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A Descriptive Study of
Teacher Retention and
Attrition in Northern Lights
School Division #113,
Saskatchewan

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Executive Summary

This descriptive study investigates the high rate of attrition by teachers in the Northern Lights School Division #113 in northern Saskatchewan. The purpose of the study was to identify which teachers were resigning and why. A conceptual framework, essentially a modified version of the hierarchy of needs theory by Abraham Maslow was used to explain teacher attrition as a factor of personal needs not being met. These needs were also influenced by demographic variables such as age, gender, or marital status.

Identifying teachers who were resigning involved developing a demographic survey, completed by 229 teachers and comparing the data with 43 of the participants who resigned. Results from this survey indicated that most attrition occurred among young teachers or those with two years or less experience in the division.

Identifying why teachers were quitting involved developing a survey of teaching and living conditions that was organized into categories of Maslow's basic needs. Randomly selected teachers rated the conditions with a Likert-type scale, and provided descriptive comments about how their needs were being met in the north. A total of 63 teachers participated in the follow up survey. Results of the survey found that most attrition attributed to living conditions was due to isolation and distance from family, a lack of quality food in the community, and limited access to medical and dental care. Attrition attributed to teaching conditions resulted from a lack of mentorship and induction for new teachers, a lack of parent support, and ineffective in-school administration practices.

The following recommendations are suggested:

- i) That the division should examine further its teacher mentorship and induction in school.
- ii) That the division explore how parental support can be enhanced.
- iii) That the division clearly outline the advantages of teaching in the north.
- iv) That the division provide quality professional development for in-school administrators.
- v) That the division continue to provide and advocate for better living conditions in the north.
- vi) That the division examine further its use of retention incentives to retain teachers.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

THE SETTING

The Northern Lights School Division #113 (NLSD) is a public school division, covering most of the geographical northern half of Saskatchewan. It serves predominantly Cree and Dene aboriginal peoples in 22 communities. Its division office is in the central northern town of La Ronge. All communities in this school division other than three in the far north have road access. The schools in this division range from large modern facilities in La Ronge and large outlying towns, to small schools with one to four classrooms located in smaller communities. With nearly three hundred teachers, NLSD strives to meet the educational needs of over 5000 students, many of whom are learning English as a second language.

THE PROBLEM

As an educational jurisdiction, NLSD strives to provide a quality education for its enrolled students by recruiting teaching staff to carry out the delivery of provincial curricula and educational programs. The division continually attempts to balance the demands of its educational mandate with a supply of human resources.

The ability to maintain this balance has become increasingly difficult with a high rate of teacher attrition. In the 2000-01 school year for example, NLSD had to fill 107 teacher positions out of a total of 285 teaching staff (NLSD, 2000) and the division began the year with teaching positions that remained vacant. Invariably this must cause great strains on the delivery of quality education and consume considerable financial resources and time.

Demand for teachers due to attrition will always exist. Every year, due to individual circumstances, teachers will leave, creating vacancies in a school division. A common reason is teacher retirement. However, according to C. McConnell (personal communication, July 23, 2001) most attrition in NLSD is for reasons other than retirement as there were no teacher retirements in 2001. With this significant depletion of human resources, it would be vital for this school division to determine which teachers are leaving, and what the factors may be that motivate some teachers to terminate employment and others to remain.

In reaction to the attrition rate of northern teachers, the northern branch of Saskatchewan Education (April 13, 2000; December 7, 2000 and March 9, 2001) held three roundtable discussions for stakeholders to develop strategies to address the recruitment and retention of teachers in all public and band schools of northern Saskatchewan. At the third roundtable, Ernie Epp, a

retired teacher with northern experience proposed “Project North”, a mentorship program by superannuated teachers. Retired teachers would mentor teachers new to the north, and working in small and isolated communities during the first few months of their employment. This idea was supported and implemented by the division. Despite these collaborative efforts to find solutions to this crisis, there has not been any published research that involved surveying northern Saskatchewan teachers directly, to determine their perceptions on factors for attrition and retention.

To understand the issue of teacher attrition in NLSD, two factors must be examined. First, it is important to identify which teachers are either leaving or staying so that the school division can make informed decisions about reducing teacher attrition. Second, it is important to examine why teachers are either leaving or staying so that the school division can make informed decisions about reducing teacher attrition.

This descriptive study investigates who is leaving and staying and why teachers are motivated in making these decisions. This study attempts to examine who are leaving and staying by determining personal characteristics (demographics) of teachers who leave. This study attempts to examine why teachers are either leaving or staying by asking them how they perceive northern teaching and living conditions as factors in motivating them to remain or quit teaching. These perceptions of teaching and living conditions have been organized into Maslow's (1970) categories of basic needs. An awareness of personal characteristics and perceptions of teachers to either leave or remain teaching will facilitate the school division to make informed decisions in reducing the rate of teacher attrition.

BACKGROUND OF TEACHER SUPPLY ISSUES

It is difficult to focus on a specific regional labour issue in a global economy. This paper will provide a brief background and opinions on recent teacher supply issues. While it is not the purpose of this study to conclude whether there is a global teacher shortage, it is most useful to understand trends at a time when popular magazines such as *Newsweek* (2000, October 2) and *Maclean's* (2001, May 14) are dedicating cover stories to the topic of a teacher shortage. A more detailed background will follow regarding the teacher supply issues of NLSD, and a presentation of initiatives of teacher retention utilized by this particular school division.

OVERSEAS

The Canadian Teachers' Federation (1999) has reported that the teacher shortage is a global phenomenon. In Australia, heavy recruiting by the United Kingdom, the United States, and New Zealand is exacerbating an already undersupply of teachers in that country. In the United Kingdom, teachers are leaving permanent teaching positions for the spiraling salaries of an open market of supply teaching (ITN, 2001). Recruiting organizations have been hiring on Canadian campuses, to fill a demand in urban areas of England for primary and secondary science teachers (Initial, 2001).

UNITED STATES

In the United States, Piphon (1998) attributes demographics of a greying teacher force, population growth, and an attrition rate of 7%, to a “media certified” teacher shortage. The biggest shortage of teachers is in poor urban districts and areas in the expanding American South and West (Darling-Hammond, 2001). The 1997 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) data from the National Center for Educational Statistics suggests that dissatisfied American teachers quit the profession due to higher salaries available to them in other occupations, student discipline problems and inadequate support from administration (Thomas, 1998).

Several scholars dispute the teacher shortage in America. Wayne (2000) from SASS 1994 and the Teacher Follow Up 1995 (TFS-95), point out that excluding retirement, only one in twenty teachers quit each year, and most novice teachers cite personal or family reasons for quitting. Feistritzer (1998) contends there are four million Americans holding education degrees and are not teaching. Furthermore, 34% of new teachers in the workforce are actually returning teachers.

CANADA

In Canada however, there is a paucity of comprehensive national data on teacher supply and demand. Press (1996) suggests that despite a national surplus of teachers, certain regions will not be able to match demand with supply, especially in areas of senior science and math, technology education, special education, and teachers with cross cultural training. A study by the Ontario College of Teachers (1998), has warned of teacher shortages in that province due to an increase in teacher retirements and low teacher education applicants in faculties of education. The British Columbia Teachers’ Federation (2000) has presented a brief to the provincial government indicating that while there is an uncertainty of a provincial teacher shortage, there are shortages in some geographic areas and specific subjects. The Manitoba Teachers’ Society has pointed to a growing shortage in that province.

SASKATCHEWAN

In Saskatchewan, the Department of Learning maintains school grants data and teacher services data to provide insight into future supply and demand for teachers. Student enrollment will continue to drop from 184,605 students in 2000-01 to 164,803 in 2005-06 (Saskatchewan Education, 2000). The teacher supply will have a surplus in each year assuming a student/educator ratio of 16.8 to 17.4. There is an adequate supply of teachers in the province but with regional shortages, for example, in the north. (Saskatchewan Education, 1999) The Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation survey of “Teacher Supply and Demand” (STF, 1997) found there is a trend for rural, urban and northern school divisions to have decreasing staffing requirements.

NORTHERN SASKATCHEWAN

There are three school divisions in northern Saskatchewan. They are Creighton #111, Ile a la Crosse #112, and Northern Lights #113. The number of students in northern schools not including First Nations schools will decline from 5,262

to 4,398 in the years 2000-01 to 2005-06. The teacher services data (Saskatchewan Education, 2000) indicates that in the three northern school divisions, the number of teachers trained in Saskatchewan has declined from 78.4% in 1998 to 66.6% in 2000. This suggests an increasing dependence by northern school divisions to recruit staff in other provinces. The total out-of-province teachers in these northern divisions are comprised of 50 teachers from Manitoba, Alberta, and B.C., 49 teachers from Ontario and the eastern provinces, and 11 teachers from outside Canada. It is difficult for northern school divisions to hire First Nations teachers as many choose to work for on-reserve band schools where they pay no income tax. Age and experience data indicates that 43% of northern teachers had eight years or less experience and nearly 25% of the teachers are less than 30 years old. Considering the difficulties of staffing schools in this region, the Government of Saskatchewan allocated financial support for northern school divisions in its 2001 provincial budget.

Northern Saskatchewan School Divisions are also able to draw from the regional Northern Teacher Education Program (NORTEP) (Saskatchewan Education, 2000, December 7) as a teacher labour supply. This program has had an erosion of education students who cite inadequate salaries and student discipline problems as a deterrent to entering the teaching profession. More students are choosing to enroll in the arts and science NORPAC program, suggesting that northern students have a better awareness of employment opportunities other than those in the education field.

In a study by McDonald (2001), 39% of graduating education students from the University of Saskatchewan stated that they would not be willing to work in a northern community. Prospective teachers were asked which factors would be of the most concern to them in terms of being a teacher in northern Saskatchewan. The factor with the highest frequency of selection for accepting employment in the north was the provision of a northern allowance. The three next factors, in order of decreasing concern, for students, were affordable housing, employment for spouse or partner, and personal safety. These findings suggest that prospective teachers for northern Saskatchewan are more concerned and motivated by physiological (salaries, employment benefits, housing) and safety needs.

NORTHERN LIGHTS SCHOOL DIVISION #113

Dery (2000) has prepared annual staffing data for NLSD for the years 1995 to 1999. Resignations increased from 36 in 1995 to 81.5 in 1999. Cumulatively, there were 328.5 resignations in that five-year period. There were an additional 139.5 term positions available, creating the need for total recruitment of 468 teachers. In the year 2000 alone, 103 teachers were recruited for vacancies.

The number of teacher resignations and the ability of the division to fill vacancies vary from community to community. La Loche had experienced 71 resignations in its two schools from 1995-99. In the same time frame, La Ronge had 47 resignations in its three schools, Pinehouse Lake and Sandy Bay each had 30, Buffalo Narrows and Beauval each had 25, and Cumberland House had 21. The high school in La Loche had opened some school years without a full complement of teachers.

The division has employed different strategies to overcome the challenges of recruiting so many teachers. The division has attended university “Job Fairs” in

western Canada, and recruited heavily out of province, particularly in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. Promotional material has been created and distributed to potential candidates. The division offered contracts to potential teachers before the May 31 annual deadline, by providing financial “early resignation incentives” to teachers that knew they were going to resign from the division. The division encouraged on site interviews for its recruitment candidates by offering a financial travel incentive. The moving allowance for teachers new to the division has been increased to \$1500. The division has also worked collaboratively with Local Advisory Boards to develop ways in which communities can encourage excellent teachers to accept positions.

The division also looked at measures that would improve teacher retention. Incentives have been created through policy and local agreement negotiations. Improvements to division housing have occurred with the construction of fencing. Rental rates have been reduced and pegged at the “northern factor” rate. Utility rebates have been created to offset costs to division housing tenants. Security alarms systems were installed in teacherages in 2002. Financial incentives offered to teachers, including a “travel allowance” of \$1000, have been given to returning teachers annually since the fall of 2001. Improvements to educational leaves and bursaries have continued. Northern allowances have also increased. Collaboration with Local Advisory Boards has occurred in regards to retention strategies as well. Notwithstanding these incentives, the problem of retaining teachers in the north continues, and it is therefore necessary to determine the nature and extent of this problem and what can be done to solve it. This study proposes to do this.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The following problem statement will guide this investigation: Who are the teachers that are leaving and how do all teachers rate teaching and living conditions as personal factors in remaining or terminating employment with the Northern Lights School Division?

PURPOSE

The main purpose of this study is to determine which teachers are leaving, and what may be the factors that motivate some teachers to terminate employment and others to remain.

SPECIFIC PURPOSES AND QUESTIONS

The specific purposes of the study are to investigate:

1. Personal characteristics (demographics) of educators who terminate employment with the Northern Lights School Division.
2. How teachers rate teaching and living conditions as motivating factors in terminating or continuing employment with the Northern Lights School Division.

3. The factor teachers rate as most important when considering both terminating and continuing employment with the Northern Lights School Division.

The specific questions to be asked are as follows:

1. What are the (demographics) personal characteristics of educators who terminate employment with the Northern Lights School Division?
2. To what extent are teaching and living conditions factors in motivating teachers to remain with the Northern Lights School Division or to choose to terminate employment?
3. What factor do teachers rate as most important when considering both terminating and continuing employment with the Northern Lights School Division.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework for this study (see Figure 1.) takes into account that teachers as rational decision makers are motivated by the fulfillment of basic needs as proposed by Maslow (1970) and that personal characteristics (demographics) have a role in a teacher's employment decisions. This study adapts Maslow's theory by categorizing each living and teaching condition into a corresponding need. The categories of human needs from Maslow's theory are physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization. According to Maslow, human behaviour is motivated by the fulfillment of these needs. It is assumed that when teaching and living conditions are providing a low fulfillment of needs, teachers will be less satisfied, not motivated to remain in teaching, and, therefore, attrition will occur. For teachers that are having a high fulfillment of their needs met by the teaching and living conditions, they may be more satisfied and motivated to remain teaching and, therefore, retention will occur.

In addition to the motivational theory, this conceptual framework includes personal characteristics and demographic factors that teachers take into consideration when making employment decisions. Regardless of how well teaching and living conditions meet the needs of individual teachers, there are personal characteristics that can influence a decision of remaining or quitting employment. Teachers may decide to terminate employment on the basis of their age, their educational background, a change in marital status or other family reason, or for another professional opportunity. These factors are a vital component of the conceptual framework for this study.

This conceptual framework is congruent with the purpose of this study. Briefly, this study seeks to determine if there are personal characteristics (demographics) associated to the attrition of teachers, and to determine what extent teaching and living conditions are factors in motivating teachers to quit or remain employed.

FIGURE 1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF RETENTION AND ATTRITION IN NORTHERN LIGHTS SCHOOL DIVISION #113

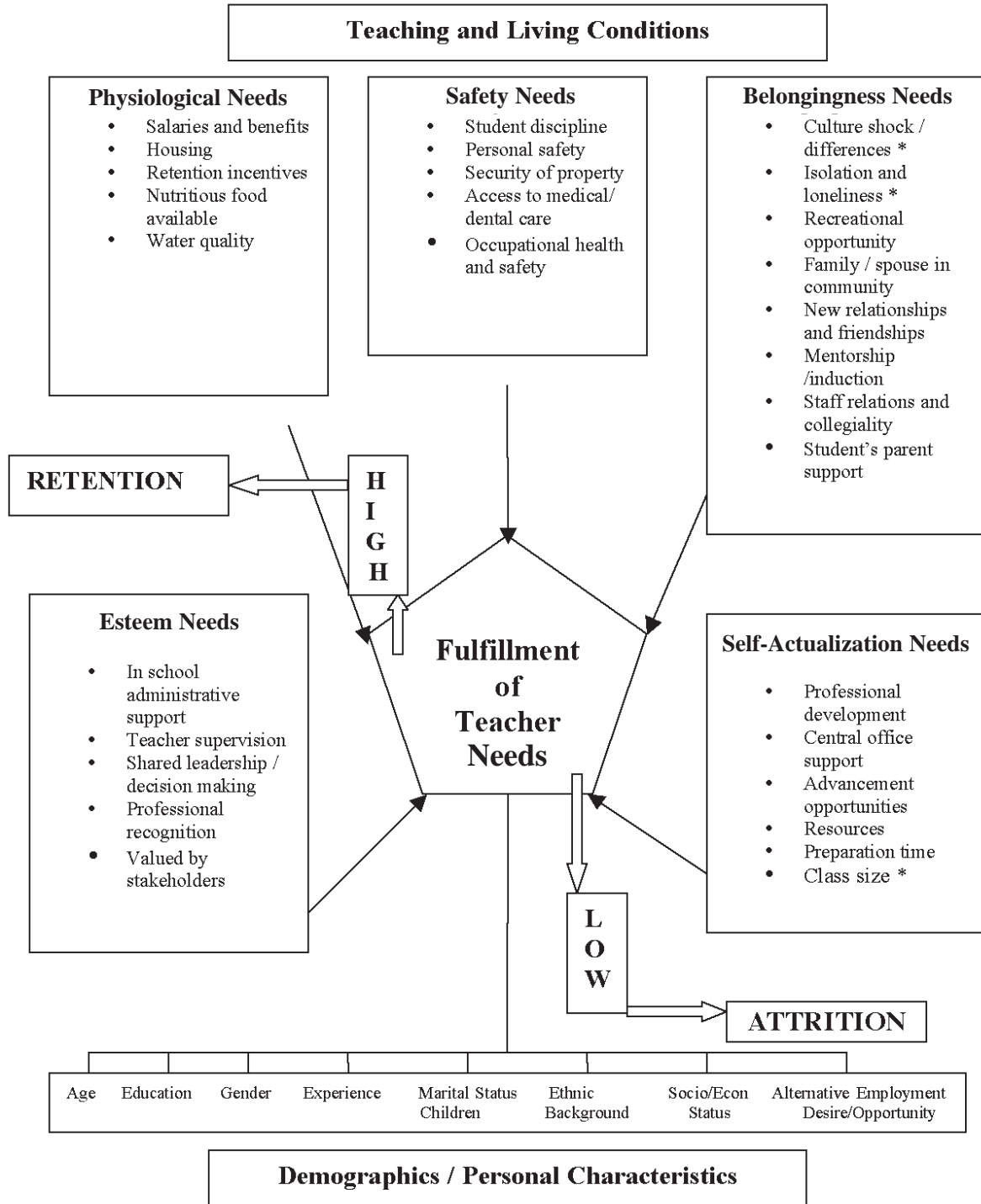


Figure 1. Factors of teacher attrition and retention are organized into categories of Maslow's (1970) basic human needs. Teacher motivation to terminate employment can be attributed to low fulfillment of these needs. Teacher motivation to continue employment can be attributed to high fulfillment of these needs. Personal characteristics (demographics) may additionally affect the decision of employment by teachers. * Presence of these variables has an inverse effect on attrition.

HYPOTHESES AND ASSUMPTIONS

It is assumed that personal characteristics (demographics), and teaching and living conditions are factors in motivating teacher retention and attrition in the Northern Lights School Division. The following assumption and hypotheses will be tested to achieve the purpose of the study.

It is assumed that personal characteristics (demographics) will affect teachers' decisions to terminate employment with Northern Lights School Division.

H1. If teaching and living conditions are favourable, then teachers will be motivated to remain employed with the Northern Lights School Division.

H2. If teaching and living conditions are congruent with personal needs then teachers will be enticed to remain in employment.

H3. Inversely, if teaching and living conditions are incongruent with personal needs then teachers will terminate employment.

LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

1. The study will focus upon the variables of retention and attrition of teachers.
2. The study will be confined to educators within the Northern Lights School Division.

JUSTIFICATION

This study was necessary when considering the scope of the problem. In light of the number of resignations in the Northern Lights School Division, the perception of a global teaching shortage, a reluctance of graduating student teachers to relocate to the north, and the expense of recruitment, it is essential to collect information about which teachers are quitting and why teachers either choose to leave or stay. This study aims to provide that information.

The difficulty in staffing schools in this school division must be of concern to all educational partners. To ensure continuity in the delivery of provincial curricula and educational programs, the school division must have a full complement of teachers. To have classrooms without qualified teachers in a school is a detriment to a quality education for students; this affects the morale of existing teachers, and should be viewed as inadequate by any parent.

A paucity of information regarding northern teacher retention and attrition negatively affects the ability of the division to find meaningful long-term solutions to this problem. It is essential that teachers in this jurisdiction be involved in the process of gathering information. This study will involve teachers in identifying who is leaving the division and the reasons why they are leaving.

It is important to identify which teachers are leaving by comparing rates of attrition to personal characteristics or demographics of teachers who leave

the school division. By doing so, rates of teacher attrition can be broken down into categories of teacher age, gender, level of education, years of experience and so on. When it is known which teachers are leaving, informed decisions can be made in NLSD about reducing teacher attrition.

It is also important to examine why teachers are either staying or leaving by giving teachers an opportunity to express how teaching and living conditions fill their needs and motivate them to either continue or to quit working as a teacher in NLSD. When we know why teachers are leaving, informed decisions can be made by NLSD about reducing teacher attrition.

ASSUMPTIONS

It is assumed that the results attained from the subjects will be accurate and based upon the responses, given by participants as well as other sources of information.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purpose of clarification, the following terms are defined:

1. Teachers are defined as full time equivalent school personnel, including classroom teachers, teacher librarians, specialist teachers, resource teachers and in-school administrators.
2. Personal characteristics (demographics) include but are not limited to gender, age, level of education, marital status, number of children, ethnic background, and home province.
3. Retention refers to the decision of an educator to remain as an employee in the subsequent school year.
4. Attrition refers to the unilateral and voluntary decision of an educator to terminate employment with the school division.

OUTLINE OF STUDY

This document is organized into five chapters. This chapter introduces the background of the problem and teacher supply issues. It presents the conceptual framework, key questions, purpose and justification of the study. In addition, hypotheses limitations and assumptions are also presented.

Chapter 2 provides a review of related literature. It provides information of demographic factors of teacher attrition in education. This chapter also presents teaching and living conditions as factors of teacher retention and attrition. These are organized into categories of Maslow's (1970) needs as proposed in the conceptual framework of the study. A summary of the reviewed literature in relation to the stated problem of the study is presented.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology used for the study. The research design, sample and subject selection, instrumentation, procedure and analysis of data are described.

Chapter 4 provides results of the study. It presents tables of data gathered from surveyed teachers. Teacher comments are presented in descriptive form to illustrate findings in teaching and living conditions. The results are presented in relation to the research questions.

Chapter 5 summarizes and discusses the main findings of the study. They are presented in terms of study questions as to which teachers choose to quit teaching, and how teachers rate teaching and living conditions as they pertain to employment. This chapter also includes recommendations on how to reduce teacher attrition, based on the study's findings.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

This review of related literature is congruent with the purpose and conceptual framework of the study and will be presented in two parts. First, literature on demographic factors that take into consideration personal characteristics of teachers and affects on teacher attrition and retention are presented. Second, teaching and living conditions that affect teacher attrition and retention in education are presented. These factors are organized by categories of basic needs. This literature review will facilitate an understanding of which teachers are more likely to resign and the teaching and living conditions that contribute to such decisions.

DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

There are demographic factors that contribute to attrition and retention of educators. These include a teacher's age, level of education, gender, years of teaching experience, marital status and children, ethnic background or race, socioeconomic status, and other employment opportunities.

A teacher's age is a factor in teacher attrition. Rates of teacher attrition decline with age. Singer (1992), terms the beginning years for teachers as "hazardous years", and has found that special educators who are under the age of 30, are twice as likely to quit than are special educators who are older than the age of 30. Grissmer and Kirby (1997), find that teacher attrition follows a U shaped curve whereby new teachers to the field and aging teachers have a high rate of attrition. It can be inferred that attrition in aging teachers is due to retirement and that for new teachers, there are other reasons.

Teachers' level of education provides conflicting findings in terms of attrition. While Theobald (1990), claims that teachers with a Master's degree have 35% higher attrition rate than those with just an undergraduate degree, Adams and Dial (1994), found that teachers with graduate degrees remain as teachers longer, and have a lower attrition rate than teachers with an undergraduate degree. In a comparison with teachers that remain or leave education, Chapman (1984), found no significance related to differences in their GPAs.

In terms of gender, a study by Theobald (1990), found that females in their twenties and thirties are significantly less likely to remain teaching than their male counterparts, although females older than forty are significantly more likely to remain teaching than men. This finding may suggest that women are

delaying their careers in education while raising a family. Indeed, young women quit teaching more often than any other demographic group (Singer, 1992). Women, according to Weiss (1999), were significantly less likely to choose teaching as a career, or remain in teaching. This may have far reaching implications for the profession, as women have generally been a reliable source of labour for education positions in the past. This condition may also be an indication of an increase of career options or alternatives to teaching, for women. Elementary education may still be seen as feminine work and less prestigious than secondary education and thus the difficulty of hiring males in the elementary years (Stine, 1998). A lack of prestige deters men in the elementary years, while prestige seems to attract men to administrative positions in education.

Rates of attrition based on years of experience for teachers reflect the same findings as attrition by age. As teachers increase their years of teaching experience, their rates of attrition decline (Macdonald, 1999; Grissmer & Kirby, 1997; Shen, 1997), and job satisfaction improves (Avi-Itzhak, 1988). In the investigation of SASS91 and the Teacher Follow-up Survey TFS92 by Shen (1997, p. 39), a human capital interpretation was presented that explained “the more a teacher has invested in teaching, the more he or she tends to stay in teaching.” Perhaps as teachers’ competencies increase, the perception of burden in the classroom decreases.

Marital status as a factor in teacher retention in education is not well reported in the literature. Stinebrickner (1998) has determined that both marriage and number of children are factors in the length of time a teacher is in education. Men are more likely to quit teaching when they are married. Women are also more likely to quit teaching when married, but most likely for reasons different than men. Having children also reduces the likelihood for married men to quit teaching and to lesser extent women as well.

Findings of attrition in terms of racial characteristics have been contradictory. In Weiss (1999), the analysis of the US Department of Education’s School and Staffing Surveys (SASS) for 1987-88, and 1993-94, found no significant difference between attrition rates of black and white teachers. This finding confirmed results by Singer (1992) for special educators, but refutes findings in the early 1980’s by Bloland and Selby (1980), that blacks have lower rates of attrition than whites. No data comparing aboriginal and non-aboriginal rates of attrition for educators in Canada was found.

Socio-economic status has a rather limited amount of research that associates this factor with attrition rates of teachers. Bloland and Selby (1980) have noted that lower rates of attrition are found in teachers who were self supporting in college, or come from a blue-collar background. Furthermore, teachers from a high socio-economic status family have higher attrition rates. This finding may be the result of lower socio-economic families viewing a teaching career favourably, while a high socio-economic family may perceive being a teacher as a disappointment.

A demographic trend that is a factor in teacher retention and attrition is the economy and employment opportunities that are available. Piphon (1998) attributes a robust economy to attrition of teachers. This implies that in good economic conditions, educators have alternatives to teaching and thus there is

an increase in attrition. Alternatively, in economic downturns, when there are fewer alternative employment opportunities for teachers, attrition is reduced.

TEACHING AND LIVING CONDITION FACTORS

There are teaching and living conditions that contribute to attrition and retention of teachers. These factors have been categorized into physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization needs as proposed by the motivational theory of Maslow (1970). Each category begins with a definition and a brief description of how these needs are met in the Northern Lights School Division. Following this description is the review of the literature for each category.

PHYSIOLOGICAL NEEDS

Physiological needs are those that are basic to the maintenance of life. Teaching and living conditions in NLSD related to this need, are salaries and benefits, including retention incentives, housing, the availability of nutritious food locally such as fresh produce, dairy products, bread and meats as well as the quality of water. Teachers in NLSD have a northern allowance in addition to their provincial salary. Teachers have been receiving retention incentives of \$1000 travel allowances and rebates on utilities. The division provides subsidized housing for all teachers except in La Ronge. Rental rates range from \$175 to \$375 per month. The availability of groceries differs from community to community, however a national northern chain of stores serves all of the larger communities. All teachers in the division have running water.

High salaries have been positively correlated with high teacher retention, (Shen, 1997; Jacobson, 1988; Theobald, 1990) while low salaries contribute to higher rates of attrition (McCreighton, 2000). Male teachers believe that salary is important, whereas female teachers rate this factor much lower (Bloland and Selby, 1980). Dolton and van der Klaauw (1999) have generalized their findings on salary and retention, that as rational decision makers, teachers with higher wage opportunities outside of teaching are more likely to quit teaching for those opportunities, however, with higher wages in teaching, they will be less likely to quit. Teachers who leave education assign more value to salary (Chapman, 1984). Cockburn (2000, p.233) goes as far as saying “policy makers and employers need to acquire a greater understanding of teacher’s financial and professional needs...” Generally, since teachers with more years of teaching experience have higher salaries and lower rates of attrition, teachers with higher salaries are less prone to quit.

While the use of higher salaries to promote teacher retention has been proven effective, it is controversial in terms of motivation of teachers. Drawing upon the motivational theory of Maslow (1970), Avi-Itzhak (1988), suggests that if the lower order needs (salaries and benefits) are not met, then teachers will not be motivated to fulfill more satisfying higher order needs. Johnson (1986, p.55) however, questions the motivational value of salaries in education with the belief that “teachers regard professional efficacy, not money, as the primary motivator in their work...the prospect of extrinsic reward may diminish the potency of intrinsic reward.”

There is a lack of information in regard to teacher housing. However, in locations where housing is not affordable or available, school divisions have difficulty attracting teachers and the provision of adequate housing in remote or isolated areas is imperative in the retention of teachers (Grubis, 1982).

Incentives have been used to attract and retain teachers. Massachusetts has paid a bonus of \$20,000 to 200 teachers for four years of service. New York has offered \$10,000 for three years of service in high needs schools. Maryland teachers are offered \$5,000 for closing costs on homes in the city. (NTRC, 2001) Texas has raised salaries \$3000 across the board and in South Carolina, retired teachers are taking positions without penalty to their pension (Chaddock, 1999). In Buford, Georgia, the first known daycare for teachers' children in a school has been established as US Department of Education data report that 14% of teachers leave because of pregnancy or child rearing (Zipp, 1999).

No literature has been found on the effects on teacher attrition and retention by the availability of fresh food and water quality in communities.

SAFETY NEEDS

Safety needs are those that provide a sense of security and stability in life. Teaching and living conditions in NLSD related to these needs are student discipline, personal safety, security of property, access to medical or dental care, and occupational health and safety. Teachers want to work in orderly classrooms and schools. Teachers want to live in communities that are safe and free from vandalism or other property crime. Many communities in northern Saskatchewan lack dental care facilities and can only provide basic medical services. Some communities have neither medical nor dental care. In NLSD, a safe school protocol is being developed for all schools and each school is required to have an occupational health and safety committee.

Student discipline is cited as a major reason for attrition in several studies (Macdonald, 1999, Bloland & Selby, 1980 and Shen, 1997). From the School and Staffing Survey (SASS) data from 1987 and 1993, Weiss (1999), has found that teacher morale is lower when teaching is interrupted by student misbehaviour or violence, when schools have problems with drug abuse, weapons, and pregnancies, or there is a lack of parental support. First year teachers also identify challenging classroom conditions as a significant factor of attrition (Marlow & Inman, 1997). The work in the Netherlands by Brouwers and Tomic (2000), indicate that a major source of stress and burnout for teachers is their own perception of self-efficacy in classroom management.

No literature has been found on the effect of personal safety and property crime, access to medical and dental care, and safe work conditions in schools.

BELONGINGNESS NEEDS

Belongingness needs are those that provide a desire for people to belong, be loved or feel accepted. Teaching and living conditions in NLSD related to this need are cultural shock, isolation, recreational opportunities, family, new relationships, mentorship, staff relations and parent support. For teachers who have never lived in the north, culture shock may cause anxiety. Many teachers have left families

and friends and feel lonely, isolated or homesick. Living conditions in the north, can meet this need through opportunities for community involvement and recreation, and new relationships or friendships. Teachers that have families in the community would more likely feel support and belonging. Teaching conditions are also factors in feeling of belonging. Teachers want to be accepted by colleagues. Mentorship and induction activities as well as staff relations and collegiality can help teachers feel that they fit in. Support from students' parents can induce a feeling of partnership in the education of students.

There is evidence that attrition occurs as a result of culture shock and when teachers live and work in communities of minority cultures, or areas of socio-economic difficulty (Shen, 1997). Furthermore, Shen finds high rates of attrition associated with low-income schools that have student lunch programs, and a high percentage of minority students. This implies in areas where there is social disadvantage, there are high rates of teacher attrition. Shen advocates policy development that provides special incentives for teachers of socially disadvantaged students.

Isolation and loneliness contribute to attrition. Collins (1999) refers to isolation for teachers in rural or remote areas as social, cultural, or professional, and requiring orientation programs for new teachers. Appleton (1998) expands on the concept of isolation, through the teacher's concepts of personal and professional identity, and future aspirations. If the teaching placement is not congruent with the teacher's values as a person or as a professional teacher with future aspirations, then isolation occurs and creates a motivation for the teacher to move to a place that more resembles the identity of the individual. The Mississippi Teacher Fellowship Program is attempting to retain teachers in districts of teacher shortages through the use of technology, keeping in contact with new teachers, and forming peer groups (Chambless, Sweeney, & Thompson, 1999). In research on rural schools, Collins (1999) recommends joint efforts by schools and communities to make teachers feel at home and a sense of belonging in the community.

Involvement in traditional or recreational activities in the community can help offset the feeling of isolation (Grubis, 1982). This is important in assisting teachers to fulfill the need of belonging in a new and unfamiliar community.

Family and spouses contribute to belongingness although there is little reference to its affect on teacher retention and attrition in literature. Grubis (1982) determined from his work with teachers working in isolation in Alaska, that marital discord and strains on personal relationships would often occur. Describing this as "cabin fever", married couples tended to become extremely irritable living and working in remote areas.

There is no known research on how the effect of relationships and friendships affect teacher retention and attrition. This would include the effect of being married or starting a family as a result of having moved to an isolated area.

Mentorship and new teacher induction activities are instrumental in the retention of teachers. Administration must be sensitive to the needs of first year teachers and provide orientation activities for first year teachers with the purpose of increasing teacher retention (Hope, 1999). McCreighton (2000) has recommended a strong mentorship program. Mentorship is the most popular

form of staff development and is cost effective for schools over time (Easley, 2000). The rate of retention will increase when peer support and mentorship is provided for new teachers (Stine, 1998). The Public School Forum of North Carolina (1996), attribute “sink or swim” induction as being overwhelming on teachers and compounding attrition in schools. In a study by Ganser (1999), the main mentorship activities over a year for beginning teachers include help with policies and procedures, as well as general support and encouragement. The success of a mentorship program is related to the quality of training for mentors (Weiss and Weiss, 1999). Schools with a culture of low trust amongst staff have higher rates of attrition (Easley, 2000).

Student parent support is a factor in retention of teachers. One reason for attrition of special education teachers is apathy of parents (Sultana, 1996). The perception by teachers that there is a lack of parent or family support for education is a factor in teachers wanting to quit the profession (Shen, 1997). Teachers need to feel they have the educational support from parents.

ESTEEM NEEDS

Esteem needs are desires by an individual to feel a sense of value, satisfaction, and recognition. Teaching and living conditions in NLSA related to this need are support by administration, opportunities for shared leadership, recognition for professional accomplishments, and being valued by stakeholders including colleagues, parents, and students.

Administrative support is crucial for teacher retention. Bloland and Selby (1980), find that relations with colleagues and administration are important in the retention of teachers and the school administrator must be perceived as supportive. High burnout and subsequent attrition has been associated to schools with an overly hierarchical structure, imposed goals by administration, and buildings that are extremely clean and orderly (Friedman, 1991).

Teacher supervision styles may be important for retention. There is no literature on the effect of teacher supervision and attrition.

Administrators must provide teachers opportunities for leadership, policy development, and decision-making on issues that affect them (Avi-Itzhak, 1988; Shen, 1997). Teachers who are in the center of decision-making are more committed to tasks as a teacher. Administration must be aware of a teacher’s perceptions of problems in the school. Schools with high rates of attrition have a tendency for teachers to feel powerless to make change (Easley, 2000). Opportunities for leadership can be motivating and contribute to a feeling of commitment by teachers. Zinn (1997) suggests that to facilitate teacher participation in decision-making, there needs to be a strong network of teachers and a workplace that is a forum for communication to deal with problems. In schools where the opportunity for shared leadership is continuing to expand, there may be reduction in teacher attrition as a result of teachers feeling empowered and more committed to the organization.

Recognition for achievements is important for meeting the esteem needs of a teacher. Recognition by a central office can make a teacher feel supported (Gersten, 1995). Fox and Certo (1999) suggest that this recognition at a

national level can offer a solution to the teacher shortage issue and improve retention.

A feeling of being valued by stakeholders is important to the self-concept and satisfaction by teachers. Easley (2000) suggests that frustration is contributing to attrition as teachers have listed feelings of discontentment, being undervalued and under supported. Teachers that are least likely to be burned out are those that are most satisfied by their work (Friedman, & Farber, 1992).

SELF-ACTUALIZATION NEEDS

Self-actualization is the need for one to be able to develop to one's own potential. Teaching and living conditions in NLSD related to this need include professional development, central office support, opportunities for advancement, teaching resources, preparation time, and class size. Teachers in this division have opportunities for networking with other teachers and for professional development. There is an annual Northern Area Teachers' Association (NATA) convention every October. Several curriculum consultants and educational specialists such as an educational psychologist are available to assist teachers. Educational leave and bursaries are made available to teachers who want to continue with their education. Opportunities for advancement are frequent. The division has allocated funding and matching grants for the purchase of resources at schools. Preparation time varies from school to school and class to class, as does the size of classes.

Professional development is important for teachers. Staff development time has been suggested as a strategy for teacher retention by McCreighton (2000). Professional development support can also be of a financial nature, whereby bursaries or educational leaves are available to the teacher.

Central office support is important for teacher retention. Gersten (1995) suggests that a perception of teachers that central offices tend to control teachers from a distance contributes to attrition. A recommendation from this study suggests that there is a provision of opportunities for teachers to be meaningfully involved in communicating ideas to relevant issues.

Teachers have very limited opportunities for advancement. Bloland and Selby, (1980, p.17) find that "perhaps nowhere else in the professions is there an occupation that requires so much educational preparation while offering so little opportunity for advancement." Shen, (1990) refers to this as a "flat ladder" and suggests building a career ladder into teaching.

Resources, preparation time, class size are factors that can affect job satisfaction for teachers and rates of attrition. Non-teaching demands can cause difficulty for educators to be effective teachers, contributing to a feeling of frustration, and a desire to leave their position (Easley, 2000). The most common reason for attrition for special education teachers reported to Sultana (1996) is excessive paper work. The Public School Forum of North Carolina (1996), cite teacher attrition as a result of a shortage of classroom materials needed for lessons and assessments, and the constant necessity of teachers needing to pay for materials out of pocket. This forum recommended that teachers should have access to a telephone in the classroom, a computer, and sufficient workspace.

SUMMARY

The review of related literature focused on the effects of teacher characteristics or demographics, and teaching and living conditions, on teacher retention and attrition. The demographic factors that contribute to attrition and retention of educators are age, level of education, gender, years of teaching experience, marital status and children, ethnic background or race, socioeconomic status, and other employment opportunities. Teaching and living factors are organized by categories of basic needs including physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization. Each factor was shown to have an effect on attrition.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

Teacher attrition is a problem in the Northern Light School Division. This problem is further exacerbated by a paucity of information. Little is known about which teachers are leaving and the reasons why teachers decide to stay or leave. This problem invariably must have detrimental effects on the education of students, morale of school staff, and consume considerable financial resources. The purpose of this study is to investigate what factors affect attrition and retention of teachers, so there can be a better awareness as to who is leaving and why. This information may lead to decisions that can reduce teacher attrition in the Northern Lights School Division.

This chapter will encompass the methods employed in conducting this study. This chapter describes the research design, sample, subject selection, instrumentation and analysis of data. This study is divided into two parts. The first part is an analysis of personal characteristics (demographics) of the population and the second part outlines the attrition and retention survey of a sample of the Northern Lights School Division teachers.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Given that the Northern Lights School Division has a large rate of teacher attrition, this study examines the demographic factors, and the living and working conditions that motivate teachers to consider resigning or continuing to work in the division. The dependent variables of retention and attrition of educators were analyzed by examining independent variables of demographics and living and teaching conditions. These conditions were organized into categories of needs by Maslow (1970). The categories of human needs are physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization.

As this study is descriptive research, two survey questionnaires were developed. The first questionnaire collected demographics of the population of teachers, and the data was compared to the teachers who resigned. The second survey collects information on a selection of teachers' perceptions of living and teaching conditions as factors of attrition and retention. Teachers were given the opportunity to provide opinions on each factor. Teachers were asked to identify the most important factors for either remaining employed or terminating employment with the division.

SAMPLE AND SUBJECT SELECTION

For the first survey of the study, all teachers in the Northern Lights School Division were given the opportunity to submit demographic information. For the second survey of the study, 30% of the teachers who completed the first survey were randomly selected to provide information on how teaching and living conditions motivated them to consider resigning or remaining employed with NLSA.

INSTRUMENTATION

This first instrument is a self-reporting "Teacher Demographic Questionnaire" (see Appendix C). It includes questions on demographics and personal characteristics.

The second instrument is a telephone survey, "Retention and Attrition Teacher Survey" (see Appendix D). It was administered to a randomly selected 30% of the demographic survey participants. In developing the survey instrument the professional literature was consulted and included the following work by: Adams, G.J., & Dial, M., (1994); Appleton, K.(1998); Bloland, P.A., & Selby, T.J., (1980); Collins, T., (1999); Easley, J., (2000); Ganser T., (1999); Gersten, R., (1995); Grubis, S. (1982); Hope, W.C., (1999); Jacobson, S.L., (1988); Johnson, S.M., (1986); Macdonald, D., (1999); Marlow, L., et al., (1997); Marlow, L. & Inman, D.,(1997); Maslow A.H., (1970); McCreighton, C., (2000); Piphoo, C., (1998); Scott, N.M., (1999); Shen, J., (1997); Singer, J.D., (1992); Stine, D.E., (1998); Stinebrickner, T.R., (1998); Sultana, Q.,(1996); Theobald N.D.,(1990); Weiss, E.M.,(1999); and Weiss, E.M. & Weiss, S.G.,(1999). A copy of the sample items for the questionnaire and survey is attached in the appendix.

Face validity was determined by a panel of judges, including a principal, superintendent and a teacher.

PROCEDURE

A letter was sent to the Director of Education, to acquire permission from the Northern Lights School Division board of trustees (see Appendix A). After board consent was acquired, the researcher presented the study to the population of educators on the business day of the teachers' convention in October 2001. At this time informed consent of the subjects was attained, by providing information as to the purpose of the study and that the information collected would remain anonymous and confidential (see Appendix B). The demographic survey (see Appendix C) was distributed for completion. Teachers were given time to complete the survey and return it to the researcher. Teachers who did not complete the survey were mailed the same survey and consent form in March 2002. Data from the demographic survey were recorded on spreadsheet. In June 2002, a list of resignations from the division was acquired from the human resource officer. Comparisons of the demographic data were made with the list of teachers who resigned.

In May 2002, 30% of the participants who completed the demographic survey were randomly selected to complete a follow-up telephone survey (see Appendix D).

A telephone survey was most appropriate in this study due to the geographical distances, uncertain road and weather conditions, and time constraints. An information package was sent to the candidates with the survey for previewing. This allowed candidates time to look at the survey questions and have an opportunity for clarification before the telephone survey was conducted. Candidates were contacted at their place of employment to arrange an interview time. Release time was paid for by a financial grant given for conducting this survey. Responses were recorded on the researcher's copy of the survey instrument and transferred to a spreadsheet.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The response rate for the questionnaires was provided in terms of percentage of returns. The frequency of responses for each item was presented in numerical and percentage form.

In the demographic survey, trends of attrition and retention are presented in Chapter IV. Each demographic variable is outlined. Information is presented in numerical and percentage form, as to the number of teachers who resigned for each variable.

Living and teaching condition information is presented in tables in numeric and percentage form. The frequency of responses for each question was presented. The mean average is calculated for each question. A mean average score of over 3 indicated that the living or teaching variable motivates teachers to resign while a score of less than 3 indicated a motivation of teachers to remain. Opinions and comments from teachers were presented for each question. The factors were ranked by mean average and presented in a table. The personal intentions or main reasons for remaining or leaving the division were presented by frequency in a table.

Chapter IV

RESULTS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the results of the study. These results are provided in three parts. The first part presents the results of the demographic data. The second part presents the teaching and living condition data. The third part presents the most important factor for teachers when considering both terminating and continuing employment in the Northern Lights School Division. These three parts are congruent with the study questions presented in Chapter I. Each part begins with an introduction explaining how the data is presented. The results are presented in tables. The tables are placed under headings related to survey questions, the number of participants, frequency of responses and percentages. At the end of each table is a general comment.

The first two tables are to provide information on the participation of teachers in this study. Table 1 shows that the demographic survey was completed by 229 of 292 (78.4%) teachers. This participation rate is divided into three categories of schools. Table 2 shows that 43 (18.8%) teachers resigned out of the 229 teachers who participated in the demographic questionnaire. The resignations of these 43 teachers are presented by teaching positions.

TABLE 1: THE PERCENTAGE RETURN OF QUESTIONNAIRES ISSUED

Participants and description of school	Questionnaires Issued	Questionnaires Returned	% Returned	% Of Total (229) returned
La Ronge Schools	76	65	85.5	28.4
Large Schools - 5 or more teachers	191	143	74.8	62.4
Small Schools – 4 or fewer teachers	25	21	84	9.2
Total	292	229	78.4	100

TABLE 2: PARTICIPATION AND RESIGNATIONS BY TEACHING POSITIONS

Teaching Position of Participants	Number of Participants	Number of Resignations	% of Resignations	% Of Total (43) Resignations
Early Years (K-5)	92	17	18.5	39.5
Middle Years (6-9)	46	15	32.6	34.9
Senior Years (10-12)	38	7	18.4	16.3
Administration/ Resource Teachers/ Teacher Librarians	51	4	7.8	9.3
No response to grade	2	0	0.0	0.0
Total	229	43	18.8	100

Table 2 shows that the highest percent of the total resignations in this study is by early year's teachers. However, nearly one in every three middle teachers involved in this study decided to resign from the division.

PART ONE: DEMOGRAPHIC AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS DATA

In this section, the demographic data is presented for the 229 teachers in the study. The tables present the total number of teachers, the total number of teachers who resigned, the percentage of resignations by personal characteristics, and the percentage of resignations of a total 43 resignations. The teachers resigned from the Northern Lights School Division in June 2002.

TABLE 3: PERCENTAGE OF RESIGNATIONS BY AGE

Age of Participant	Number of Participants	Number of Resignations	% of Resignations	% of Total (43) Resignations
20-23	3	0	0	0
24-27	31	11	35.5	25.6
28-31	34	11	32.3	25.6
32-35	27	5	18.5	11.6
36-39	21	3	14.3	7.0
40-43	19	3	15.8	7.0
44-47	24	0	0	0.0
48-51	30	3	10.0	7.0
52-55	26	6	23.1	14.0
56-59	8	1	12.5	2.3
60 and over	5	0	0	0.0
Non respondents	1	0	0	0.0
Total	229	43	18.8	100.0

Table 3 shows the number of teachers by age and the rate of attrition for each. The age categories of 24-27 and 28-31 had the highest percentage of resignations respectively.

This table indicates that many of the teachers who resign are young. Over half of the resignations in the division are by teachers less than 32 years old. It is interesting to notice that with the exception of the teachers age 52-55, the frequency of resignations diminish with age. Indeed, these findings of attrition by teacher age support the U shaped curve presented in professional literature by Grissmer and Kirby (1997).

TABLE 4: PERCENTAGE OF RESIGNATIONS BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Level of Education of Participant	Number of Participants	Number of Resignations	% of Resignations	% of Total (43) Resignations
Undergraduate	218	42	0	97.7
Masters Degree	9	1	11.1	2.3
Doctorate Degree	1	0	0	0.0
Non respondents	1	0	0	0.0
Total	229	43	18.8	100

Table 4 shows the level of education of teachers and the rate of attrition for each. Teachers with undergraduate degrees or graduate diplomas had the highest percentage of resignations.

There are few teachers in this division with Master's degrees. However, with only one resignation out of ten teachers with a Master's or Doctorate degree, the rate of attrition is much lower than teachers with less education. Nearly one in every five teachers with an undergraduate degree or graduate diploma has resigned.

TABLE 5: PERCENTAGE OF RESIGNATIONS BY GENDER

Gender of Participant	Number of Participants	Number of Resignations	% of Resignations	% of Total (43) Resignations
Male	86	18	20.9	41.9
Female	143	25	17.5	58.1
No response	0	0	0	0
Total	229	43	18.8	100

Table 5 shows the gender of teachers and the rate of attrition for each. Female teachers had the higher percentage of total resignations.

This data is interesting when looking at the ratio of resigning teachers who are male, compared to female. While the ratio of resignations for total male teachers is 1:4.7 teachers, the ratio of resignations for females is 1:5.7 teachers. From this standpoint, male teachers are more likely to resign than females in this school division. As the conflicting literature suggests, it is difficult to determine why this is so.

TABLE 6: PERCENTAGE OF RESIGNATIONS BY TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Years of Teaching Experience	Number of Participants	Number of Resignations	% of Resignations	% of Total (43) Resignations
0	8	4	50.0	9.3
1	23	7	30.4	16.3
2	12	5	41.6	11.6
3	8	3	37.5	7.0
4	9	2	22.2	4.7
5	11	3	27.3	7.0
6-8	27	4	14.8	9.3
9-10	20	3	15.0	7.0
11-15	27	4	14.8	9.3
16-19	20	0	0.0	0.0
20-25	30	1	3.3	3.3
26 years and over	24	7	17.5	16.3
Non respondents	0	0	0.0	0.0
Total	229	43	18.8	100

Table 6 shows the years of teaching experience for teachers and the rate of attrition for each. Teachers with either 0-5 or 26 years and over of experience had the highest percent of resignations.

This data is a reflection of the demographic data by age of teachers. Teachers with 0-2 years of teaching experience comprise 37.2% of the resignations in the division. This confirms that a mass wastage of human resources is occurring. With the exception of teachers who are 26 years and over, there is generally less attrition by teachers with more experience.

TABLE 7: PERCENTAGE OF RESIGNATIONS BY DIVISION EXPERIENCE

Years of Division Experience	Number of Participants	Number of Resignations	% of Resignations	% of Total (43) Resignations
0	44	13	29.5	30.2
1	42	9	21.4	20.9
2	17	5	29.4	11.6
3	9	3	33.3	7.0
4	10	2	20.0	4.7
5	11	3	27.3	7.0
6-8	14	1	14.8	2.3
9-10	13	1	15.0	2.3
11-15	25	3	7.1	7.0
16-19	10	0	0.0	0.0
20-25	22	0	0.0	0.0
26-30	7	2	28.6	4.7
Over 30 years	1	1	100	2.3
Non respondents	4	0	0.0	0.0
Total	229	43	18.8	100

Table 7 shows the years of teaching experience with the division for teachers and the rate of attrition for each. Teachers with either 0-2 years of division experience had the highest percent of resignations.

Once again this data confirms that many of the resignations in this division are by inexperienced teachers. A total of 62.7% of teachers' resignations are by teachers with two years or less division experience. Generally, as teachers stay longer with the division, it is less likely they will resign. It is also interesting to compare the data of 40 teachers with 16 years or more of division experience in table 7 with 74 teachers with 16 years or more of teaching experience in table 6. This is an indication that a large number of experienced teachers have less experience in the division. It may also explain the substantially larger number of teacher resignations by teachers with two years or less division experience (62.7%) in table 7 compared to two or less years of teaching experience (37.2%) in table 6.

TABLE 8a: PERCENTAGE OF RESIGNATIONS BY MARITAL STATUS

Marital Status of Participant	Number of Participants	Number of Resignations	% of Resignations	% of Total (43) Resignations
Married or Equivalent	141	24	17.0	55.8
Not Married or Equivalent	83	19	22.9	44.2
No response	5	0	0.0	0.0
Total	229	43	18.8	100

Table 8a shows the marital status for teachers and the rate of attrition for each. Teachers who are married had the higher percent of resignations.

With a large difference of teachers who are married and those who are not, it is essential to compare their rate of attrition by ratio. The ratio for resignations for married teachers is 1:5.9 married teachers while the ratio for not married teachers is 1:4.3 non-married teachers. Therefore, teachers who are single are more likely to resign than their married or equivalent colleagues.

TABLE 8b: PERCENTAGE OF RESIGNATIONS BY SPOUSAL RESIDENCY

Spousal Residency of Participant	Number of Participants	Number of Resignations	% of Resignations	% of Total (43) Resignations
Lives in community with spouse	129	21	16.3	48.8
Does not live with spouse	12	3	25.0	7.0
Not Married	83	19	22.9	44.2
No response	5	0	0.0	0.0
Total	229	43	18.8	100

Table 8b shows the residency of spouses for married teachers and the rate of attrition for each. Married teachers who live in the community with their spouse had the highest percent of resignations.

The data for married teachers is best compared by ratios. The ratio of resignations teachers with a spouse in the community is 1:6.4 while married teachers without a spouse in the community is 1:4. This data suggests that married teachers who are apart from their spouse quit more frequently than those who live together.

TABLE 8c: PERCENTAGE OF RESIGNATIONS BY SPOUSAL EMPLOYMENT

Spousal Employment of Participant	Number of Participants	Number of Resignations	% of Resignations	% of Total (43) Resignations
Spouse employed in community	92	10	10.9	23.3
Spouse not employed	37	13	35.1	30.2
Does not live with spouse	12	3	25.0	7.0
Not Married	83	19	22.9	44.2
No Response	5	0	0.0	0
Total	229	43	18.8	100

Table 8c shows the employment status of spouses who live in the community with married teachers and the rate of attrition for each. Married teachers who live in the community with their spouse that is not employed had a higher percent of resignations than those who are employed.

The employment of spouses and its effect on teacher attrition is best compared by ratios. One teacher in 9.2 teachers resign who have employed spouses in the community. This compares to one teacher in 2.8 teachers resigning who have unemployed spouses in the community. This ratio suggests that married teachers whose spouses are unemployed in the community resign at a substantially higher rate than those teachers who spouses are working in the community.

TABLE 9a: PERCENTAGE OF RESIGNATIONS BY CHILDREN

Children of Participant	Number of Participants	Number of Resignations	% of Resignations	% of Total (43) Resignations
Has children	146	20	13.7	46.5
Has no children	76	22	28.9	51.2
No response	7	1	14.3	2.3
Total	229	43	18.8	100

Table 9a shows the number of teachers with or without children and the rate of attrition for each. Teachers with no children have the highest percent of resignations.

The rate of attrition for teachers without children is different than teachers who have children. One teacher in 7.3 teachers who have children resigned. This compares to one teacher in 3.5 teachers who do not have children resigning. Teachers who have no children therefore are quitting at a substantially higher rate than those with children.

TABLE 9b: PERCENTAGE OF RESIGNATIONS BY RESIDENCE OF CHILDREN

Children of Participants	Number of Participants	Number of Resignations	% of Resignations	% of Total (43) Resignations
Children reside with teacher	106	13	12.3	30.2
Children do not reside with teacher	40	7	17.5	16.3
Has no children	76	22	28.9	51.2
No response	7	1	14.9	2.3
Total	229	43	18.8	100

Table 9b shows the rate of attrition for teachers with children who either live with them or not. Teachers with children who reside with them represent 30.2% of the total resignations in the division. Teachers with children who do not reside with them have 16.3% of the total resignations.

This data suggests that teachers may be slightly more likely to remain teaching if they have their children with them in the community. Teachers with children in the community resigned at a rate of 12.3% compared to teachers who had children outside of the community resigned at a rate of 17.5%.

TABLE 10: PERCENTAGE OF RESIGNATIONS BY ETHNIC BACKGROUND

Ethnic Background of Participant	Number of Participants	Number of Resignations	% of Resignations	% of Total (43) Resignations
Aboriginal	66	10	15.2	23.3
Non aboriginal	157	33	21.0	76.7
No response	6	0	0.0	0
Total	229	43	18.8	100

Table 10 shows whether teachers are of aboriginal descent or non-aboriginal and the rate of attrition for each. Non-aboriginal teachers have the higher percent of resignations.

One teacher in 6.6 aboriginal teachers has resigned compared to one teacher in 4.8 non-aboriginal teachers, who has resigned. This ratio is an indication that aboriginal teachers quit less often than non-aboriginal teachers. This is important information for staffing northern schools.

TABLE 11a: PERCENTAGE OF RESIGNATIONS BY FAMILY ECONOMIC STATUS

Family Economic Status by Participant	Number of Participants	Number of Resignations	% of Resignations	% of Total (43) Resignations
High	9	2	22.2	4.7
Middle	155	28	18.1	65.1
Low	56	12	21.4	27.9
No response	9	1	11.1	4.3
Total	229	43	18.8	100

Table 11a shows family economic status for teachers and the rate of attrition for each. Teachers from a middle class background have the highest percentage of total teacher resignations.

TABLE 11b: PERCENTAGE OF RESIGNATIONS BY STUDENT LOANS

Student Loans by Participant	Number of Participants	Number of Resignations	% of Resignations	% of Total (43) Resignations
Has student loans	68	20	29.4	46.5
No student loans	156	23	14.7	53.5
No response	5	0	0.0	0
Total	229	43	18.8	100

Table 11b shows teachers having student loans and teachers who do not have student loans and the rate of attrition for each. Teachers who do not have student loans have a higher percentage of resignations.

With one in 3.4 teachers with student loans resigning, it would appear that having student loans is not a deterrent for resignations. Despite representing only 68 teachers, students with loans represent nearly half of the resignations. This further demonstrates how young, inexperienced teachers are very much willing to resign from Northern Lights despite financial burdens.

TABLE 12: PERCENTAGE OF RESIGNATIONS BY ALTERNATIVE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Would you leave the school division?	Number of Participants	Number of Resignations	% of Resignations	% of Total (43) Resignations
Yes would leave the division	113	32	28.3	74.4
No would not leave the division	100	9	9.0	20.9
No response	16	2	12.5	4.7
Total	229	43	18.8	100

Table 12 shows whether teachers would be willing to leave the division and the rate of attrition for each. Teachers willing to leave the division had the higher percent of resignations.

The data from Table 12 is of interest in that it was collected in October 2001, only two months after the start of the school year. Nearly three out of every four teachers that resigned at the end of the year were willing to leave the school division much earlier in the year. Furthermore, it must be of concern that nearly half of all the teachers in this study would be willing to leave the school division. This may have further staffing implications for the school division.

TABLE 13: PERCENTAGE OF RESIGNATIONS BY DESIRED ALTERNATIVE EMPLOYMENT

Most desirable place of employment?	Number of Participants	Number of Resignations	% of Resignations	% of Total (43) Resignations
Band School	13	2	15.4	4.7
Rural Saskatchewan	21	1	4.8	2.3
Urban Saskatchewan	18	9	50.0	20.9
Out of Province	50	16	32.0	37.2
Out of Country	8	2	25.0	4.7
Would not leave	100	9	9.0	20.9
No response	16	2	12.5	4.7
No destination	3	2	66.7	4.7
Total	229	43	18.8	100

Table 13 shows the desired employment of teachers willing to leave the division and the rate of attrition for each. The highest percentage of the total teachers who resigned wanted positions outside the province of Saskatchewan. A half of the teachers who indicated they wanted to teach in urban Saskatchewan resigned.

A further concern from the data from Table 12 and Table 13 is that while 100 teachers claimed that they would not leave the division, in fact nine of them did. This further suggests the vulnerability of the division should nearly 10% of teachers who claim that they will not leave actually do.

PART TWO: TEACHING AND LIVING CONDITIONS DATA

This section presents the results of the follow-up telephone survey completed by 63 out of 75 randomly selected teachers from 229 teachers who had completed the demographic survey in October 2001. This data was collected in May 2002 and the results are presented in tables. The tables are placed under headings related to the research questions, frequency of responses, and percentages of total responses. At the bottom of each table is a mean average for the research question. At the end of each table are general comments and qualitative comments or opinions by teachers. A table that ranks the factors of teaching and living conditions is at the end of the chapter. Two tables that display the main reason given by teachers for staying or leaving NLSD is also at the end of the chapter.

PHYSIOLOGICAL NEEDS

TABLE 14: SALARIES AND BENEFITS

How do salaries and benefits including allowances affect your decision of employment in NLSD?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly want to return	13	20.6
Moderately want to return	23	36.5
Neither return nor quit	19	30.2
Moderately want to quit	7	11.1
Strongly want to quit	0	0
NA or no response	1	1.6
Total	63	100

Mean Average 2.40

Table 14 shows that salaries and benefits have a positive effect on teachers' decisions of employment. When the two responses of strongly want to continue is combined with moderately want to return, there is a majority of teachers who claim that salaries and benefits are meeting their needs. No teachers strongly wanted to quit as a result of their salaries and benefits.

Teachers expressed the following opinions on salaries and benefits:

- Increments at higher levels would retain more older teachers.
- Some teachers made more money in other provinces but believed they were further ahead because of a lower cost of living.
- A lack of banking in most communities other than La Ronge is frustrating.
- A lot of people go north to save money.
- The northern allowance does not compensate for the higher costs of living in northern Saskatchewan.
- Some teachers felt that they were in a lower salary classification than they would be in other provinces.

TABLE 15: TEACHER HOUSING

How does NLSD housing including adequacy and affordability affect your decision of employment in NLSD?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly want to return	11	17.5
Moderately want to return	10	15.9
Neither return nor quit	4	6.3
Moderately want to quit	4	6.3
Strongly want to quit	0	0
NA or no response	34	54.0
Total	63	100

Mean Average 2.03

Table 15 shows that housing provided by Northern Lights has a very positive effect on teachers' decisions of employment. The large number of non-responders was due to 34 teachers indicating they did not live in board provided housing. Of the remaining 29 teachers who live in board housing, 21 either strongly or moderately are motivated to remain employed when considering the housing accommodations and affordability.

This data is a strong indication that the Northern Lights School Division is meeting this basic need for teachers. This is essential when considering from the professional literature that housing in remote or isolated areas is necessary for the retention of teachers (Grubis, 1982).

Teachers expressed the following opinions about teacher housing:

- Housing is excellent and the rents are reasonable.
- At times maintenance can be slow.
- There needs to be more family housing.
- Some families do not like having single people living downstairs.
- It would be nice to have a freezer in teacherages.

TABLE 16: RETENTION INCENTIVES

How do retention incentives including \$1000 and utility rebates affect your decision of employment in NLSD?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly want to return	30	47.6
Moderately want to return	12	19.0
Neither return nor quit	13	20.6
Moderately want to quit	3	4.8
Strongly want to quit	4	6.3
NA or no response	1	1.6
Total	63	100

Mean Average 2.02

Table 16 shows that many teachers are motivated to remain teaching in the school division when considering the retention incentives provided by the school division. Nearly half of the teachers surveyed indicated that these incentives strongly motivate them to want to continue.

These findings support the school division's decision to provide retention incentives to teachers. Despite the strong positive feedback by teachers, there still remain about 20% of teachers who feel that these incentives have no effect on their decision to stay. A further 10% contend that the incentives are inadequate and still want to leave the division. Given the expense of providing \$1000 to each continuing teacher in addition to other financial incentives, and considering that 30% of teachers feel that this provision does not entice them to stay, it may be necessary to examine this in a further study.

Despite the numerous positive responses regarding retention incentives there were few actual opinions expressed. The opinions regarding retention incentives were:

- The \$1000 is nice.
- A \$1000 does not make a difference.
- NLSD has to be clear on who is not eligible for retention allowances.

TABLE 17: QUALITY OF FOOD AT LOCAL GROCERY STORES

How does the quality of food at local grocery stores affect your decision of employment in NLSD?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly want to return	5	7.9
Moderately want to return	14	22.2
Neither return nor quit	20	31.7
Moderately want to quit	14	22.2
Strongly want to quit	9	14.3
NA or no response	1	1.6
Total	63	100

Mean Average 3.13

Table 17 shows that teacher satisfaction with food quality in communities is varied throughout the school division. Over 36% of teachers stated that the quality of food in local grocery stores either moderately or strongly motivated them to want to quit working for NLSD.

Teachers had many negative comments about food in the local grocery stores in the north. These opinions included:

- The food is terrible.
- Teachers need to stock up when they are out of town.
- Some food items such as milk and bread run out in the store and the truck doesn't come in until next week.
- It's like doing all your shopping at a 7/11.
- Fruits go bad in a couple days.
- Produce is often poor quality or unavailable.
- The prices are ridiculous.
- As a mother of three, the food costs a fortune and it bothers me that I am not providing for the wellness of my children

TABLE 18: WATER QUALITY IN COMMUNITY

How does the quality of water affect your decision of employment in NLSD?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly want to return	18	28.6
Moderately want to return	16	25.4
Neither return nor quit	20	31.7
Moderately want to quit	1	1.6
Strongly want to quit	7	11.1
NA or no response	1	1.6
Total	63	100

Mean Average 2.40

Table 18 shows a majority of teachers view water quality as having a favourable affect on their decision of employment. Over half of the teachers surveyed found the quality of water met their personal needs and was part of their motivation either strongly or moderately to remain with the division. For several teachers the water quality in their communities motivated them to strongly want to quit teaching.

Teachers had the following opinions about water quality in the north:

- The water in the north is excellent.
- Water in Sandy Bay is not too good, it makes people sick and it needs to be boiled.
- Teachers have to buy bottled water in Cumberland House.

SAFETY NEEDS

TABLE 19: STUDENT DISCIPLINE

How does student discipline in the school affect your decision of employment in NLSD?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly want to return	11	17.5
Moderately want to return	24	38.1
Neither return nor quit	11	17.5
Moderately want to quit	14	22.2
Strongly want to quit	3	4.8
NA or no response	0	0.0
Total	63	100

Mean Average 2.59

Table 19 shows that over 55% of teachers are motivated strongly or moderately to remain with the school division when considering student discipline. Conversely, there are also 27% of teachers who are motivated strongly or moderately to leave the division when considering student discipline.

When considering the literature on teacher attrition due to student discipline and also the number of teachers in this division who are motivated to leave, this issue may need further attention or study.

Teachers presented these various opinions about student discipline in the north:

- I have taught in the south, it's the same in the north.
- We have great students and a great discipline policy.
- I feel it is more stressful as a middle years teacher.
- Discipline is not good at all and administration is too busy to help.
- Teachers are just coping, putting up with discipline problems everyday.
- Parents back up the misbehaviour by defending their children.
- Discipline is much easier if you know the parents or families.
- Administration must be visible in the school and take charge.
- Continuity of discipline standards change with turnover in administration.

- The division board must establish their expectations in terms of swearing or violence in schools.
- Having more experience or being an older teacher helps in discipline.

TABLE 20: PERSONAL SAFETY

How does personal safety affect your decision of employment in NLSD?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly want to return	25	39.7
Moderately want to return	16	25.4
Neither return nor quit	15	23.8
Moderately want to quit	6	9.5
Strongly want to quit	1	1.6
NA or no response	0	0.0
Total	63	100

Mean Average 2.08

Table 20 shows that while a majority of teachers either feel strongly or moderately safe in the north. The highest percentage of teachers in this study indicated that they are strongly motivated employed with the division when considering the factor of personal safety.

The findings of this study contradict the concerns of a University of Saskatchewan prospective teachers' survey who listed personal safety as one of their major concerns for employment in the north (McDonald, 2001). The perception that communities in northern Saskatchewan are unsafe places to live must be changed. A change in perception may influence teacher recruitment and in turn teacher retention.

The following are a range of opinions about personal safety by teachers in the north:

- I don't feel threatened at all, I have been well accepted.
- I feel safe in La Ronge.
- Safety in the north is top notch.
- I have had coarse language directed at me when I go for a run.
- I feel desensitized to some of the physical abuse I have seen in the community.

TABLE 21: SECURITY OF PERSONAL PROPERTY

How does security of your personal property affect your decision of employment in NLSD?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly want to return	18	28.6
Moderately want to return	12	19.0
Neither return nor quit	18	28.6
Moderately want to quit	9	14.3
Strongly want to quit	6	9.5
NA or no response	0	0.0
Total	63	100

Mean Average 2.57

Table 21 shows that while nearly half the teachers are motivated either strongly or moderately to remain teaching when considering personal security. They generally have not experienced any problems of property crime. In contrast, nearly a quarter other teachers feel strongly or moderately wanting to quit because of this factor. Many of the participants felt that the division has no role in this issue, as it is a community problem, even though there were many favourable comments about the provision of alarm systems in Northern Lights teacherages.

The following are a range of teacher opinions regarding security of personal property in the north:

- For me it has been really good, never a problem.
- I was paranoid when I first came here but nothing ever happened.
- There have been too many break-ins to homes and vehicles.
- The community has to take responsibility for this problem.
- Alarms in the teacherages have made a total difference, the best thing the board could have done, and they are a real deterrent.
- I can't leave anything out in my yard.
- Alarms are a joke.
- We get a house sitter when we go away.
- We worry when we leave, we hide possessions.
- Alarms made a difference.

TABLE 22: ACCESS TO MEDICAL/DENTAL CARE

How does access to medical or dental care affect your decision of employment in NLSD?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly want to return	8	12.7
Moderately want to return	16	25.4
Neither return nor quit	10	15.9
Moderately want to quit	18	28.6
Strongly want to quit	10	15.9
NA or no response	1	1.6
Total	63	100

Mean Average 3.10

Table 22 shows that teacher satisfaction with medical or dental care is varied throughout the division. A large number of teachers, over 44%, are strongly or moderately motivated to quit teaching in Northern Lights School Division when considering the provision of dental and medical services in their teaching communities. While many teachers expressed satisfaction in La Ronge, for outlying communities, this issue represents a major concern.

Teachers presented the following opinions on health and medical care:

- It's a three hour drive to a dentist and a four hour wait in the hospital.
- There is dental only for children and there are real long waits for medical attention.
- Driving six hours to the doctor is inconvenient and extremely expensive.
- This has been very difficult on me with my health problems.

TABLE 23: OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

How does occupational health and safety conditions affect your decision of employment in NLSD?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly want to return	11	17.5
Moderately want to return	18	28.6
Neither return nor quit	19	30.2
Moderately want to quit	7	11.1
Strongly want to quit	3	4.8
NA or no response	4	6.3
Total	63	100

Mean Average 2.53

Table 23 shows that nearly half of the teachers are motivated to remain teaching on the basis of occupational health and safety in their schools. A small number of teachers are motivated to quit because of this factor and expressed the concern of job stress and student violence as concerns that motivated them either strongly or moderately to want to quit.

Teachers presented the following opinions about occupational health and safety in the north:

- There are no real problems.
- We have a committee for our concerns.
- School security cameras do not work.
- The school is safe, but I am always concerned that what I see happening in schools on TV happening here.
- Carpets should be removed in schools.
- It is so stressful working with student misbehaviour.
- There needs to be a better awareness of things like hepatitis and TB by teachers.
- School violence is getting worse, some teachers have been assaulted, this is something nobody should have to put up with and these kids should be expelled.

BELONGINGNESS NEEDS

TABLE 24: CULTURAL SHOCK

How does cultural shock or differences between the ways you were raised affect your decision of employment in NLSD?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly want to return	7	11.1
Moderately want to return	5	7.9
Neither return nor quit	8	12.7
Moderately want to quit	6	9.5
Strongly want to quit	1	1.6
NA or no response	36	54.0
Total	63	100

Mean Average 2.59

Table 24 shows that a majority of teachers feel cultural shock has no relevance in their decision of employment. There were 36 teachers who responded with NA or no response. Generally, there were several reasons for this unusually high response. Of the teachers who indicated this response, many were in the north for several years, were originally from the north, felt La Ronge had many of the amenities they expected, or that they were so used to the differences in lifestyle, that they no longer thought about cultural differences.

Considering that this survey was conducted at the end of the school year, all teachers had time to adjust to the northern environment. When considering the professional literature on cultural shock it would be useful to examine this factor in more detail.

Teachers in regards to cultural shock in the north presented the following comments:

- I have been treated very well by aboriginal people.
- People in the north are very friendly.
- I am from a large urban area and believe it or not there really is not that much difference.
- I am from the north so there really is no cultural shock.
- Even though I am from the north, I was shocked by all the store windows being barred.

- It was difficult at first but you become desensitized to the poverty, welfare and lack of education.
- I find it strange that kids want to play with my five year old at 11:00 at night.
- You need to have an open mind and get to know the people.
- It really bothered me to see some kids out at 3:00 in the morning or some kids not being supervised.
- I have been really frustrated by the level of interest in education and student homework habits.

TABLE 25: ISOLATION OR LONELINESS

How does isolation or loneliness including distant family or relationship affect your decision of employment in NLSD?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly want to return	0	0.0
Moderately want to return	5	7.9
Neither return nor quit	19	30.2
Moderately want to quit	10	15.9
Strongly want to quit	8	12.7
NA or no response	20	31.7
Total	63	100

Mean Average 3.50

Table 25 shows that nearly a third of teachers feel that isolation or loneliness has no relevance in their decision of employment. Many teachers feel that this condition does not exist for them with a large number of teachers in their community. Other teachers are either from the community or have family with them and as such content that isolation or loneliness was not a factor that they think about.

Still, there was nearly a quarter of the teachers motivated moderately or strongly to quit because of isolation or loneliness. Many of these teachers were single, lived alone and expressed a longing for friends or loved ones far away from their teaching community.

There were many comments in regards to isolation and loneliness presented by teachers:

- I am a bit of a loner, so I love being in the north.

- I am a loner who likes to read so I love the isolation, I can always call home.
- Isolation is not a problem, there is good television, this is the best job I have had in 30 years.
- I am from the north and I was lonely even being an hour from home.
- I have a fiancée out of town and this has been really difficult.
- I really miss my family.
- It would be nice to be closer to my family.
- After getting married I sure have wanted for my kids to be closer to their grandparents.
- You get use to it after a while.
- This is hard on kids being so far away from their grandparents.
- If I could change anything, this would be it. If I would ever leave, this would be the reason.
- My mom is sick and I need to be close to her.

TABLE 26: COMMUNITY RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

How does recreational opportunities in your community affect your decision of employment in NLSD?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly want to return	10	15.9
Moderately want to return	21	33.3
Neither return nor quit	15	23.8
Moderately want to quit	8	12.7
Strongly want to quit	9	14.3
NA or no response	0	0.0
Total	63	100

Mean Average 2.76

Table 26 shows that nearly half of teachers feel recreational opportunities either motivate them strongly or moderately to stay teaching in NLSD. In contrast, over a quarter of all teachers are either moderately or strongly

motivated to quit as a result of the recreation opportunities available in their community.

For the teachers who view recreation as meeting their personal needs, many of them included the outdoor pursuits in these kinds of activities. Many expressed the enjoyment in the north of fishing, cross country skiing, or just being outdoors.

Teachers who felt that recreational opportunities in the north were inadequate often looked to community recreation for fulfillment of this need. Many did not particularly care for outdoor pursuits but expressed that they missed things they were used to. Many expressed that they wished they could do things they could when they lived in a city.

These are the following teacher opinions about recreational opportunities in the north:

- The outdoors is great.
- Great opportunity for outdoor recreation such as fishing and hunting.
- Not much to do in the community but it is great if you like the outdoors.
- There seems to be nothing for non drinkers.
- The recreation coordinators are inadequate, the community wants teachers to organize everything.
- There are no movies or a coffee shop in my community.
- Teachers end up being organizers for everything you want.
- Not much to do for children.
- It seems like there is a gambling element to local based recreation all the time.

TABLE 27: FAMILY OR SPOUSE IN THE COMMUNITY

How does having a family or spouse with you in the community affect your decision of employment in NLSD?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly want to return	31	49.2
Moderately want to return	7	11.1
Neither return nor quit	3	4.8
Moderately want to quit	3	4.8
Strongly want to quit	3	4.8
NA or no response	16	25.4
Total	63	100

Mean Average 1.72

Table 27 shows that nearly half of teachers are strongly motivated to remain teaching in NLSD by having either a spouse and/or family with them in the community. This living condition represents the highest rated average in terms of teacher retention. A quarter of the teachers had no response or found this question not relevant. This large number of teachers who responded NA expressed that they did not have family with them in the community.

This living condition sheds light on the major reason why teachers stay in the north. Despite a few teachers indicating that family was a motivator in leaving, for the most part having a family in the north meant that this personal need was met and people were less likely to leave. A few teachers indicated that the lack of a family in the north motivated them to leave.

These are the following opinions from teachers:

- It has been great having my spouse here, but at times it has been difficult when employment or training has only been available to local people.
- We have had marital challenges by living in the north.
- The family was fine with living here for a while but they are not happy, it would be better if you are single.
- I am from the community so obviously I would stay at my job for a long time.
- Having a family with you is the most important thing that keeps you in the north although it was very difficult leaving distant family to come here.

TABLE 28: NEW RELATIONSHIPS AND FRIENDSHIPS

How do new relationships, friendships that have occurred by moving into the community including marriage and family affect your decision of employment in NLSL?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly want to return	15	23.8
Moderately want to return	19	30.2
Neither return nor quit	13	20.6
Moderately want to quit	3	4.8
Strongly want to quit	1	1.6
NA or no response	12	19.0
Total	63	100

Mean Average 2.14

Table 28 shows that a majority of teachers are either strongly or moderately motivated to remain teaching as a result of new friendships or relationships formed by moving to the community. This is particularly true for teachers in this study who indicated that they have a partner or are married to someone from the north.

Teachers provided the following opinions about new friendships and relationships:

- I have been very happy with the people I have met in the north.
- I have become friends with people in the north that I would probably not been friends with anywhere else.
- It is difficult when no one else on staff has children like we do.
- You always lose friends when living in the north.
- I am getting tired making new friends every year.
- It is hard to invest in friendships when so many people leave.

TABLE 29: MENTORSHIP INITIATIVES AND INDUCTION ACTIVITIES

How do mentorship initiatives or induction activities affect your decision of employment in NLSD?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly want to return	1	1.6
Moderately want to return	12	19.0
Neither return nor quit	12	19.0
Moderately want to quit	7	11.1
Strongly want to quit	6	9.5
NA or no response	25	39.7
Total	63	100

Mean Average 3.13

Table 29 shows how teachers perceive mentorship and induction. A large number of teachers felt the question was not relevant. Many of these teachers felt that there really was no orientation in their school or mentorship initiatives. Teachers also felt that aside to some curriculum orientation, that there really is no division orientation for new teachers.

In considering the frequency of teachers who indicate “no response” as a result of inadequate orientations in schools, and considering the high attrition of teachers with 0-2 years of experience, this factor may indeed be a part of the attrition problem. More investigation may be needed to determine how orientations and support for new teachers are provided in the division schools. It could be suggested that the 25 teachers who indicated “no response” may more realistically be a part of the 13 teachers who are strongly or moderately motivated to quit when considering this factor.

Teachers provided the following opinions on mentorship and induction:

- Very little is being done in our school.
- Retired teachers / Ernie Epp was excellent, it helped out quite a bit.
- There needs to be more done in this area especially pairing existing teachers with new teachers.
- There needs to be a new teacher orientation done by the division.
- I was very depressed when I started.
- There needs to be better initiatives at the division level to introduce teachers.
- The STF new teacher orientation is OK but I think it would be better if it was done within the division.

TABLE 30: COLLEGIALLY OF SCHOOL STAFF

How does collegiality of staff or staff relations affect your decision of employment in NLSD?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly want to return	14	22.2
Moderately want to return	23	36.5
Neither return nor quit	12	19.0
Moderately want to quit	7	11.1
Strongly want to quit	2	3.2
NA or no response	5	7.9
Total	63	100

Mean Average 2.31

Table 30 shows that collegiality in schools motivates over half of all teachers either strongly or moderately to remain teaching in NLSD. Teachers felt that there was a common need for all teachers to get along and work together as it was tough enough working in the north.

The following are a selection of a few of the other teacher opinions about collegiality in schools:

- Staff are really supportive in our school.
- There is a real tight group of teachers.
- There is polarization between elementary and high school teachers.

TABLE 31: SUPPORT FROM STUDENTS' PARENTS

How does support from students' parents affect your decision of employment in NLSD?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly want to return	8	12.7
Moderately want to return	14	22.2
Neither return nor quit	14	22.2
Moderately want to quit	13	20.6
Strongly want to quit	12	19.0
NA or no response	2	3.2
Total	63	100

Mean Average 3.11

Table 31 shows teacher perception of parent support is varied throughout the division. There were nearly 40% of teachers who indicated they were moderately or strongly motivated to quit teaching in Northern Lights School Division as a result of the lack of parent support. Teachers are feeling quite frustrated in this area throughout the division. This high perception of a lack of parent support is congruent in the literature that teachers will want to quit (Shen, 1997).

There were many teacher opinions about parent support in the north:

- Parents are committed.
- There is a lot of support, parents are very understanding.
- Parents are becoming more concerned all the time.
- It seems like aboriginal parents are always supportive while the non aboriginal parents are always complaining or criticizing teachers.
- Parents do not seem to know their role as parents in education, they need to get involved.
- Parent support for their children's misbehaviour is a deterrent to educational improvement.
- Parents grant teachers a lot of freedom.
- Parents are at both ends of the scale in terms of support.
- Parents do not want to get involved in activities or fundraising.
- There is too much blaming of teachers and sticking up for children.

- Parent lifestyle may conflict with active involvement.

ESTEEM NEEDS

TABLE 32: IN-SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT

How does support from in-school administration affect your decision of employment in NLSD?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly want to return	20	31.7
Moderately want to return	12	19.0
Neither return nor quit	3	4.8
Moderately want to quit	8	12.7
Strongly want to quit	5	7.9
NA or no response	15	23.8
Total	63	100

Mean Average 2.29

Table 32 shows that nearly half of the teachers are either strongly or moderately motivated to remain teaching due to the support from the in-school administrators. Over 20% of all teachers are either strongly or moderately motivated to quit when considering in-school administration support.

The data collected in this question indicates the critical role in-school administrators have in teacher retention and attrition. Teachers feel that the in-school administrators have either the ability to create work environments that they want to be a part of or teaching conditions that make them want to quit.

Teachers provided the following opinions about in-school administrators' support, and illustrate the ways in which they can influence teacher retention or attrition:

- Administration is great, they always inform staff and involve them in decisions.
- The administrators are very supportive and concerned.
- There is great communication with administrators, they provide a form of security for teachers.
- There is a lack of communication with our in-school administrator.
- There is no support, nothing being done about discipline problems, nor are there suspensions for terrible behaviour.

- Administration are not visible in our school, they are stuck in the office and not in the trenches.
- Administration needs to provide more personal contact with teachers for reassurance and support.
- Administration is not supportive at all, they question integrity of teachers, or make decisions arbitrarily, and inconsistent in discipline problems.
- I feel I am on my own as they do not listen to my problems

TABLE 33: TEACHER SUPERVISION

How does teacher supervision including the value of observations and reports affect your decision of employment in NLSD?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly want to return	10	15.9
Moderately want to return	10	15.9
Neither return nor quit	12	19.0
Moderately want to quit	5	7.9
Strongly want to quit	5	7.9
NA or no response	21	33.3
Total	63	100

Mean Average 2.64

Table 33 shows that a third of the teachers feel that teacher supervision is either not applicable or gave no response. This large response was similar to the question regarding teacher orientation. Teachers indicated that observations are not happening, and thus cannot honestly rate it in terms of leaving or remaining. This response must also be a concern when considering the attrition rate of new teachers in the division. All teachers need constructive, supportive supervision. If a third of the teachers feel they cannot respond as a result of little or no observations then this problem needs to be further investigated. This is addition to the 15% of teachers who say that they are not getting any supportive feedback from administration and are motivated either strongly or moderately to resign.

Of the teachers who viewed supervision positively, they attributed the efforts to the superintendent or in-school administrator taking the time to complete observations in a supportive clinical supervision environment. This is further evidence how administrative practice can affect teacher supervision.

Teachers provided the following opinions about supervision:

- There are good reports and feedback from the superintendent.

- It doesn't happen very often, but it is good feedback when it does.
- It is not happening at all.
- I would like more feedback from them, supervision is a good thing.
- We need more specific reports rather than generic evaluations.
- Observations are fair but not that helpful.

TABLE 34: SHARED LEADERSHIP AND COLLABORATIVE DECISION-MAKING

How do opportunities for shared leadership and decision-making affect your decision of employment in NLSD?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly want to return	10	15.9
Moderately want to return	22	34.9
Neither return nor quit	10	15.9
Moderately want to quit	8	12.7
Strongly want to quit	6	9.5
NA or no response	7	11.1
Total	63	100

Mean Average 2.61

Table 34 shows that over half of all teachers are motivated either strongly or moderately by shared leadership and collaborative decision-making in school. Over 20% of all other teachers are motivated either strongly or moderately to quit when considering the same factor.

This is another factor that indicates how administrative practice can influence how teachers are motivated to quit or remain with the division. Teachers who are strongly motivated to remain with the division indicate that they feel valued and trusted by their in-school administrator and have opportunities to be involved in decisions for the school. In stark contrast, teachers who felt like leaving expressed feelings of not being able to contribute to decisions and did not feel a part of a school team. These comments reflect that teachers who feel powerless in schools have higher rates of attrition (Easley, 2000).

Teachers provided the following opinions about shared leadership and collaborative decision-making:

- It is good that there are committees in our school for decisions.
- Shared decision-making through committees takes a lot of time for meetings, there are too many opportunities for this.

- At times I wish the principal would make the decision to save time.
- We are allowed a lot of input but implementation rarely occurs.
- We are not allowed to have an opinion, people get defensive.

TABLE 35: RECOGNITION BY COLLEAGUES

How does recognition by colleagues for effort and achievement affect your decision of employment in NLSD?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly want to return	15	23.8
Moderately want to return	22	34.9
Neither return nor quit	13	20.6
Moderately want to quit	6	9.5
Strongly want to quit	4	6.3
NA or no response	3	4.8
Total	63	100

Mean Average 2.26

Table 35 shows that over half of teachers are motivated either strongly or moderately to remain teaching when considering recognition by colleagues. Teachers demonstrated the desire to work in environments where their efforts are acknowledged. There were ten teachers who indicated that the environments in their school were not conducive to being recognized for efforts and that they were either strongly or moderately motivated to quit.

Teachers provided the following opinions:

- Everyone is supportive.
- There is a great feeling of community in our school.
- It would be good if there were more recognition.

TABLE 36: VALUED AS A TEACHER BY STAKEHOLDERS

How do feelings of being valued as a teacher by stakeholders affect your decision of employment in NLSD?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly want to return	17	27.0
Moderately want to return	24	38.1
Neither return nor quit	8	12.7
Moderately want to quit	6	9.5
Strongly want to quit	5	7.9
NA or no response	3	4.8
Total	63	100

Mean Average 2.30

Table 36 shows that a majority of teachers (55.1%) are motivated to remain teaching when considering feelings of being valued as a teacher in NLSD. There were 11 teachers who indicated that they felt they were not valued by people in the educational community and were moderately or strongly motivated to quit. These comments are a reflection of several teachers feeling that students' parents do not support them.

Teachers presented the following opinions about being valued in the north:

- I feel really valued as a teacher in La Ronge.
- The longer you stay, the more you feel appreciated by students and parents.
- I feel a lot of respect from the kids.
- Nobody seems to notice.
- Need to here that we are valued more.
- Teachers are “milked” for all they are worth.
- There is still a lot of criticism from parents and community groups.
- I am frustrated by negative parents.

SELF ACTUALIZATION NEEDS

TABLE 37: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

How does professional development support including consultants, NATA convention, education leave and education bursaries affect your decision of employment in NLSD?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly want to return	16	25.4
Moderately want to return	19	30.2
Neither return nor quit	14	22.2
Moderately want to quit	7	11.1
Strongly want to quit	6	9.5
NA or no response	1	1.6
Total	63	100

Mean Average 2.48

Table 37 shows that a majority of teachers are motivated to remain teaching when considering professional development support in NLSD. The 13 teachers who feel that professional development is not meeting their needs suggested costs, distances, a lack of information, or no release time as the reasons they felt this way. It must also be mentioned in the process of conducting the study there appeared to be a lack of comprehensive understanding as to the professional development opportunities available. For example, some teachers indicated that they were not aware of the process for bursary application in the local teachers' agreement.

Teachers provided the following opinions on professional development in the division:

- The curriculum consultants are top notch, most helpful.
- Modules for in-school administrators are excellent.
- Support through bursaries in the division is excellent.
- PD is nearly impossible in the Far North due to geography.
- NLSD is very supportive and I feel a sense of dedication because of them.
- Forms for reimbursement are a hindrance.
- More support for convention would be nice.
- My leave for PD was not approved.
- NATA needs to have more practical things for the teacher convention.
- PD is very expensive when living in the north for travel, accommodations and meals.

TABLE 38: CENTRAL OFFICE SUPPORT

How does central office support affect your decision of employment in NLSD?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly want to return	10	15.9
Moderately want to return	19	30.2
Neither return nor quit	20	31.7
Moderately want to quit	6	9.5
Strongly want to quit	5	7.9
NA or no response	3	4.8
Total	63	100

Mean Average 2.62

Table 38 shows that slightly less than half of all teachers are motivated either strongly or moderately to remain teaching as a result of NLSD central office support. Another third of all teachers did not feel that the central office had much effect on the work conditions. Teachers who did feel supported by the central office commented on processes of decision-making, and communication as sources for their feelings.

The teacher opinions about central office support are as follows:

- Central office is very supportive.
- They are good to deal with.
- I received a supportive letter from the director, that was a nice thing to get, and an important thing to do.
- Senior administration are very supportive.
- I am happy with direction from central office as opposed to ten years ago.
- There is great support considering all the challenges.
- Decentralization is a joke.
- Too much paperwork, I want to teach, not do paperwork.
- They do not value school administration and impose top down decisions, NLAA is needed to lobby.

TABLE 39: ADVANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES OR CHANGE OF ASSIGNMENT

How do opportunities for advancement or change of teaching assignment affect your decision of employment in NLSD?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly want to return	14	22.2
Moderately want to return	16	25.4
Neither return nor quit	13	20.6
Moderately want to quit	7	11.1
Strongly want to quit	5	7.9
NA or no response	8	12.7
Total	63	100

Mean Average 2.51

Table 39 shows that slightly less than half of all teachers are motivated either strongly or moderately to remain teaching as a result of opportunities for advancement or change in teaching assignments. Teachers who provided positive feedback in this category felt they were able to move to another position if they wanted to. Teachers who did not respond favourably mentioned the lack of their involvement in deciding teaching assignments or were not selected for other positions that became available.

Teachers provided the opinions about opportunities for advancement or change in teaching assignment:

- With so many resignations there is always an opportunity to change.
- There are always lots of openings.
- I applied for an administrative position and was not even given an interview.
- I was forced into a new grade and had no say in the matter.

TABLE 40: TEACHING RESOURCES

How does the quality of teaching resources in your school affect your decision of employment in NLSD?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly want to return	17	27.0
Moderately want to return	21	33.3
Neither return nor quit	9	14.3
Moderately want to quit	11	17.5
Strongly want to quit	4	6.3
NA or no response	1	1.6
Total	63	100

Mean Average 2.42

Table 40 shows that most teachers are either moderately or strongly motivated to remain teaching as a result of teaching resources available in their school. Still there remain nearly a quarter of teachers who are not satisfied with teaching resources, and suggest they are either moderately or strongly motivated to quit because of this.

Teachers expressed the following opinions about teaching resources:

- We have great teaching resources in our school.
- A teacher librarian is excellent.
- We have a large supply of resources.
- There seems to be more money for physical resources.
- We need textbooks for every student.
- I do not like RBL, as it has left out textbooks. We need textbook based instruction.
- Computers are great but seems like the internet is always down.
- There is poor management of resources in our school.

TABLE 41: PREPARATION TIME

How does the amount of preparation time affect your decision of employment in NLSD?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly want to return	11	17.5
Moderately want to return	19	30.2
Neither return nor quit	13	20.6
Moderately want to quit	5	7.9
Strongly want to quit	9	15.4
NA or no response	6	9.5
Total	63	100

Mean Average 2.68

Table 41 shows that nearly half of all teachers are either moderately or strongly motivated to remain teaching when considering preparation time in their school. Nearly a quarter of all teachers want to quit for the same factor.

Teachers expressed the following opinions about preparation time:

- Preparation time has been extremely good.
- I feel it is similar to other jurisdictions.
- I would like to see preparation time guaranteed in the contract.
- It's awful, I virtually get no preparation time.

TABLE 42: CLASS SIZE

How does the number of students in your class affect your decision of employment in NLSD?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly want to return	20	31.8
Moderately want to return	18	28.6
Neither return nor quit	10	15.9
Moderately want to quit	7	11.1
Strongly want to quit	2	3.2
NA or no response	6	9.5
Total	63	100

Mean Average 2.17

Table 42 shows that nearly 60% of teachers are either moderately or strongly motivated to remain teaching in Northern Lights School Division when considering class size.

Teacher opinions about class size were:

- Class sizes are great.
- A lot better than some other places.
- It was terrible at the beginning having so many students in the class.
- The classes were overfilled at the beginning of the year because the school administration knew that many of the students would drop out.
- There is a lot of shifting of students, not an equal number of students per class.
- Very inconsistent from class to class or year to year.

TABLE 43: RANKING OF TEACHING AND LIVING CONDITIONS

Rank	Teaching or Living Condition	Needs Category	Mean Average
1	Family / Spouse in Community	Belongingness	1.72
2	Retention Incentives	Physiological	2.02
3	Teacher Housing	Physiological	2.03
4	Personal Safety	Safety	2.08
5	New Friendships / Relationships	Belongingness	2.14
6	Class Size	Self Actualization	2.17
7	Recognition by Colleagues	Esteem	2.26
8	In-School Administration Support	Esteem	2.29
9	Valued as a Teacher by Stakeholders	Esteem	2.30
10	Collegiality of School Staff	Belongingness	2.31
11	Salaries and Benefits	Physiological	2.40
12	Water Quality in Community	Physiological	2.40
13	Teacher Resources	Self Actualization	2.42
14	Professional Development Support	Self Actualization	2.48
15	Advancement Opportunities	Self Actualization	2.51
16	Occupational Health and Safety	Safety	2.53
17	Security of Personal Property	Safety	2.57
18	Student Discipline	Safety	2.59
19	Cultural Shock	Belongingness	2.59
20	Collaborative Leadership / Decisions	Esteem	2.61
21	Central Office Support	Self Actualization	2.62
22	Teacher Supervision	Esteem	2.64
23	Preparation Time	Self Actualization	2.68
24	Community Recreation	Belongingness	2.76
25	Access to Medical / Dental Care	Safety	3.10
26	Support From Students' Parents	Belongingness	3.11
27	Mentorship and Induction	Belongingness	3.13
28	Food Quality in Community	Physiological	3.13
29	Isolation or Loneliness	Belongingness	3.50

Mean Average /5

Table 43 shows a ranking of teaching and living conditions as factors for teacher attrition. Factors with a low mean average motivate teacher retention while factors with a high mean average motivate teacher attrition.

PART THREE: MAIN REASONS FOR LEAVING OR REMAINING WITH NLSD

In this section, two tables are presented that indicate the main factor teachers consider for both leaving or remaining with the Northern Lights School Division. The tables present the responses, frequencies and percentages.

TABLE 44: MAIN FACTOR FOR REMAINING WITH NLSD

What reason would most likely cause you to remain employed with Northern Lights School Division	Frequency of Responses	Percent of Total Responses
I like/love the north.	9	14.3
I enjoy my assignment/like my job	7	11.1
I am from the community/north	6	9.5
Money/benefits	5	7.9
I have job security with NLSD	5	7.9
My family/spouse/children are here	4	6.3
I like the students	4	6.3
I like the community	3	4.7
I enjoy recreation in the north	2	3.2
I am connected to nature here	2	3.2
I have freedom/flexibility in my job	2	3.2
I like the school	2	3.2
I have a good quality of life.	1	1.6
I can make a difference here	1	1.6
My spouse is employed here	1	1.6
I am familiar with the routine	1	1.6
I am loyal to the division	1	1.6
My friendships	1	1.6
I am a part of collaborative decisions	1	1.6
Collegiality in the school	1	1.6
I am close to retirement	1	1.6
The division is supportive	1	1.6
Equality in the division	1	1.6
I have a caring employer	1	1.6
NA or no response	0	0
Total	63	100

Table 44 shows teachers responses when asked what is the main factor they consider for remaining employed with the Northern Lights School Division. The two most frequent answers comprised over 25% of all responses. These responses were that they either liked living in the north or working in the schools. These answers illustrate the importance of living and teaching conditions for teacher retention.

TABLE 45: MAIN FACTOR FOR LEAVING NLSD

What reason would most likely cause you to terminate employment with Northern Lights School Division	Frequency of Responses	Percent of Total Responses
Distance from family/miss my family	11	17.4
Family needs / family want to leave	10	15.9
Student discipline	4	6.3
I won't leave	3	4.7
Stress	3	4.7
My workload is too heavy/paperwork	3	4.7
Lack of admin support	2	3.2
Lack of central office/ support	2	3.2
Salary	2	3.2
Lack of teamwork/recognition	2	3.2
If other opportunities occur	2	3.2
Opportunities for my children	1	1.6
Community safety	1	1.6
Senior admin treatment of teachers	1	1.6
Isolation	1	1.6
Better conditions elsewhere	1	1.6
My age	1	1.6
Lack of preparation time	1	1.6
I have treaty status	1	1.6
Distances to travel	1	1.6
Lack of health services	1	1.6
No parent support	1	1.6
Not getting a promotion	1	1.6
Lack of direction in division	1	1.6
NA or no response	6	9.5
Total	63	100

Table 45 shows teachers responses when asked what is the main factor they consider for terminating employment with the Northern Lights School Division. The two most frequent answers, which were related to distant family or family needs, comprised 33% of all responses.

The role of the family is extremely influential in decisions of employment for both teachers who leave and remain. In Table 45, the most common reason for terminating employment would be for family reasons. This is in contrast to Table 43 and Table 27, whereby teachers suggest that spouse and family are most likely to motivate them to remain in the North. This data suggests that family may have the most influence in both teacher attrition and retention.

SUMMARY

This chapter presented the results of the study. A quantitative approach was used to present the demographic data while both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to present teaching and living condition data. The quantitative data was presented in tables while the qualitative data was presented in a descriptive manner. Results indicated that demographics can give an indication as to which teachers are leaving and that teaching and living conditions are motivating some teachers to leave and others to stay. Teachers were able to identify the main factor that makes them want to stay and also the factor that makes them want to leave. Further discussion of the results follows in the next chapter.

Chapter V

SUMMARY, FINDING AND DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a summary of the key points in the first three chapters of the study. A summary of findings from Chapter IV is also presented in alignment with the questions that guided this study. From these findings, a discussion of the main issues and a presentation of some recommendations are made.

SUMMARY

This study examined the problem of teacher attrition in the Northern Lights School Division #113 (NLSD) in northern Saskatchewan. This problem coincides with a perception and media attention of teacher shortages provincially, nationally and internationally. Roundtable discussions have been held and provincial funding has been allocated in an attempt to solve this problem. The division used incentives to retain teachers. Despite these efforts however, the turnover problem still exists. The purpose of this study was to determine which teachers are leaving and why teachers are deciding to leave or stay. A conceptual framework that modified the motivational theory of Maslow (1970) explained how teachers as rational decision-makers, will remain employed if basic needs are met and resign if needs are not met. Personal characteristics of teachers are also factors in employment decisions.

The second chapter of this study presented a review of professional literature of teacher retention and attrition. This review was congruent with the conceptual framework, emphasizing the role of demographics and teaching and living conditions as factors in retention and attrition of teachers. The factors that were congruent with personal needs were seen to enhance continuation of employment. Factors that were incongruent with personal needs influenced termination of employment.

The third chapter presented the methodology for the study. Two surveys were developed in congruence with the conceptual framework, professional literature

and purpose of the study. The first survey was a demographic questionnaire. It was distributed to all teachers. The demographic data collected from the completed questionnaires was compared with resignations at the end of the school to find trends in identifying which teachers were resigning. The second survey was a telephone survey that asked teachers to rate the extent teaching and living conditions motivated them to either continue or terminate employment with the division. Teachers were also asked to provide descriptive comments about how their personal needs were met. This survey was distributed to a random selection of 30% of the teachers who completed the demographic questionnaire. Results were presented in tables in numeric and percentage form while the opinions were presented in descriptive form.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section the major findings of the study are presented and discussed using the research questions posed in Chapter I. Each question is restated and the findings of the study are presented and discussed.

Question 1. What are the (demographics) personal characteristics of educators who terminate employment with the Northern Lights School Division?

The demographic data was obtained from 43 resignations of the 229 teachers who participated in the study. This represents a resignation rate of 18.8%. While this rate is significantly lower than previous years, it is still a high rate of teacher turnover. The main demographic findings are related to teacher's ages, teaching experience, gender, family status, ethnic background, and alternative employment opportunities.

A substantially high number of resignations in the division are by young teachers. Over half of the resignations are by teachers less than 32 years of age. The rate of attrition generally declines with a teacher's age until the retirement years. Young teachers are not deterred from quitting by having student loans. Nearly half of the teachers who resign claimed they had student loans.

Many teachers in the division who are leaving have little teaching experience. A total 37.2% of all resignations are by teachers who have taught for two years or less. This number jumps to 62.7% for teachers who have taught for two years or less with the division. Beyond two years of experience, rates of attrition generally decline until the end of the teachers careers.

There is a moderate difference in rates of attrition by gender. One in 4.7 male teachers chose to resign while one in 5.7 female teachers chose to resign.

Family status has an affect on teacher attrition. Teachers are more likely to quit if they are not married or do not have children. For teachers who are married, attrition increased for teachers whose partners do not live with them in the community or if the partner lives in the community and is unemployed.

Differences in rates of attrition were found when investigating ethnic background. One in 4.8 non-aboriginal teachers resigned compared to one in 6.6 aboriginal

teachers. Therefore, aboriginal teachers had a lower rate of attrition than their non-aboriginal colleagues.

Alternative employment opportunities data must be of concern to the division. Nearly three out of every four teachers who resigned had indicated early in the year they were willing to leave the division. Furthermore, nearly half of the teachers in the school division state they would leave if they were able to get a job elsewhere.

The results of the demographic data point to a necessity by the division to strive to reduce the rate of attrition for beginning, inexperienced teachers. Employing more aboriginal teachers who are from northern Saskatchewan would likely reduce attrition.

The findings from this question are related to the assumption in Chapter I. It was assumed that personal characteristics (demographics) would affect teachers' decisions to terminate employment with Northern Lights School Division. The personal characteristics of teachers' ages, teaching experience, gender, family status, and ethnic background had an affect on teachers' employment decisions.

Question 2. To what extent are teaching and living conditions factors in motivating teachers to remain with the Northern Lights School Division or to choose to terminate employment?

The ratings and opinions of teaching and living conditions by teachers provide an indication of what motivates them to either remain teaching or leaving. This perspective, based upon the adaptation of motivational theory by Maslow (1970), organizes teaching and living conditions into Maslow's categories of human needs. Teachers are motivated by the fulfillment of personal needs. When teaching and living conditions in northern Saskatchewan are not congruent with personal needs then attrition is likely to increase. Conversely, retention will increase when personal needs are met.

Several living conditions are viewed by teachers as factors in wanting to continue employment with the Northern Lights School Division. The highest rated factor for teachers was the presence of family or a spouse in the teaching community. Teacher housing provided by the division is meeting personal needs. Teachers feel safe in the north and find new friendships as motivators to stay. While salaries and benefits are adequate, teachers rate the retention incentives provided by the division very positively. Considering the expense of retention incentives, more research should be conducted to determine if this allocation is providing the best return in terms of retention, or if it could be better spent in other ways to reduce attrition.

Several living conditions are viewed by teachers as factors in wanting to terminate employment with the Northern Lights School Division. The highest rated factor for teachers wanting to leave was isolation and loneliness. This is particularly true for single teachers. In many communities, teachers are dissatisfied with the availability and affordability of groceries. Medical and dental care is viewed as inadequate. Teachers who do not like outdoor activities such as fishing, hunting, or cross country skiing perceive a lack of recreational opportunities by living in the north.

Several teaching conditions are viewed by teachers as factors in wanting to continue employment with the Northern Lights School Division. The highest rated factor in this category was class size. Teachers view recognition by colleagues very favourably. Overall, in-school administrators were viewed as supportive, however teachers strongly suggested that in-school administrators can be extremely influential in motivating them to either stay or leave.

Several teaching conditions are viewed by teachers as factors in wanting to terminate employment with the Northern Lights School Division. The highest rated factor in this category is mentorship or induction of new teachers. Many teachers expressed the concern that mentorship and induction are not adequate in the division. Teachers are also strongly motivated to quit due to a lack of parent support and cited discipline problems in this context. Teaching conditions that are influenced by in-school administrators were also prominent in teachers' motivation to quit. These conditions include a lack of preparation time, a lack of teacher supervision, and also few opportunities for collaborative decision-making or shared leadership.

The results of the teaching and living conditions data illustrate the necessity by the division to continue to maintain living conditions for its employees in ways it can reasonably do so. The division may also consider ways it can support teachers for living condition factors that are outside its jurisdiction. Results clearly indicate the role of the in-school administrator in influencing teaching conditions.

The findings from this question are related to the assumptions and hypotheses in Chapter I. If teaching and living conditions are favourable, then teachers will be motivated to remain employed with the Northern Lights School Division. If factors are congruent with personal needs then teachers will be enticed to remain in employment and inversely, if factors are incongruent with personal needs then teachers will terminate employment. Further discussion will be found in the recommendations section of the chapter.

Question 3. What factor do teachers rate as most important when considering both terminating and continuing employment with the Northern Lights School Division.

This section of the study supports the role that demographics and teaching and living conditions have on teacher attrition and retention as presented in the assumptions and hypotheses, as well as the conceptual framework. Teachers report most frequently that enjoyment of living in the north and the enjoyment of teaching in northern schools are the main reasons they stay in the Northern Lights School Division. In contrast, teachers most frequently report that living a long distance from family is the main reason they leave.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study lead to six recommendations that may result in the reduction of teacher attrition in Northern Lights School Division. The recommendations are in no particular order. They are:

1. Examine mentorship / induction of beginning teachers. Demographic data indicates an extremely high rate of attrition for beginning, inexperienced

teachers. Furthermore, there is a perception of inadequate teacher induction in several schools and the lack of orientation for new teachers to the division. The division should examine how mentorship and induction is occurring in all of its schools. It should consider also ways that it can provide new teachers with an orientation to the division.

2. Advocate teaching as a career in the north. Demographic data indicates that aboriginal teachers and those with family remain teaching in the north longer. Living condition data suggests that living in the north is safe, and has many opportunities for those interested in outdoor recreation. The division should advocate positive aspects of northern teaching. For example, promoting northern teachers as northern role models can influence the school division's high school students to choose teaching as a career. Partnerships with provincial universities to place student teachers in northern schools can provide a better understanding of living and teaching in the division.
3. Examine how parental support can be enhanced. Teaching condition data indicated a strong motivation by teachers to quit as a result of a lack of parent support. Comments from teachers indicate that this frustrates them especially in the context of student discipline. The division should look at ways other northern jurisdictions promote the educational responsibility of parents and garner parent support.
4. Professional development for in-school administrators. Teaching condition data indicated a high motivation by teachers for remaining in the north when they work with supportive administrators. Ineffective building administrators can largely influence teachers to want to resign. Teachers indicate several inadequate teaching conditions in schools that are primarily the responsibilities of in-school administrators. These included a lack of teacher observations, no shared leadership and a no shared decision-making. Teacher satisfaction in schools is largely influenced by the leadership and management of the in-school administrator. The division should therefore provide professional development for in-school administrators to positively affect the working conditions in schools, which will improve teacher satisfaction, and in turn increase teacher retention.
5. Continue to provide and advocate for better living conditions. The living condition data indicated that the provision of adequate and affordable housing is a strong motivator for remaining in the division. Favourable comments were made about the division caring for its teachers by placing alarm systems in teacherages. Maintaining these factors go a long way to maintain teacher satisfaction and retention. There are several unfavourable living conditions that fall outside the jurisdiction of the school division. Examples of these are access to medical or dental care, quality of food in grocery stores, or water quality in some communities. The division can extend support to these teachers by advocating on their behalf to jurisdictions that are responsible for these conditions.
6. Examine retention incentives. Despite the high acceptance and approval by teachers for retention incentives, more study is required to determine if they are effective in reducing attrition. Considering the substantial allocation of financial resources by giving all returning teachers \$1000 each, it needs to be investigated if this is the most cost effective way to reduce teacher attrition. This is particularly important if the division wants to examine other strategies for reducing teacher attrition such as those proposed in this study.

CONCLUSIONS

The Northern Lights School Division #113 in northern Saskatchewan has had difficulty with high rates of teacher attrition. There have been years when schools in this division have opened without a full complement of teachers. Supported in part by the northern division of the provincial education department, the division has developed strategies to recruit and retain more teachers including a financial retention incentive. Notwithstanding these efforts, the problem of teacher attrition continues with a lack of information as to which teachers are leaving the division and the reasons why. This study attempted to do this.

A conceptual framework for the study presented demographic factors and teaching and living conditions as factors in teachers deciding to remain or leave the school division. By adapting the hierarchy of needs theory by Abraham Maslow, the teaching and living conditions were placed in categories of basic needs. The decisions of teachers to remain employed were presented in the context of personal needs being met. In contrast, when personal needs were not being met by teaching and living conditions, attrition occurs.

A total of 229 teachers completed the demographic survey. This data was compared with 43 resignations at the end of the year to identify trends in which teachers were resigning. A total of 63 teachers completed the telephone survey and provided data as to the extent 29 teaching and living variables motivated them to either remain or quit teaching. These surveys were based upon the conceptual framework for the study and drawn upon the professional literature of teacher attrition.

From the demographic data, trends were established as to which teachers were leaving the division. From the follow up telephone survey, data demonstrated which teaching and living conditions were not meeting their personal needs and were motivating them to leave. Data also showed which teaching and living conditions met teachers' needs and motivate them to stay.

Recommendations were presented to address the key problems for the school division based up the findings of the study. It is anticipated that the recommendations would be given some consideration and that teacher attrition in the Northern Lights School Division as a result be reduced.

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Appendix A

REQUEST FOR BOARD APPROVAL

Mark Williment
Box 484
La Loche, Saskatchewan
S0M 1G0

August 15, 2001

Mr. Ralph Pilz
Director of Education
Northern Lights School Division #113
Bag Service #6500
La Ronge, Saskatchewan
S0J 1L0

Dear Mr. Pilz,

I wish to bring to your attention, my interest in conducting educational research in your school division entitled "A Descriptive Study of Attrition and Retention of Teachers in Northern Lights School Division #113". The purpose of this study is to identify demographic trends in teacher retention and attrition and to measure the extent living and working conditions motivate teachers to decide to remain or terminate employment with the school division. These working and living conditions as retention and attrition factors have been organized into categories of needs as outlined by the motivation theory of Maslow (1970.)

Participation by teachers in this survey will benefit the division. This data will provide the school division and the board with a starting point for further research and information to strategically plan for recruitment.

I have enclosed a copy of the proposal for your perusal, and would like to request that you or I present it to the board of trustees for approval. I would like to commence the first questionnaire at the NATA convention in October. If you have any concerns about this research, feel free to call me at the school at 822-2024.

Sincerely yours,

Mark Williment
Assistant Principal
La Loche Community School

Appendix B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

October 15, 2001

Dear Colleague,

You are being requested to participate in a research project entitled "A Descriptive Study of Attrition and Retention of Teachers in Northern Lights School Division #113". The purpose of this study is to identify demographic trends in teacher retention and attrition and to measure the extent living and working conditions motivate teachers to decide to remain or terminate employment with the school division. These working and living conditions as retention and attrition factors have been organized into categories of needs as outlined by the motivation theory of Maslow (1970.)

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to fill out a simple demographic questionnaire and may be asked you participate in a telephone survey in the spring of 2002. Your participation is entirely voluntary and there will be no negative consequences if you refuse to participate, withdraw from the study or refuse to answer questions. I am the only person who will see your personal responses and will maintain anonymity and confidentiality. In no way will I present findings that will identify you as a source.

Participation in this survey will benefit all teachers in the division. This may be the first time that the entire population of NLSD teachers has been given an opportunity to express their opinion of teacher retention and attrition in the division. While the survey in itself will not provide solutions to teacher turnover, it will provide reasons why people either stay or leave.

If you are randomly selected to participate in the telephone survey, you will be asked to provide an interview time at your convenience. If it is during school time, release time will be arranged. The telephone survey should take about twenty minutes to complete.

At the conclusion of the study, the information collected will stored securely and destroyed as soon as the purposes of the study have been met. The results will be presented to the Northern Lights Board of Education, and also published provincially through the Saskatchewan Teacher Federation's McDowell Foundation, which is providing funding for this research. The McDowell Foundation promotes research by teachers to improve education. Furthermore, this research is in partial fulfillment of course requirements for the degree of Master of Education, Brandon University, in Brandon Manitoba.

If you have any concerns about this research, feel free to call me at the school at 822-2024.

Having understood the above information and after being given an opportunity to have my questions answered, I agree to participate in this study.

Signature of Participant

Date

Appendix C

TEACHER DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Please fill in the following information. Remember that information will remain strictly confidential.

Personal Information

Name _____

School _____

Teaching assignment (grade, subject, admin etc.) _____

Home province (or country if not in Canada.) _____

Name of university you attained your education degree. _____

Demographic Information

Please mark with an "X" in the appropriate ____.

1. What is your age in years?
- | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 20-23 | _____ | 24-27 | _____ |
| 28-31 | _____ | 32-35 | _____ |
| 36-39 | _____ | 40-43 | _____ |
| 44-47 | _____ | 48-51 | _____ |
| 52-55 | _____ | 56-59 | _____ |
| 60+ | _____ | | |

2. What is your highest level of education?

Undergraduate Degree _____

Graduate Diploma _____

Masters Degree _____

Doctorate Degree _____

Other _____ Please specify _____.

3. What is your gender? Male _____ Female _____

4. How many complete years of teaching experience do you have?

0 _____ 1 _____ 2 _____

3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____

6-8 _____ 9-10 _____ 11-15 _____

16-19 _____ 20-25 _____ 26+ _____

5. How many complete years of teaching experience do you have with the current school division?

0 _____ 1 _____ 2 _____

3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____

6-8 _____ 9-10 _____ 11-15 _____

16-19 _____ 20-25 _____ 26-30 _____

30+ _____

6. Are you married or equivalent? Yes _____ No _____

7. Does your spouse live in the same community (residence) as you?

Yes _____ No _____

8. If yes to number 11, is your spouse employed?

Yes _____ No _____

9. Do you have children? Yes _____ No _____

10. If yes to number 13, do they live in _____ the same community (residence) as you?

Yes _____ No _____

11. Are you of aboriginal descent?

Yes _____ No _____

12. Which would you consider was your family economic status as a child?

High _____

Middle _____

Low _____

13. Do you have student loans?

Yes _____ No _____

14. Would you leave the school division if you have an opportunity to be a teacher elsewhere?

Yes _____ No _____

15. If yes to number 17, which would be your most desirable place of employment?

Band School _____

Rural Saskatchewan _____

Urban Saskatchewan _____

Out of province _____

Out of country _____

Appendix D

RETENTION AND ATTRITION TELEPHONE TEACHER SURVEY

Name _____

School / Community _____

These questions are structured from Maslow (1970) "Needs Hierarchy." This survey is being conducted by telephone due to the geographical distances, uncertain road and weather conditions, and time constraints.

SECTION A

Teaching and Living Conditions as Factors Motivating Retention and Attrition

The following questions will ask candidates the extent to which the following teaching and living conditions affect their decision of employment in Northern Lights School Division #113. They are to be answered using the following responses. Ensure that they have the list of responses in front of them to refer to.

Responses

1. Strongly want to return as an employee.
2. Moderately want to return as an employee.
3. Neither return nor quit as an employee.
4. Moderately want to quit as an employee.
5. Strongly want to quit as an employee.
- NA. Factor does not pertain to candidate.

Read the statement, inserting the appropriate factor, and circle the candidate's response.

How do/does _____ affect your decision of employment in NLSD?

After each section, allow the candidate the opportunity to express any other comments about the factors in which they were asked to respond.

PHYSIOLOGICAL NEEDS

Factors

Responses

1. Salaries and benefits including allowances

1 2 3 4 5 NA

2. NLSD housing including adequacy and affordability

1 2 3 4 5 NA

3. Retention incentives including \$1000 and utility rebates

1 2 3 4 5 NA

4. Quality of food at local grocery stores

1 2 3 4 5 NA

5. Quality of water in the community

1 2 3 4 5 NA

Comments _____

SAFETY NEEDS

6. Student discipline in the school

1 2 3 4 5 NA

7. Your personal safety

1 2 3 4 5 NA

8. Security of your personal property

1 2 3 4 5 NA

9. Access to medical or dental care

1 2 3 4 5 NA

10. Occupational health and safety conditions in the workplace including locally developed safe school policies and the use of surveillance cameras

1 2 3 4 5 NA

Comments _____

BELONGINGNESS NEEDS

11. Cultural shock / differences between the way you were raised and the way the community is

1 2 3 4 5 NA

12. Isolation or loneliness including distant family or relationship

1 2 3 4 5 NA

13. Recreational opportunities in the community

1 2 3 4 5 NA

14. Having a family or spouse with you in the community

1 2 3 4 5 NA

15. New relationships, friendships that have occurred by moving into the teaching community including marriage and family

1 2 3 4 5 NA

16. Mentorship initiatives or induction activities at school

1 2 3 4 5 NA

17. Collegiality of staff or staff relations at school including a sense of trust and support

1 2 3 4 5 NA

18. Support from student's parents

1 2 3 4 5 NA

Comments _____

ESTEEM NEEDS

19. Support from in-school administration

1 2 3 4 5 NA

20. Quality of teacher supervision including value of observations and reports

1 2 3 4 5 NA

21. Opportunities for shared leadership including opportunities for decision-making and school policy development

1 2 3 4 5 NA

22. Recognition by colleagues for effort and achievement

1 2 3 4 5 NA

23. Feelings of being valued as a teacher by stakeholders

1 2 3 4 5 NA

Comments _____

SELF-ACTUALIZATION NEEDS

24. Professional development support including, consultants, staff in-services, annual NATA teacher convention, educational leave and education bursaries

1 2 3 4 5 NA

25. Central office support

1 2 3 4 5 NA

26. Opportunities for advancement or change of teaching assignment

1 2 3 4 5 NA

27. The quality of teaching resources in the school

1 2 3 4 5 NA

28. The amount of preparation time

1 2 3 4 5 NA

29. The number of students in class

1 2 3 4 5 NA

Comments _____

SECTION B

Personal Intentions of Attrition and Retention

1. What reason would most likely cause you to remain employed with the Northern Lights School Division in northern Saskatchewan

2. What reason would most likely cause you terminate employment with the Northern Lights School Division in northern Saskatchewan.

3. Do you plan on continuing to remain employed with the Northern Lights School Division in the upcoming school year?

Yes _____ No _____

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