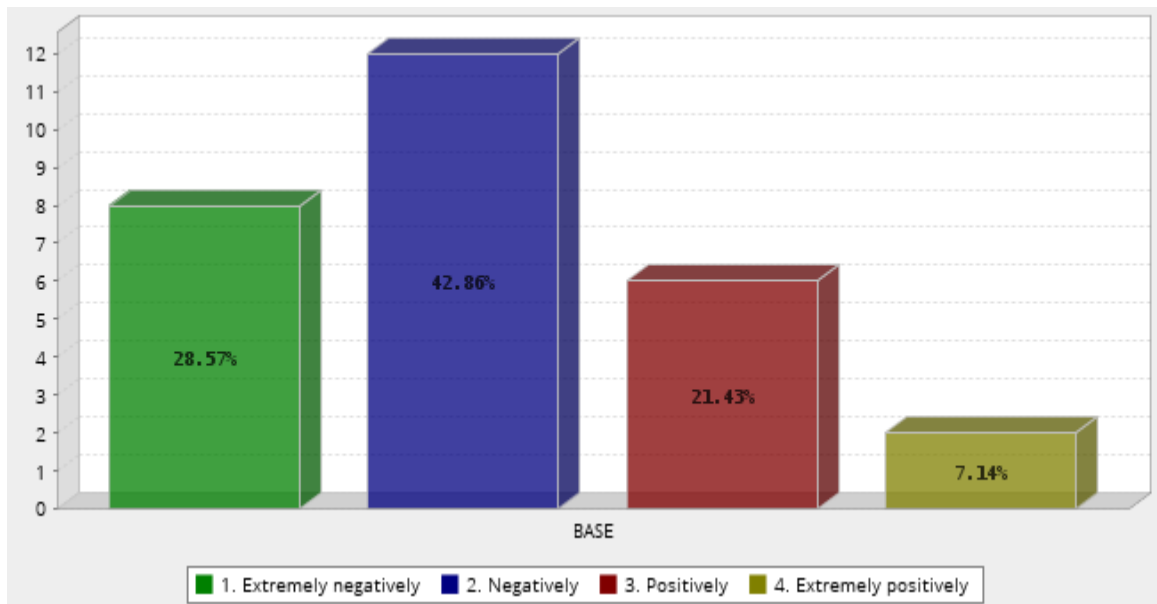
	whatever reason that profession doesn't work for me, I could get a non-traditional teaching license and work as a teacher specialized in architecture.
41229552	Being skilled in more than one area can help teachers better assist students who might have trouble in more than just one school course.
41220160	I would like to teach more than 1 subject as a teacher, mainly high school courses. I know that some schools have budget cuts and need flexible teachers to teach multiple courses.
41123658	One would have to be educated in different topics, while teaching classes.
41085357	The teaching field is not one that I am interested in.
41081298	If I were to get into teaching, I could deal in my area of expertise, which is English. As an English teacher, I wouldn't have to worry about subjects I am ignorant on, like chemistry.
41079797	Teachers should be able to focus on their best subjects.
41079633	I chose my answer because I don't have any desire to become a teacher in the future.
41079610	Even though teacher know how to teachers multiple things they don't get paid for it so it doesn't matter in the end.

Q23. For you, authority over decision-making in your future profession is:



	Answer		Count	Percent
	1. Extremely unimportant		0	0.00%
	2. Unimportant		3	10.71%
	3. Important		11	39.29%
	4. Extremely important		14	50.00%
	Total		28	100%
Mean : 3.393	Confidence Interval @ 95% : [3.139 - 3.647]	Standard Deviation : 0.685	Standard Error : 0.130	

Q24. How does what you know about teachers and their authority over decision-making impact your desire to become a teacher?



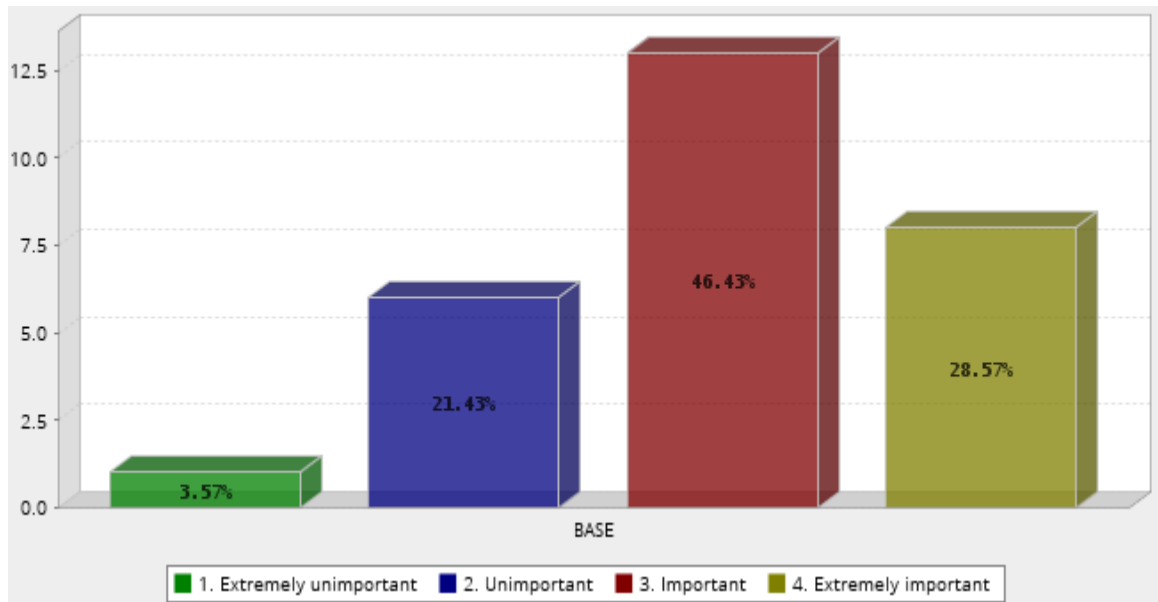
	Answer	Count	Percent
	1. Extremely negatively	8	28.57%
	2. Negatively	12	42.86%
	3. Positively	6	21.43%
	4. Extremely positively	2	7.14%
	Total	28	100%
Mean : 2.071	Confidence Interval @ 95% : [1.738 - 2.405]	Standard Deviation : 0.900	Standard Error : 0.170

Q25. Why did you choose your answer?

42794421	If authority is used correctly then that is positive
42613240	Not my interest to become a teacher.
42110104	I believe teachers should have authority over certainly to decision makings.
42103817	I'm not sure
41993403	Don't want to be a teacher.
41947063	I don't know anything
41930214	Teachers have some sort of say in what goes on in the classroom but they get told what to teach and how to.
41922905	Because it's barely a say so if you ask me.
41916944	Teachers have no authority over anything everything is ruled by the principal and school board.
41913807	It seems very very accurate to me.
41912198	From what I've seen teachers don't get a say they get a command and they do it without a word said.
41911695	..
41909362	Teachers have to use a curriculum, so thats simply your superiors telling you what to teach along with how and when to teach it.
41909257	Same answer
41761951	Because they don't make their own decisions they have to listen to somebody else
41401660	I don't really know .
41382104	I've seen too many cases where the administration don't listen to the teachers. Since the teachers are the ones who actually know and teach the students, they're the ones who knows what's actually best for each individual student most times. I don't think teachers' opinions are taken into much consideration during important decision-making processes.
41229552	Having authority over others can be overwhelming at times.
41220160	I want to have a say-so in what I get to teach my class and how I get to teach them. I know that non-traditional teachers usually do not get to teach the way that they would like and I do not want that for my class, because I plan on being a non traditional teacher.
41123658	I would like to make my own decisions.

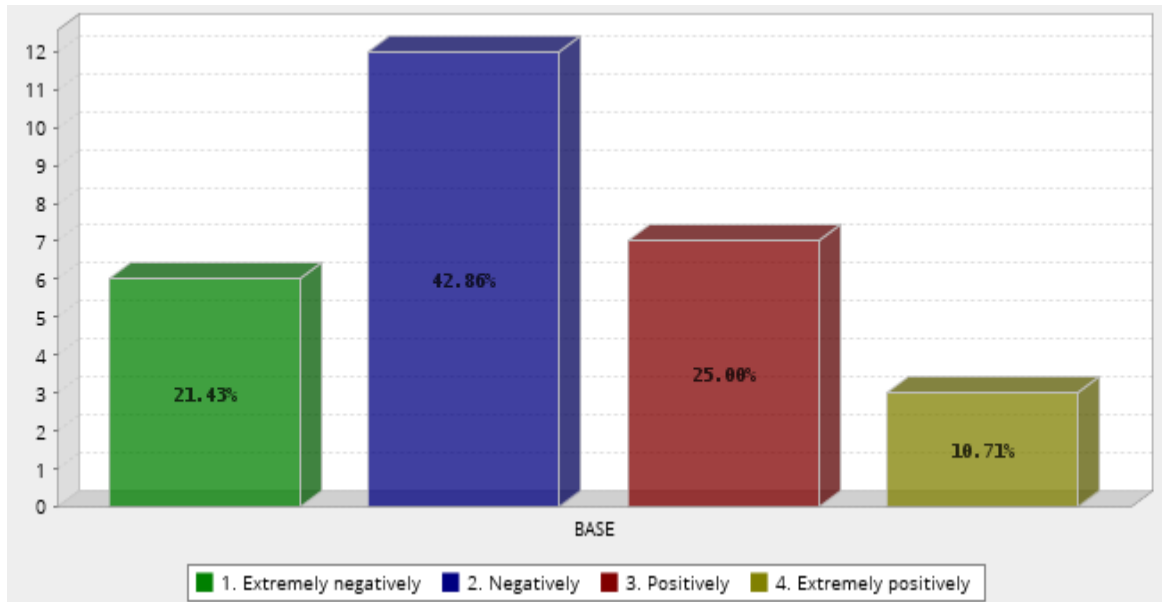
41085357	It's rare that a teacher really has authority over decision making.
41081298	A lot of teachers have no voice, which doesn't seem productive, and doesn't seem like it would positively impact a workplace.
41079797	Teachers are equipped to make good decisions
41079633	I chose my answer because I don't have any desire to become a teacher in the future.
41079610	They don't have a say so because a lot of teachers don't agree with decisions that the state department makes but you all still make them.

Q26. For you, prestige and social status of your future profession is:



	Answer		Count	Percent
	1. Extremely unimportant		1	3.57%
	2. Unimportant		6	21.43%
	3. Important		13	46.43%
	4. Extremely important		8	28.57%
	Total		28	100%
Mean : 3.000	Confidence Interval @ 95% : [2.698 - 3.302]	Standard Deviation : 0.816	Standard Error : 0.154	

Q27. How does what you know about teachers and the prestige and social status of teaching impact your desire to become a teacher?



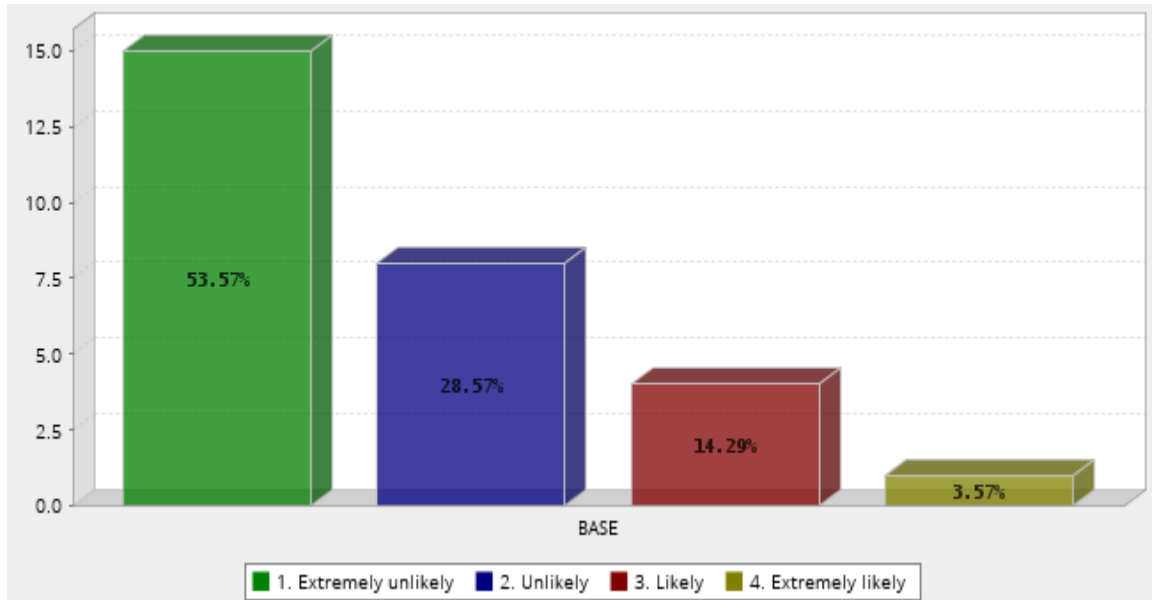
	Answer	Count	Percent
	1. Extremely negatively	6	21.43%
	2. Negatively	12	42.86%
	3. Positively	7	25.00%
	4. Extremely positively	3	10.71%
	Total	28	100%
Mean : 2.250	Confidence Interval @ 95% : [1.906 - 2.594]	Standard Deviation : 0.928	Standard Error : 0.175

Q28. Why did you choose your answer?

42794421	Social status is important if you are a teacher
42613240	Not my interest to become a teacher.
42110104	Teachers should have a positive social status with people especially those are being taught .
42103817	I have to earn trust if I want to one day become the best
42099543	Bit much statue really, they deserve more
41993403	Don't want to be a teacher.
41930214	Surgeons get recognized when they do well but no one knows about the teachers who taught them.
41922905	Because a few teachers don't really have, nor care about social status.
41916944	Teachers are very disrespected and looked down on.
41913807	I believe it is
41912198	I've heard stories about teachers like this that have done and said disgusting things to students, teachers, and/or staff and didn't face any consequences because no one believed they would do something like that.
41911695	...
41909362	I don't want to be a teacher.
41909257	Same answer
41761951	Teachers are known to be underpaid
41401660	I don't know anything about that .
41382104	It doesn't impact my desire to become a teacher, but I think teachers get a lot of respect from society because of their career.
41229552	Many teachers go down/have went down in history because of their prestige.
41220160	I know that Principals and even administrators play favorites and treat teachers differently based on social status within the school.
41123658	Social status isn't important.
41085357	If you have a great status as a teacher you can be promoted to a higher position, but I still have no desire to be a teacher.

41081298	Everyone knows teachers are underpaid and under appreciated (assuming they're a teacher who actually does their job) and I'm hopeful people would exercise lenience because of this.
41079797	Teachers don't need social status to be effective.
41079633	I chose my answer because I don't have any desire to become a teacher in the future.
41079610	I really just don't bother to care about all that because knowing what our teachers go through and put us through makes me not even want to be that type of person.

Q29. For you, how likely is it that you will become a teacher in your future profession?



	Answer	Count	Percent
	1. Extremely unlikely	15	53.57%
	2. Unlikely	8	28.57%
	3. Likely	4	14.29%
	4. Extremely likely	1	3.57%
	Total	28	100%
Mean : 1.679	Confidence Interval @ 95% : [1.359 - 1.998]	Standard Deviation : 0.863	Standard Error : 0.163

Q30. Why did you choose your answer?

42794421	Teachers do not receive the income for the life I want to live.
42613240	Not my interest to become a teacher.
42110104	Like I've mentioned previously it's just something I wouldn't put myself through or others . It takes time and patience to become a teachers and put up with all the obstacles that'll come your way .
42103817	It's not my area of interest
42099543	Not interested, never has been
41993403	Don't want to be a teacher.
41947063	I never wanted to be a teacher I am shooting to be in the medical field
41930214	I want to become a surgeon and at some point, I will have to teach surgeons under me but I don't wish to become a teacher.
41922905	Because I just can't see myself being one.
41916944	Being a teacher does not interest me.
41913807	We never know what the future holds, I may end up being what I didn't say or loss some interest in.
41912198	Regardless of the unreasonable salary and the power dynamic there is a chance would it's neither high nor low there's just a chance.
41911695	BECAUSE I HAVE PLANS FOR MEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
41909362	I chose my answer because I wouldn't like to be a teacher and why would I choose a profession and not be happy in that field.
41909257	Same answer
41761951	Because they are underpaid and go through a lot of stuff that I would've been quit after
41401660	I don't like dealing with children and children can be very disrespectful at times
41382104	I don't have a desire for teaching at all and I don't feel as though I would be a good teacher because I don't work well with kids. I know that there's a possibility that things can change in the future so I don't find it extremely unlikely, but I do find it unlikely.
41229552	I want to stay within the pathway/area of study that I have chosen.

41220160	Once again, I have considered it time and time again.
41135646	Being a teacher doesn't fit me
41123658	I don't want to teach in the future.
41095905	I would not wish to become a teacher.
41085357	I have no desire to become a teacher.
41081298	I do *plan* to teach, I just have no clue when in my career.
41079797	I don't like the classroom environment.
41079633	I chose my answer because I don't have any desire to become a teacher in the future.
41079610	I want control over what I do and I want to be able to care about students mental health and well being not just their work.

Q31. Please list the professions that you have considered for your future:

42794421	Lawyer, Member of Congress, or something dealing with Agriculture
42613240	Computer Engineer, 3-D artist (crafting parts, designs)
42110104	Pediatrician, architecture. Fashion or interior designer.
42103817	Doctor(OBGYN, or a Medical Doctor) , and Fashion Designer
42099543	Pediatrician, medical field , criminal lawyer
41993403	Veterinarian, Entrepreneur
41947063	Military Nurse
41930214	Surgeon Biomedical Engineer Physician Pharmacist
41922905	Fashion Designer, Interior Designer, and an Electronic Developer.
41916944	Lawyer, nurse, doctor, correctional officer, and 911 operator.
41913807	The professions I have considered for the future is a nursing, an Entrepreneur, and maybe teaching.
41912198	Recreational Director Recreational Assistance OBGYN Nurse Daycare Provider Neonatal Nurse Registered Nurse Junior High Teacher 9th Grade Teacher Esthetician Hair Stylist Braider Mother
41911695	Art Music Acting I'm gonna do all three and no one can stop me.
41909362	Veterinarian Pharmacist Marine Biologist
41909257	An RN
41761951	Rn
41401660	Physician or RPN
41382104	Residential Architect
41229552	General Surgeon Surgical Nurse
41220160	Teacher; Psychologist; Counselor; Funeral Director; Motivational Speaker; Business Consultant; Business Owner
41135646	Military nurse
41123658	Engineering, botany, vermiculture, and carpentry

41095905	Business SEO
41085357	The profession that I want to strive for in the soon future is pre-law.
41081298	- Creative Writer (especially for video game scripts) - Stagehand \ Technical Director for theater - English Teacher
41079797	Athletic Trainer
41079633	OBGYN Neurosurgeon Pediatrician Plastic surgeon
41079610	Psychologist

Appendix B

IRB Approval



**Office of Sponsored Programs
and University Initiatives**

Administration Building, Room 207
1509 North Boulder Avenue
Russellville, Arkansas 72801

Office: 479-880-4327
www.atu.edu

January 29, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

The Arkansas Tech University Institutional Review Board has approved the application for Jonathan Crossley's proposed research, entitled "Perceptions of High Achieving High School Students Regarding the Professionalization of Teaching and Their Interest in Becoming Teachers." This protocol has been assigned approval code Crossley_012921. The IRB approves for the researcher to proceed with his research.

Please note that, in the event that any of the parameters of the study change, the researcher may be required to submit an amended application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Gordon".

Sarah Gordon, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board Chair
Arkansas Tech University

Appendix C

Parent/Guardian Consent Form

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I am a doctoral student at Arkansas Tech University in the Center for Leadership and Learning. In addition to being a doctoral student, I am also an assistant superintendent in the Pine Bluff School District in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. As a former non-traditional teacher, I am seeking to better understand how our “best and brightest” (top 20% of juniors and seniors) view the teaching profession. Beyond their perceptions, I hope to better understand the likelihood of these students to select teaching as a career.

I am inviting participation from your student because they have been identified in the top 20% in their class. Participation will be requested from all students in the top 20% of their junior or senior class. Students that would like to engage in the study can complete the survey after the survey has been shared with them electronically.

Student participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to have your student(s) participate or wish to withdraw your student at any time, there will be no penalty. Likewise, if your student(s) chooses to not participate or withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. The results of this study may be published, but your student’s name will not be used.

Although there may be no direct benefit to your student, the possible benefits of the study are related to future policy and administrative decisions regarding retention and recruitment to the teaching profession. There is an overall teacher shortage in Arkansas and the United States of America, overall. It benefits researches to better understand the factors contributing to the perception of the teaching profession within the top students of local high schools.

Responses to the survey by your students will be kept confidential. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your school name and students’ names will not be used.

If you have any questions concerning the research study or your district’s participation in the study, please call me at 864-838-3887.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Crossley

By signing below, you are giving consent for your student(s) to participate in the study.

Parent/Guardian Signature
Date

Parent/Guardian Printed Name

Student Name

If you have any questions about your student's rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel your district or your students have been placed at risk, you can contact the Director of the Arkansas Tech University, Center for Leadership and Learning, Ed.D Program, at 479-964-0583.

Appendix D

District Approval for Research Study



PINE BLUFF SCHOOL DISTRICT

Barbara J. Warren, Superintendent
1215 West Pullen Street (P. O. Box 7678)
Pine Bluff, AR 71611
870-343-4200 Phone 870-343-4208 Fax
www.pinebluffschoools.org



Outstanding Academic Achievement for ALL Scholars

October 6, 2020

Dear Institutional Review Board:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that I give Jonathan Crossley permission to conduct the research titled *Perceptions of High Achieving High School Students Regarding the Professionalization of Teaching and Their Interest in Becoming Teachers* at Arkansas Tech University. This also serves as assurance that this school complies with requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) and will ensure that these requirements are followed in the conduct of this research.

Sincerely,

Barbara J. Warren
Superintendent of Schools