Teacher Retention: Perceptions of the organizational factors that influence teacher transition from private school classrooms of individuals with autism to public school autism classrooms

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Teacher Retention: Perceptions of the organizational factors that influence teacher transition from private school classrooms of individuals with autism to public school autism classrooms

by

Kathryn Cerino Britton

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

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SETON HALL UNIVERSITY
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APPROVAL FOR SUCCESSFUL DEFENSE

Kathryn E. Cerino Britton, has successfully defended and made the required modifications to the text of the doctoral dissertation for the Ed.D. during this Spring Semester 2016.

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Abstract

Nine experienced certified special education teachers who chose to move from the private sector to the public sector were interviewed to gain knowledge and information that could be used to improve the private sector school for learners with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). Using Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs as the conceptual framework, this study explored the respondents’ beliefs about their workload, work responsibilities, compensation, and perceptions regarding their teaching experiences in private and public schools. Specifically, telephone or face-to-face interviews were conducted to ascertain the motivating factors that led the respondents to leave one private school, The Apple School, for teaching positions in the public sector. The timeframe was limited to the three-year period of 2012 to 2015. The study found that, for the four primary research questions and their sub-questions, all nine respondents referred to either a more favorable salary, working hour arrangement, workload, growth potential, or commute to work as a primary incentive to leave the private school and, once in the public sector, to remain at the public school. Of these findings, increased financial compensation was the predominant factor favoring the public school system, and private school’s longer required working hours along with a heavier workload were disincentives for the private school system. Recommendations were given to address the organizational factors identified in the study.
Acknowledgments

Day in and day out, I have felt privileged to be working and living among exceptional people. I am inspired by many people who have honored me with their support, love, guidance, and unending encouragement. While I have an endless list of people to recognize for assisting me in some way throughout my journey, I feel compelled to single out certain people for motivating me to strive to be my best.

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To my parents, thank you for modeling a strong work ethic and for giving me everything I needed, but not everything I wanted, thereby instilling in me that it takes hard work to achieve your goals. Your unconditional love is felt every minute of every day. You have supported me always—when I’ve succeeded and, more importantly, when I have failed. You have provided me with the impetus to continually move forward, to strive for more and to always improve who I am in all things that I do.

To my family who puts up with me and who can always laugh when I am taking myself too seriously, only you know the real me and love me despite my quirks.
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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to the most significant woman in my life, my mother. From as long as I can remember, my mom was the master juggler, raising three daughters as she worked full time and completed her doctoral degree. You would never know how busy her life was since she always carried herself with grace and overflowed with kindness to all. I have a newfound respect for all that she endured and am forever grateful that she is in my corner. Luckily, I also have a pretty fantastic dad who has always loved his girls more than himself.

I also dedicate this dissertation to teachers who are committed to high-quality autism intervention and do not settle for less. It is because of your efforts that your students thrive and exhibit endless potential for a bright, independent, productive future. You are their cheerleaders and are charged with advocating for their needs. Continue to hold your expectations high, be proud of your work, and never lose sight of the importance of science-based treatment and education.

Lastly, I dedicate this dissertation to “my kids,” the learners with ASD who rely on me daily to ensure they are being taught everything they need to know. It is a fact that they are the greatest teachers. I continually learn there is no limit to their potential and that each and every one of them possesses skills and talents waiting to be tapped.
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Chapter I: Introduction

The foundation of any educational institution is its faculty. Qualified, experienced teachers are the cornerstone upon which the excellence of education rests. Teacher retention has become an ongoing challenge for public and private school general and special education programs; in fact, it has become a critical issue facing educational institutions. In the last three decades, a great deal of research has been conducted to identify the factors that compel experienced and certified teachers to leave the profession or move from special education to general education. Odland and Ruzicka (2009) present this issue as a global problem in their research on attrition in international schools. They found that, overall, the one-year attrition rate is very similar for teachers in the United States versus those in international schools. The per-year attrition rate of 16-20% for American teachers and approximately 14.4% for international teachers is very clear and problematic (Odland & Ruzicka, 2009). Indeed, many educational researchers view the teaching profession as a revolving door—a teacher enters as a teacher exits—with Ingersoll, one of the most cited teacher turnover researchers, at the forefront (Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2008; Ingersoll, 2001, 2003; Montrose & Young, 2012; Stempien & Loeb, 2002). To compound the situation, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 necessitated that new teachers hired after the 2002-2003 school year meet certain highly qualified criteria by 2005-2006. This was a step in the right direction; according to Billingsley (2004a), a prolific researcher in special education, attracting and keeping a qualified faculty cohort is a critical component in effective special education and ensures a work environment that enhances involvement and commitment of the certified and experienced special education teacher.

While much attention and research focus has been given to the effects of and reasons for attrition of both general and special education teachers, fairly little attention has been given to
the motivations of educators who stay in teaching, but move or transfer from one school to another and from the private sector to the public sector. The challenge to administrators is to recognize why certified experienced teachers leave or move, so they can make the changes necessary to motivate them to stay.

The main purpose of this phenomenological case study was to investigate the specific factors that motivated certified special educators who taught in a private school for learners with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in a northeastern state of the United States to move to the public school sector in the same state and continue to teach learners with ASD. In the three years following 2012, The Apple School, a private school for individuals with ASD, experienced the turnover of nine certified teachers across seven classrooms. All nine teachers left their teaching positions at The Apple School to continue teaching individuals with ASD in a public school. This number clearly demonstrates a problem that the literature thus far has not addressed; research on the factors that motivate certified special education teachers of learners with ASD to leave the private sector for the public sector is nonexistent. Questions remain such as: What may the public sector offer these certified special educators that the private sector does not or cannot?

Teaching learners with ASD is a complicated and demanding task. Energy, enthusiasm, and knowledge are paramount skills for special education teachers. Instructors must be well-educated regarding ASD and understand the methodologies to effectively teach and connect with the learner. Training for teachers who work with these learners is expensive in terms of both time and financial resources. Burnout can happen quickly if administrators do not meet the job satisfaction needs of these teachers. In each school, decreasing the turnover rate may preserve scarce resources and improve student achievement. The challenge to create and maintain a work
climate and environment that meets the needs of teachers and students is significant. Success or failure has an immense impact on job satisfaction and retention.

The central aim of this research was to determine which organizational factors motivate certified special education teachers of learners with ASD to transfer from private schools to public schools. This research sought to answer the questions of what components in the job design of the special education teacher at private schools for learners with ASD is detrimental to the special educators’ continued employment. What organizational factors influence attrition of experienced teachers of learners with ASD severely impacts the quality and the success of the educational program?

Billingsley (2004b) focuses on this issue of special education teacher attrition and refers to the Ingersoll study in 2001 that identified the highest turnover rate of educators in the fields of math and science, but counters that belief, stating the highest turnover rate is actually in the field of special education. Statistics have proven that the greatest attrition of special education teachers is within the first three years of employment (Billingsley, 2004b; Boe et al., 2008; Ingersoll, 2003; Katsiyannis, Zhang, & Conroy, 2003). Kozleski, Mainzer, and Deshler (2000)) noted that four out of every ten special education teachers leave before the fifth year (p. 2). Programs in general and special education, in particular, cannot afford this turnover phenomenon. This turnover is detrimental to the mission and vision of private schools for children with ASD. Teaching learners with ASD is exceedingly challenging work and requires certified and experienced teachers to assist these learners to reach their greatest potential. Stempien and Loeb (2002) noted that it is often very hard to see improvement in special education learners. A very small change is often a very big accomplishment. Brownell and Smith
(1992) described the feelings of powerlessness that special educators often experience working with their students.

Kozak, Kersten, Schillmoller and Nienhaus (2013) addressed the burnout phenomenon that occurs in day-long interaction with persons whose needs are multifaceted (such as learners with ASD), and the high level of dedication and empathy required of staff. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) website (2012), 37 states and the District of Columbia addressed the ASD crisis and enacted laws that require insurance companies to cover related costs. The NCSL also stated private schools “go beyond the special education resources available in public schools” (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2016). Private schools that serve children with ASD must retain well-qualified, experienced teachers to maximize the education of these learners. It is imperative that research seeks to find the adjustments that must be made to keep certified and experienced teachers in the private sector. The competition for these special educators is strong.

The enormity of the problem of recruitment and retention was evident in the numbers of special education teachers needed in one northeastern state, New Jersey. Regarding the public school sector, according to the state’s Department of Education (DOE) latest website updates for 2013-2014 the state had 2,505 public schools, of which 1,997 were elementary schools and 507 were secondary schools; in addition, there were 92 public charter schools (The Official Website for the State of New Jersey, 2015). Serving the educational needs of these public schools at that time were 113,818 certified, full-time teachers. The DOE also cited the average class size in the state as 12.3 per one teacher. The state’s Public Schools Fact Sheet stated that the percentage of learners in the state having Individual Educational Plans (IEP) for their instruction was 16.2% (The Official Website for the State of New Jersey, 2015).
Regarding the private school sector, according to the National Center for Education Statistics there were 1,295 private schools teaching 240,555 students in this state. Like the public schools, the private schools employed a large number of certified, full-time teachers. The website for this state’s Special Education Division listed 179 approved private schools for students with disabilities at that time (State of New Jersey Department of Education, 2015).

Overall, according to the state’s Directory of Schools Serving Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders only 167 public and private schools offered various educational services to learners with ASD at that time (State of New Jersey Department of Education, 2015). Of even greater concern, only eight of the 167 programs were in private schools. Perhaps this is because all ASD programs must recruit and retain qualified teachers trained in the teaching methodology most commonly utilized in special education and specifically ASD intervention.

This research sought to investigate the specific factors that motivate certified special educators who have taught in private schools for learners with ASD to move to the public school sector in this same state and continue to teach learners with ASD. Hall (2015), in her study of the need for using evidence-based practices (EBP) in teaching students with ASD, stated, “A lack of highly qualified special educators results in students with autism spectrum disorder taught by instructors with insufficient preparation to teach students with disabilities in general, and students with ASD in particular” (p. 28). Special education teachers need to be well versed in teaching strategies for learners with ASD.

The statistics provided by the state of New Jersey showed a great need for certified, experienced, and knowledgeable special education teachers. Every school district in this northeastern state as well as the surrounding states searches for qualified teachers. With the advent of the Education for all Handicapped Children Act (1975), the No Child Left Behind Act
(2001) and the Individuals with Disabilities Act (2004), every state in the country was mandated to provide education for all children and youths in the least restrictive environment (LRE) possible. Children with special needs are no exception. Simpson, de Boer-Ott, and Smith-Myles (2003) addressed the inclusion of learners with ASD in general education classes and the many challenges faced by the special education teachers, introducing separate teaching models to help meet the type and severity of this disability. Taylor (2005), in her study on special education and private schools, found no generally accepted definition of inclusion as it relates to special education. Inclusion is, rather, a specific set of instructional methods, a belief system or a definite practice. Sindelar, Brownell, and Billingsley (2010) highlighted the competence required of special education teachers and believed that “what needs to be done to improve teachers’ skills, knowledge, and dispositions has great appeal” (p. 12). Dillenburger (2012) discussed the increased need for specialized pedagogical knowledge to teach learners with disabilities in both public sector and private sector programs, given the increasing numbers of mainstreamed learners with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

Schools specifically for learners with ASD ranging in ages 3 to 21 are growing in numbers throughout the country to meet the rising need. Private schools that educate learners with ASD are charged with developing skills that will assist their learners in becoming as independent as they are capable of becoming, which includes functional academics (e.g., reading, writing, money, and time management) as well as self-care skills as well as task behavior and basic employment skills. In a mental health report, The U.S. Surgeon General David Snatcher endorsed intensive behavioral intervention for individuals with ASD. He believed that research over a thirty-year period has shown the efficacy of applied behavioral methods that reduce the inappropriate behavior of the learner with ASD while effectively
increasing their ability to communicate, learn, and act more appropriately in their social behavior (Applied Behavior Center, 2015).

In discussing ASD prevalence, diagnosis and treatment, Manning et al. (2013) reaffirmed that special educators must deliver services that meet the unique and individual needs, both for the present and future, for each learner with ASD. They delineated the complex nature of the educational services required from the least to the most restrictive, citing the general education setting without other teaching support; classrooms with teaching aides; classrooms, both general and special education, with students taken out for further special assistance; self-contained special education classrooms; private school classrooms; and home schooling instruction. Qualified teachers must be employed in each of the various educational settings in order to meet the educational needs of the growing population of learners with ASD. In support, West and Hardman (2012) called for the monetary commitment of the U.S. federal government in recognizing the critical need of “a skilled professional workforce” (p. 154) in the field of special education and specifically cited the areas of ASD and early childhood. Simpson, Mundschenk and Heflin (2011) profiled the teacher for children with ASD and noted that certified teachers of students with ASD have specialized knowledge and skills, including EBP that are available and appropriate for students on the ASD spectrum.

The mission of The Apple School, a non-profit private school in a northeastern state for learners with ASD, was to provide learners with ASD and their families with comprehensive, scientifically-validated educational and behavioral services designed to foster individual growth and personal achievement. In this northeastern state, all eight private schools for learners with ASD had similar missions and visions. To fulfill this responsibility, qualified teachers for these schools must know and understand the teaching methods for, and unique needs of, learners with
ASD in public or private schools. What Billingsley wrote in 2004 remains true today: The critical challenge facing school districts is developing and maintaining experienced, qualified special education faculty (Billingsley, 2004b).

In fulfilling the need for ongoing special education teachers who are uniquely equipped for learners with ASD, the foremost question is: Where will experienced, qualified faculty come from? Various researchers have studied aspects of special education teaching. Brownell and Smith (1992) reported data that indicated more special education emergency certificates were given than were certificates in all other areas of education. Andrews, Evans, and Miller (2002) believed that the innovative internship credentialing program they designed would recruit and retain students for special education coursework but found in follow up studies that some graduates of their program were disillusioned by a lack of industry support and respect. Payne (2005), in his review of research addressing the barriers of special education teacher retention and attrition, found the root of the problem was the job design and expectations for special education teachers.

Given these findings from the literature and the fact that from one private school alone, nine certified and experienced special education teachers moved to a public school in the span of a three-year period, it became paramount to uncover the motivating factors that lead certified teachers to leave the private sector for the public sector. With this move from private to public, these teachers are not leavers of the teaching profession for learners with ASD, but rather movers who transition from one organizational structure to another while teaching the same category of student. What is the difference in teaching in a public school?
Statement of the Problem

Teaching learners with ASD can be very demanding and stressful, and is acknowledged in the literature as a factor for special education teachers to leave the profession or transfer to general education. The question to be examined, then, was how these factors of challenge and stress could lead certified special educators to move to the public sector with a job design equal to their teaching in the private sector. Specifically, this study investigated the factors that motivate certified special educators who have taught in one of the private schools for learners with ASD to leave the private school to continue teaching learners with ASD in the public school sector of a northeastern state of the United States.

Furthermore, this study sought to identify factors that influence private school educators of individuals with ASD to leave the private sector for the public sector, either for inclusion or self-contained classrooms. Guided by organizational theory, the researcher looked to identify the extent to which the organizational factors of private schools for learners with ASD influenced the teacher’s decision to continue teaching learners with ASD in the public sector. Research on the factors that motivate certified special education teachers of learners with ASD to leave the private sector for the public sector, yet continue to teach learners with ASD, was nonexistent. This study sought to provide some insight concerning this phenomenon. Additionally, this study adds to the existing literature on the organizational factors in faculty retention or attrition in classrooms of children with ASD.

Conceptual Framework

The focal issue in this study was the retention of certified special educators in the private sector school for learners with ASD. The population sample in this research was attracted to the private sector organization, oriented, inducted, and engaged for a period of time, but at some...
point, became dissatisfied. What factors led to this dissatisfaction? To find answers to this question, organizational theory and Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs provided a framework to guide the research instrument. Organizational theory is the study of formal social organizations and the interrelationship with the environment in which they exist. According to Bolman and Deal (2013), an organization exists to assist in meeting human needs: “People and organizations need each other. Organizations need ideas, energy, and talent; people need careers, salaries, and opportunities” (p. 117). Human behavior and decisions are driven by motivations which are unique to each person, and impact how problems are solved and needs are met.

Maslow focused on human influences in organizations in his human needs theory as a means of understanding motivation from a hierarchical view. He believed that an individual’s personal need motivates the individual to use various methods to achieve the objectives of the organization (Reference for Business, 2015). This earliest and well-known theory of Maslow builds on the foundation of five sequenced needs: immediate physiological needs; then safety needs; followed by love, affection, and belongingness; rising to esteem or respect; and culminating in self-actualization (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Maslow evolved in his thinking of human needs. He did not visualize the basic needs in the pyramid design many are familiar with seeing, nor did he view the levels of need as static (Kiel, 1999; O’Connor & Yballe, 2007; David, 2014; McLeod, 2014). Again, counter to popular interpretation, he did not believe that one level must be achieved before the next is attainable. Rather, he envisioned the hierarchy of needs as fluid interchanges as life experiences arise.

Maslow expanded his original hierarchy of needs twice in his career to go beyond the first four levels that represent deficiency needs to include four upper levels considered growth needs (Martin & Loomis, 2007). These growth needs included the cognitive need (i.e., the need
to know), followed by aesthetic, self-actualization, and transcendence needs. McLeod (2014) postulated that Maslow searched to explain how people fulfill their potential and that people do not remain static at one level but are “always ‘becoming’” (p. 1).

Herzberg (1966), a contemporary of Maslow, developed his two-factor theory, also known as Herzberg’s motivation-hygiene theory, which centered on factors in the workplace that support job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Based on 203 engineer and accountant employee interviews, he postulated a two-dimensional paradigm that influenced work attitudes and proposed that job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction are independent of each other, caused by separate factors. Bolman and Deal (2013) described the first component as “good feelings” or “motivational factors” that enrich job performance such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement, participation in decision making, and personal growth. This level of attainment provides satisfaction in the work performed. The second component they described was described as “bad feelings” or “hygiene factors”. Hygiene factors are not motivators, but factors that focus on organizational or company policy, administration and supervision, working conditions, interpersonal relations, and salary and benefits (Bolman & Deal, 2013). They believe these factors shape the employee’s connection to the environment of the job and are thought of as “maintenance” factors sometimes responsible for job dissatisfaction. Job enrichment, according to Herzberg, is central to motivating employees by providing greater challenges, increased freedom, and increased authority for their work performance.

Copious amounts of literature in the behavioral sciences discuss the universal applicability of Maslow’s theory. Many researchers believe the hierarchy of needs theory is outdated and simplistic, or not applied correctly by managers (Chen, 2014). Keil (1999) specifically enumerated the challenges of various aspects of Maslow’s theory noted by
Heylighen (1992), Wahba and Bridwell (1976), and Schott and Maslow (1992). Kenrick, Griskevicius, Neuberg, and Schaller (2010) presented a modernized approach and “have removed self-actualization from its privileged place atop the pyramid and suggest that it is largely subsumed within status (esteem) and mating-related motives in the new framework” (p. 293). Their schematic pyramid built upon the status/esteem level to include the developing human stages of mate acquisition, mate retention, and parenting.

In the present research, the subjects appeared to have achieved the four deficit levels and were within the seventh level of self-actualization need. As certified, experienced special educators, they were recognized and hired for their knowledge and skills, as veterans in teaching learners with ASD, and for gaining respect and achievement for their work. As these subjects evolved in their human development, Kenrick et al. (2010) would add to Maslow’s theory in suggesting that they may have integrated the three goals of mate acquisition, mate retention, and parenting. Human development events may change the level of needs which, in turn, may have interacted with their employment in the private sector job design.

As one level of need changes according to life events, the resulting potential disconnect with life circumstances may spur the motivation to adjust employment goals and objectives. Gawel and ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation (1997), in discussing Maslow’s theory, articulated that employees often find it challenging to express what they are seeking from their employment experience. In response, employers often feel that they know what their employees want, and make decisions that are sometimes based on Maslow’s needs hierarchy pyramid. Reeves et al. (2007) admitted that the needs of an individual are complex but that in understanding the levels of needs, managers can be perceptive of the feelings of their employees and make adjustment as appropriate to meet these needs.
In seeking to understand the applicability of Maslow’s needs theory, Moores-Abdool and Voigt (2007) provided a “rationale for teachers’ mentoring needs” (p. 66). They conducted a literature review consisting of two search descriptors, special education teacher and retention, combined with diagnosis descriptors from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act such as autism, emotionally disturbed, deaf, and mentally retarded. They found that teachers perceived their jobs as difficult due to the lack of administrative support, overwhelming caseloads, and teacher isolation. These themes demonstrate the importance of addressing the psychological needs of teachers as a way to achieve higher level needs and satisfaction, resulting in faculty who are more likely to stay than leave. The authors believed that it is the original fifth level in Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs that “defines the need for growth” and concluded that once Maslow’s self-actualization level has been reached, the teachers are able to utilize their expertise in problem solving, knowledge, and creativity in their professional role. Having attained this level of self-actualization, the educators will be committed and remain in special education (Moores-Abdool & Voight, 2007).

O’Connor and Yballe (2007) stated that “Maslow understood that there is a very fluid emergence and combination of needs and activity in the rhythm of day-to-day life” (p. 740). Maslow viewed self-actualization as an ongoing process that keeps evolving, that requires taking risks and having courage to change (O’Connor & Yballe, 2007). Huit (2007) characterized Maslow’s concept of self-actualized persons as problem-focused, having a fresh appreciation of life, concerned about their personal growth, and able to process peak experiences. Peak experiences, he believed, are exciting and elaborate situations that met the needs of persons in the transcendence level (Huit, 2007). According to Huit (2007), Maslow and Lowery (1998) reorganized the self-actualization growth need such that “as one becomes more self-actualized
and self-transcended, one becomes more wise (develops wisdom) and automatically knows what to do in a wide variety of situations”.

Given that Maslow’s human needs theory fit the objective of this study, it guided the research instrument and study to find the organizational factors that motivate certified special education teachers to move employment. The motivational factors that influence experienced teachers’ decision to move within educational programs for children with ASD must be explored from the perspective of the organization of the private sector school. Ingersoll (2003) believed the predominant concern in organizational theory and research is teacher supply, demand, and attrition. The basic premise of this theory is that people working together, through a division of labor, are able to accomplish more as a group than as individuals through their own strength (p. 16). According to Ingersoll, this perspective assisted in understanding staffing retention problems and policies and stopping the “revolving door” syndrome in teacher attrition (p. 16). Special education teachers experience a most difficult and complicated responsibility in the federal mandates to educate every child, and require a high level of support and training.

In summary, organizational theory using Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs as a framework guided the conceptualization of the research instrument used in this study. Based on the variables the literature review enumerated that affect the motivation of special education teacher attrition, the questions sought to find the unmet human needs of the sample participants. To quote Bolman and Deal (2013), “A good frame makes it easier to know what you are up against and, ultimately, what you can do about it” (p. 10). From the study’s data, information acquired will afford the opportunity for administrators of private schools for learners with ASD to adjust their organizational design to better meet human motivation needs and retain certified, experienced faculty.
Significance of the Study

Retention of employees is fundamental to the success of an organization. Daniels (2000), in discussing human performance, urged businesses to create the type of environment and conditions that bring out the best in employees. Major (2012) believed that teachers in special education face daily challenges of stress, motivation, job satisfaction, retention, and general commitment. Fall and Billingsley (2011) looked at the working conditions of special educators, and indicated the necessity of understanding the working conditions unique to high and low poverty districts in order to both improve schools and reduce special educator turnover. They clearly stated that the context in which educators teach provides necessary facts for policy makers to create adequate working conditions and thus a high level of teacher satisfaction to reduce turnover. Stempien and Loeb (2002) noted the specific stressors of workload and task completion as burdensome to teachers of children with special needs. They believed the shortage of certified and experienced teachers could be avoided if effective comprehensive educational preparation, along with job design and work setting improvements, were instituted.

Numerous studies have shown that any program or business cannot be successful without well-trained and educated staff (Firmin, Steiner, Firmin & Nonnemacher, 2013; Miller, 1981; Peltier, Dahl, & Mulhern, (2009), Skuller, 2011; West & Hardman, 2012). Ingersoll (2003), an expert in general education retention, highlighted the effects of teacher turnover that create disruption and often less than optimal performance of the school. Using the year 2000 data from the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and The Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS), Ingersoll found that a 46% turnover rate exists for the beginning teacher after five years of service. Special education teachers leave the teaching profession at a similar rate, which makes staff turnover a priority for resolution.
Aguenza and Som (2012) looked at motivating factors in employee retention and concluded that the culture of the educational program is the key factor in attracting and retaining personnel. The authors quote Andrew Carnegie on the importance of retention of employees: “Take away my railroads, my ships, my transportation, take away my money; strip me of all of these but leave me my key employees, and in two or three years, I will have them all again” (p. 88). The authors further cite a number of studies that looked at motivating factors in retention, focusing on the study conducted in 2005 by Career Systems International of 7,500 workers regarding the ranking of retention attributes. This research reported that 48.4% of respondents found exciting work/challenging environment most important, followed by career growth/learning with 42.6%, and relationships/working with great employees with 41.8%. Surprisingly, they list fair pay was fourth as a retention factor at 31.8% and, lastly, 25.1% believed they needed management that supported them in their work.

The perceptions teachers of learners with ASD have of organizational factors are critical for retention. A number of special education researchers have asserted that teaching effectiveness and motivation to stay in teaching rely on a positive work environment which includes collaboration and support from both administrators and colleagues, inclusion in decision making, and professional development opportunities (Bettini, Cheyney, Wang, & Leko, 2014; Billingsley, 2004a, 2005; Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, Whitener, & Weber, 1997; Brownell, Smith, McNellis, & Lenk, 1994; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Fall & Billingsley, 2011; Fish & Stephens, 2010; Ingersoll, 2001; Johnson, Kraft & Papay, 2012; Ladd, 2011; Miller, Brownell, & Smith, 1999; Payne, 2005; Singh & Billingsley, 1996).

Given the U.S. government’s commitment to the educational needs of all children and the intense, specialized educational strategies needed for learners with ASD, the question remains:
How do private schools for learners with ASD competitively prevent well-educated and experienced teachers from leaving for the public school sector? The challenge is to understand the reasons these teachers leave and implement the steps necessary to get them to stay. What support is needed to keep these educators in private schools? What factors motivate certified special education teachers to transfer to the public sector? Would they return to the private school sector under any circumstances?

Special education teachers in some specialized private schools for individuals with ASD receive intensive induction education and coaching in the application of Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) in the classroom. The need for adequate staff training has been so imperative that ABA teaching methodology has been included in most teacher education programs, including online teacher preparation programs. Arizona State University, for instance, provides an online Graduate Certificate Autism Spectrum Disorders course developed for persons who wish to work with children and adults affected by ASD. Rakap, Jones and Emery (2014) recommended a grant-funded professional development web-based program, the Autism Competencies for Endorsement (ACE) Project, for its effectiveness in assisting teachers of learners with ASD in the areas of development, competency, knowledge, and teaching. This project was initiated in response to the lack of qualified teachers in Florida to meet the needs of the growing numbers of students with ASD.

To gain perspective on the seriousness of certified special educators leaving the private sector for the public sector, it is necessary to understand the research statistics on general as well as special education teacher attrition and retention. The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF) has been very vocal about the problem of teacher shortage across the country. Boe and colleagues (2008), in examining teacher turnover, stated what a number of
other researchers believed, that “teacher turnover has become a major concern in educational research and policy analysis because of the demand it creates for replacement teachers” (p. 7). They attribute this problem to the field of education since they equate the effect of the cost of teacher turnover to the potential for achievement of each student, the effective functioning of the school, and the financial burden of training a new special education teacher.

The question that arose, then, was whether the shortage of teachers was due to attrition of qualified teachers or rather to inadequate supply of certified teachers. The problem may have origins in the preparation of teachers at the baccalaureate level; it may lie also in an inadequacy and inaccuracy of the program of study to prepare the student for the reality of teaching. Some researchers have held the belief that the lack of adequate academic preparation is the reason for low retention rates in special education (Major, 2012) and have used this as a reason to stop awarding alternative special education teacher certification.

Billingsley’s (2004a) critical analysis of retention and attrition of special education teacher concluded that in order to reduce attrition, policymakers have the responsibility to develop and enhance workplace environments and policies to keep special educators committed to special needs learners. Certainly, the challenging demands of paperwork, meetings, and written reports to support the teaching process are often cited as factors in attrition and need to be addressed by policymakers. Job dissatisfaction attrition is an issue that may be fixable through policy changes. Ingersoll and Smith (2003) held the management and organization of schools responsible for the improvement in working conditions that would help reduce new teacher turnover.

In this research, nine certified special educators of learners with ASD who chose to move from the private sector to the public sector were interviewed. The objective was to gain
knowledge and information that could improve the effectiveness and positive work environment of the private sector school. The perceptions of these teachers were requested to enhance determine the factors relating to teacher allegiance and retention for The Apple School. The review of attrition literature clearly showed that negative organizational conditions in both public and private sector settings can contribute to attrition. This study addressed an area that was previously scantily researched. It also sought specific information on the extent to which job design requirements influenced retention/attrition of certified, experienced special education teachers in private schools for learners with ASD. Some questions were designed to discern how the working conditions of the Extended School Year (ESY), longer school hours, and salary compensation in private sector schools influenced their decision to move to the public school system. In relation to organizational theory, the research looked to answer: Have the private schools for learners with ASD failed to meet the basic human needs of the experienced, certified special education teacher?

**Research Questions**

Special education teachers leaving The Apple School for another position were asked to provide an assessment of their experiences during their employment. Specifically, information was sought that would explain the reasons for leaving The Apple School. The face-to-face or telephone interview, while probably not yielding as much candor as desired, revealed the major and most frequent reason for leaving focused on issues of workload and compensation.

Using the researcher’s personal knowledge of exit interviews and the insight gained through the literature review presented in Chapter 2, a questionnaire was written to elicit more in-depth information. Experienced, certified special education teachers who left the private school for learners with ASD for the public school autism classroom were asked to address four
primary research questions and a subset to each question regarding their workload. In addition, their perceptions on how the private school organization served their needs in comparison to the public school sector were requested. The major themes for the questions were:

1. To what extent did the Extended School Year (ESY) influence their retention?
2. To what extent did the school hours for teachers influence their retention?
3. To what extent did compensation influence their retention?
4. To what extent did the quality of autism intervention services influence their retention?

The questions were designed in recognition of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and incorporated subset questions to enhance the depth of answers. The methodology in Chapter 3 presents the research questions as they related to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. The subset questions are below:

1. To what extent did the Extended School Year (ESY) influence retention?
   A. How did the mandatory ESY requirement impact your decision to leave the private school?
   B. If the public school has an ESY, what are the differences between the private school ESY and public school ESY?
   C. If the public school does not have an ESY, what are the benefits to not having to work an ESY program?
   D. If the public school does not have an ESY, what are the consequences to not having to work an ESY program?
   E. What are some recommendations you could make to the private school for improvement of the ESY program?

2. To what extent did the school hours for teachers influence their retention?
   A. How did working additional hours preparing reports and materials impact your decision to leave the private school?
   B. How did the additional hours worked providing Family Consultation services impact your decision to leave the private school?
C. How did attending school fundraising events after school hours impact your decision to leave the private school?

D. What are your current working hours?

E. What are some recommendations you could make to the private school for improvement of teacher hours?

3. To what extent did compensation influence retention?

A. Describe your main concerns regarding compensation.

B. Discuss the salary earned and the workload at the private school.

C. Compare the salary earned and workload difference from the private school to the public school.

D. What compensation attracted you to the public school?

E. What are some recommendations you could make to the private school for improvement in teacher compensation?

4. To what extent did the quality of autism intervention influence retention?

A. Compare the quality of services for individuals with autism you experienced in the private school versus the public school.

B. What are some recommendations you could make to the private school for improvement in autism intervention?

C. What incentive(s) caused you to leave the private school for the public school?

D. What incentive(s) causes you to stay at the public school?

**Limitations of the Study**

A potential limitation of using a qualitative methodology of interviewing is the issue of objectivity. The researcher needed to put aside personal beliefs and experiences, and remain cognizant of receiving the information openly. A second limitation of this study was that, due to the interview format, the delivery of the question by the researcher may not be clearly
understood by the subject and therefore not specifically answered. The respondents could perceive or interpret the question differently based on their own perceptions. As the interviews progressed, the researcher needed to be sure that the subject fully understood each question.

**Delimitations of the Study**

This study was delimited to a small size of 8 to 10 certified teachers of learners with ASD who left The Apple School for a public school setting and who continued to teach learners with ASD. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to teachers from private schools for ASD learners that leave the teaching profession or enter another specialty area. Uncertified teachers of students with ASD were not interviewed.

**Definition of Terms**

**Autism:** The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition (DSM-5) offers lengthy, in-depth diagnostic criteria for ASD. Autism New Jersey, offers a brief, widely accepted definition for ASD or autism as “a developmental disorder that affects a person’s social communication and interaction. Individuals with ASD also have restricted and repetitive behavior, interests and activities. These characteristics fall across a “spectrum” ranging from mild to severe. While one person may have symptoms that impair his or her ability to perform daily activities, another may have only mildly noticeable differences and have few, if any, functional impairments” (Autism New Jersey, 2015).

**Attrition:** Attrition has various meanings throughout the literature search. For the purposes of this study, attrition was defined as “leavers” or teachers who left teaching in a private school for a public school as opposed to those who left the profession (Boe et al., 2008, p. 12).
*Extended School Year (ESY):* Special education and related services provided to a student with a disability beyond the normal school year in accordance with the student's IEP at no cost to the parent ((State of New Jersey Department of Education, 2014).

*Leavers:* Individuals who depart permanently (Dictionary.com, 2014); for the purposes of this study, leavers depart from teaching learners with autism in a private school.

*Movers:* For the purposes of this study, individuals who remain in teaching learners with ASD but transfer to public school system.

*Retention:* The steps employers take to keep their employees and maintain appropriate environments to encourage employees to stay (Masood, 2011).

*Private School:* Dictionary.reference.com defines the private school as “a school under the financial and managerial control of a private body or charitable trust, accepting mostly free-paying pupils” (Dictionary.com, 2014). In this study, the term “private school” referred to the northeastern state’s DOE Approved Private Schools for the Disabled in which the tuition is paid in full or in part by the sending school district (district in which the student resides).

*Public School:* Dictionary.com defines the public school in the United States as “a school that is maintained at public expense for the education of the children of a community or district and that constitutes a part of a system of free public education commonly including primary and secondary schools” (Dictionary.com, 2014).

In summary, according to the state’s Directory of Schools Serving Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders, there were 167 public and private schools that offered various educational services to learners with ASD. The majority of the state’s 21 counties had separate special-education schools which were financed by county taxes and tuition fees often paid by the district where the child lived. Of these 167 schools, eight were private schools. All of the programs must
recruit and retain qualified teachers trained in the teaching methodology most commonly utilized in special education, ABA; maintain a low staff-to-student ratio; and implement an IEP for each child. Therefore, the need is significant for more qualified, certified, and experienced teachers, whether in public school inclusion special education classes or in private schools specifically designed for the challenged learner. The competition for these teachers is intense. Pre-teacher programs prepare both general and special education teachers, but graduates do not always enter the teaching profession as a career. Statistics have proven that the greatest attrition of special education teachers is within the first three years of employment (Billingsley, 2004b; Boe et al., 2008; Ingersoll, 2003). Kozleski et al. (2000) noted that four out of every ten special education teachers leave before the fifth year. Guided by Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and organizational theory, this study looked for the motivating variables that influenced certified special educators’ move from the private sector to the public sector to continue teaching learners with ASD.
Chapter II: Review of the Literature

This chapter reviews the research and scholarly literature on the organizational variables that impact retention and attrition of special education teachers. Differences in the organizational structure, policies, and compensation between the public and private sectors are addressed in the following order:

- Organizational influences on retention and attrition workplace conditions, and job design.
- Private versus public sector characteristics for certified special education teachers.
- Workload burden of special educators in both the private and public sectors.
- Financial compensation.
- Extended school year and/or day.

The focus was on the working conditions, administrative support, and salary compensation that attract certified special education teachers to move from the private sector to the public sector to continue teaching learners with ASD.

Organizational Influences on Retention and Attrition

Essential elements for a successful organization are retention and engagement of its employees. Aguenza and Som (2012) defined retention as “the process of physically keeping employee members in an organization as it is one of the key fundamentals that are necessary for organizational success” (p. 88). They concluded that there are six factors that motivate teachers to remain or leave an organization: financial compensation, job characteristics, professional development, recognition for their expertise, employee management, and a balance of work and their personal life.

Firmin et al. (2013) conducted a qualitative research study concerning the longevity of direct care staff in caring for clients with intellectual disabilities, finding that participants were
significantly dissatisfied with the support of administration/managers for the day-to-day work requirements. They determined that when employees do not achieve the job satisfaction they expected upon employment, stress increases, burnout is experienced, and job turnover increases. A review of the literature regarding the chronic shortage of special education teachers was conducted by McLeskey, Tyler, & Flippin (2004). Their analysis concluded that the shortage is at the crisis level and key factor in retention is the teaching condition in special education.

Bettini et al. (2014) believed job design is a key variable in retaining special education teachers and that job characteristics influence teachers’ perceptions of the value of their work. Bettini et al. (2014) listed the five characteristics of social support, autonomy, feedback, task significance, and task interdependence as variables that predict performance and attrition. Therefore, job design needs to be structured to increase motivation, support, and the significance of work roles.

Billingsley and Cross (1991) looked at 286 special education teachers’ reasons for staying in teaching but transferring to general education. The researchers found many reasons for this transfer but wondered what incentives would bring teachers back to special education. All of the Billingsley and Cross (1991) respondents worked in public schools and reported the following factors as most influential in their decision to transfer: lack of central office administrative support, stress of working with children with disabilities, extreme amount of paperwork, disagreement between special education policies and practices, and inadequate teaching resources.

Brownell and Smith (1992) reviewed the literature on the retention and attrition of special education teachers from 1982 to 1992 and found a significant number of research studies appeared to be limited in both scope and consistency. Five areas were identified, however, that impact
retention. These included historical influences such as certification status, training quality, and program length; teacher characteristics; environmental workplace influences; governmental policies; and external influences. The environmental stimuli cited most often as the reason for leaving special education included lack of administrative support, inadequate salary, excessive paperwork, excessive workload requirements, excessive caseload, and inadequate professional growth opportunities (Brownell & Smith, 1992).

The importance of the principal’s role in retention was noted in a study by Littrel, Billingsley, and Cross (1994). They questioned 385 special education teachers and 313 general education teachers in Virginia to ascertain the level of principal support needed for adequate job satisfaction in remaining committed to the school and intending to stay in teaching (Littrel et al., 1994). Principals were identified as a key support variable for retention, providing a higher level of job satisfaction and commitment, and healthier personal experience (Littrel et al., 1994). Their results furthermore indicated that working conditions were better predictors of level of support than were demographic variables (Littrel et al., 1994).

Weiss (2001) utilized this variable of principal support and asked 320 special education teachers in Passaic County, New Jersey to rate the support they received from their principals. Their responses indicated, in general, that the special education teachers in that study received a high level of support from the principals.

The level of administrative and collegial support was the main focus in a study by George, George, Gersten, and Grosenick (1995). The authors researched the vital role of involved and committed teachers in the success of special education programs by investigating the mindset of 96 special education teachers from 53 school districts in 23 states. They referred to previous studies that utilized organizational theory to attest to their findings “that teachers’ beliefs,
attitudes, and job satisfaction are shaped by the structures, policies, and traditions of the workplace” (p. 228) and cited potential leavers’ typical characterization of their jobs as “‘stressful’, ‘draining’, and ‘energy consuming’” (p. 230). Their findings supported previous studies in that the variable of the organizational structure failed to yield support from other teachers, parents, and administrators, the delivery setting type, and an inadequate amount of time for curriculum development and paperwork completion.

Workplace conditions are addressed in some form in almost every research study in this review. In their study of 542 special educators and teachers of students with emotional disorders in Virginia, Singh and Billingsley (1996) found the factor of workplace conditions was most important for the outcome of a positive intent to stay in teaching. This finding confirmed past research and found also that administrative support was a key factor in a teacher’s commitment to job retention, while principal support by far had the strongest power on job satisfaction (Singh & Billingsley, 1996). They delineated specific improvements in the areas of teacher role definition, bureaucratic requirement reduction, and provision of adequate resources in order to more successfully teach students.

Full responsibility for job satisfaction and commitment cannot be placed on administrators alone. Looking for variables that would predict special as well as general education teachers’ likelihood of retention, transfer, or attrition, Boe and colleagues (1997) studied the responses of 4,798 public school teachers. Using the Public School Teachers Questionnaire (1987-1988), the SASS edition Ingersoll (2003) used (1991), and the 1989 Follow Up Survey, they analyzed the data and reported that “no single predictor variable alone shows the potential to improve teacher retention dramatically” (p. 407). However, the two variables of age and base salary were statistically significant for potential improvement in retention, leading to suggestions to “hire
experienced teachers, ages 35 to 55, who have dependent children over age 5; and place these teachers in full-time assignments, for which they are fully certified, and pay them high salaries” (p. 407).

Miller, Brownell and Smith (1999) sought to provide a more longitudinal review of workplace conditions. They analyzed the responses of 1,576 special education teachers in Florida to identify the workplace variables that would predict staying, transferring, or leaving special education teaching. After a two-year tracking period, their findings supported earlier studies but also found greater evidence to support the variables of certification status, school climate, stresses observed by the teachers, and age as the best predictors of retention, attrition, and transfer.

Adding to the findings of other retention researchers, Kozleski et al. (2000) identified eight organizational components that thwart the retention of qualified special education teachers. The issues included ambiguous and competing responsibilities, overwhelming paperwork, inadequate district and administrative support, significant teacher isolation, insufficient focus on improved student outcomes, increased demand for well-qualified special educators, poorly prepared new general and special educators, and fragmented state and provincial licensing systems. The authors presented an action agenda to address these barriers that included strategies to improve the organizational components of quality teachers, quality conditions, and quality interventions.

In contrast, Gersten, Keating, Yovanoff, and Harniss (2001) in their research on job design found that administrative support, inadequate resources, and limited decision-making ability were barriers to teaching effectiveness. Similar to other researchers, Gersten et al. (2001)
enumerated the problems of workload, repetitive paperwork, mandatory meetings, and disrespect from general education colleagues.

Andrews and colleagues (2002) picked up on the factor of attitude of general education teachers toward special educators while answering the question of how to effectively prepare and retain special education teachers. Respondents to the Andrews et al. (2002) study brought out the variables of importance and value placed on their work, their knowledge and skill, and the support they receive both financially and administratively.

The challenges facing both special and general education teachers are numerous and stressful, and yet very rewarding. Fore, Martin, and Bender (2002) looked specifically at the burnout phenomenon in special education as a result of these challenges. Their findings supported the conclusions of many other special education researchers, that stress and the management of workload responsibility lead to burnout (e.g., Gersten et al., 2001; Billingsley, 2005; Wisniewski & Gargiulo, 1997; Brownell, Smith, McNellis, & Lenk, 1994; Miller, Brownell, & Smith, 1999; Boe et al., 1997; Brownell & Smith, 1992; and Borman & Dowling, 2008).

The research literature is repetitive on the causes of teacher attrition and focuses on measures to increase job satisfaction and therefore retention. Billingsley (2004b) discussed four factors to promote special education teacher quality and retention and assist these teachers to succeed both personally and professionally; these include clear and responsive induction programs, role design, work conditions and supports, and continued and appropriate professional development for personal growth.

Theoharis and Fitzpatrick (2013) asked the question, “should I stay or should I go?” in their review of the literature concerning factors influencing attrition and retention of special education
teachers. Their review confirmed earlier findings that the motivation to leave is a complex issue with personal, employment, and external factors.

Recognizing the dissonance between idealistic perception of teaching and reality, Ingersoll (2001) sought to find a solution for educators to fulfill their main objective, enhancing students’ academic and social abilities. Rather than focusing on recruitment of new teachers, Ingersoll encouraged increased research on “the organizational sources of low teacher retention” (p. 499). The 2001 study found that fewer than expected teachers left private schools because of lower salaries, but similarities were found between public and private schools as far as teacher retirement, results of staffing actions by schools, and various personal reasons. Ingersoll and Smith (2003) firmly believed that an aggressive effort to attract more teachers is not the answer to teacher shortage, but rather curbing the attrition rate of teachers is the solution. They admitted that a small degree of turnover can energize and infuse new ideas into effective organizations, but acknowledged the turmoil and poor organizational functioning caused by a high turnover rate. School management and organization, Ingersoll and Smith (2003) believed, are at the root of teacher job dissatisfaction and are critical components for solving problems and turning teacher dissatisfaction into satisfaction. They suggested that the improvement of working conditions would decrease new teacher turnover and reduce school staffing problems.

Kersint, Lewis, Potter, & Meisels (2007) found that the utmost concern for teachers in general was the factor of family issues. Prioritizing time with their families was emphasized by the teachers, especially for those special educators who left than those that stayed.

Major (2012) addressed the high attrition rate of special education teachers and focused on the connectivity of stress, the work environment, and the role of job design to formulate a solution for retention issues. Major (2012) concluded that administrators must analyze the work
environment and design the special educator’s job in a way that motivates and empowers the teachers to adapt to their working conditions.

Sundberg (2016) discussed the issue of ABA service providers quitting their jobs at a rate of 30% annually, stating that “turnover seems to come with the territory” (p. 1). He cited the negative impact of this revolving door turnover rate which affects the quality of services, expense of training new service providers, and morale. He postulated that addressing the variables of training, supervision, pay, and the job characteristics is the best way to curtail voluntary service provider turnover.

Looking from a global perspective, Odland and Ruzicka (2009) studied the responses of 281 teachers at various international schools and found that the data reported three factors that influenced their decision to leave the schools after their first contract. The dissatisfactions and causes for leaving were the same as they were from the national perspective: administrative leadership, compensation, and personal circumstances.

Kozak, Kersten, Schillmoller and Nienhaus (2013) studied burnout and the psychosocial work environment at the organizational level in agencies that service people with intellectual disabilities. Given the complex and diverse needs of clients, they agreed with Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001), that in order to advance the satisfaction and productivity of employees, the work environment must support the development of employees’ “energy, vigor, involvement, dedication, absorption and effectiveness” (Kozak et al., p. 113).

Self-efficacy was a significant factor in Skuller’s (2011) doctoral dissertation. Skuller (2011) found that self-efficacy played a critical role in preventing burnout and in the subsequent attrition of special education teachers; also, increased ability for teachers to use their knowledge of instructional strategies as a basis for the programming used in their classrooms raised their
satisfaction level in their teaching positions. The researcher cited other researchers who believed that the turnover in jobs by special education teachers is usually due to limited supplies, limited progress for their learners, and non-support from colleagues.

Boe and colleagues (2008) reviewed the trends in teacher turnover and found the data on attrition mixed, unclear, at times not supported, and inconsistent. They believed that the annual turnover of a large number of teachers is normal for the teaching profession, and not necessarily particular to special education. The researchers argued that much more research is needed to understand why teachers move and how to improve retention.

In summary, researchers have been identifying and studying the chronic shortage of general as well as special education faculty and the reasons for attrition and retention since 1986. Theoharis and Fitzpatrick (2013) urged renewed emphasis on attrition and retention as they reflected on their view that there is an overabundance of special education retention and attrition research, but that most of the studies are “archaic” (p.163).

The majority of the above research studies identified major retention obstacles. These include administrative support, job characteristics including heavy workload and paperwork responsibilities, financial compensation, and personal life and work balance. It is essential to understand the variables that prompt certified, experienced special education teachers to leave the profession or move to general teaching education in order to grasp why teachers leave a private school for learners with ASD to continue teaching learners with ASD in the public school.
Private Sector versus Public Sector for Learners with Autism

Debate over public school education and private school education has been ongoing for many years, specifically since the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act in 1975. The inclusion of the mandated appropriate LRE requirement has posed a challenge to the public school sector. Audette (1982) addressed the challenging decisions that educational administrators must make on the complex issue of a possible out-of-district school placement. Leach and Duffy (2009) refuted out-of-district placement and believed that all students with disabilities should be placed in the general education classroom in their primary location. They further affirmed that learners with ASD need the social and communication interaction that the public sector provides but acknowledged that the general education teachers responsible for these learners may not be knowledgeable in the specific educational strategies and approaches needed.

A limited number of research studies were found which specifically addressed private special education in general and in specific for learners with ASD. The majority of identified studies of private schools were in parochial schools, alternate education providers for high-risk learners, and both day and residential programs for students with severe disabilities and mental health needs. Zetlin and Weinberg (2006) were adamant about the lack of research concerning private school special education; they did, however, discuss schools that criticized the lack of certification standards and educational outcome accountability. McKinney (2011) noted that studies of nonpublic, private special education schools were scarce, and stated that in the last thirty years, the literature “is limited to conceptual articles and a small number of research studies” (p. 53).

Research on the factors that motivate certified special education teachers of learners with ASD to leave the private sector for the public sector is nonexistent. Private schools usually serve
learners with ASD that are diagnosed at an early age and for whom interventions are initiated and maintained until age 21 or until the child is able to be mainstreamed in a public school. Learners with more subtle symptoms of ASD are usually mainstreamed and assigned to an inclusive classroom or a self-contained classroom.

A review of the organizational characteristics of both the public and private school sectors gave a basis for comparison of the enticement of the transfer lure. Choy (1998) and Bott (2009) both described at length the systematic and organizational differences between public and private schools. Foremost are differences in the levels of finances and the sources of economic support (Bott, 2009; Choy, 1998). Local, state and federal government funds primarily support public sector education programs. Private schools are primarily supported by religious organizations, endowments, donations, or grants along with public monies for designated services. Choy (1998) essentially considered all private schools to have a religious affiliation, and the comparison in the article of private versus public did not address a private school for learners with ASD or other disabilities. The conclusions in Choy (1998) were not without merit, however. Choy believed public school teachers’ salaries are higher and benefits are more substantial than those of teachers in private schools, teacher attrition is higher in private schools than in the public sector, private schools have smaller classes, and both administrators and teachers in private schools most likely have more weight and authority than teachers in decisions concerning discipline policy and curriculum.

Fox (1999) discussed disabled students in public school being sent to private schools, funded to some degree by public monies. While a common argument against public or private school choice is the creation of a system where the public school educates only the easiest students, Fox (1999) showed how this idea is not supported. He believed that the private sector
supplies educational services to learners that the public sector either has failed or for whom the public sector is unable to provide.

Bott (2011) examined the partnership relationship of public schools and private schools for autism in New Jersey. She affirmed that both economic and social issues have created the need for in-district placement of special needs students and, at the same time, created effective programs for these students. Bott (2011) found distinct organizational structure differences between the public schools’ special education system and the private special education schools in terms of funding, resources, accountability, and policies. Furthermore, the author addressed the unionized regulations of employment hours in public schools versus private schools’ regulations, which do not limit teachers’ after school hours.

Owen (2008) presented a comparison of public versus private school teaching and agreed with findings regarding the higher salary, better benefits, and better retirement plans for public sector teachers but admitted that private schools compete for highly qualified teachers by offering increased salaries. The advantage of a private school, Owen believed, is the fact that the state is not in control of the instruction, which gives teachers an opportunity for greater input into the decisions on curriculum and instruction. Private schools are not obliged to meet student progress standards as the public sector must.

The Council for American Private Education published an article on the advantages of private school over public school employment for teachers using the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) data, finding that, “Despite earning lower salaries, teachers in private schools are more satisfied with their careers, feel more recognized and supported, and are less stressed about their job setting than teachers in public schools” (p. 1).
Private schools with the specific mission of serving special education learners, not including private religious or charter schools, usually provide resources unavailable in public schools (Fox, 1999). They utilize programs and treatment methods that have a documented research history of significantly assisting children with ASD. Given this proof of strong, effective interventions, many parents of learners with ASD search for private schools that are tailored to the needs of learners with ASD. Other parents, however, object to the private school sector, believing it isolates their children, preventing them from interacting with general education students (Zetlin & Weinberg, 2006).

Fall and Billingsley (2011) recounted data from the Data Accountability Center (2007), which identified that “54% of students are educated in a general education classroom 80% or more of their school day and are expected to achieve the same standards alongside their peers without disabilities” (p. 65). According to the authors, problems encountered by special education teachers include poor collaboration with general educators, workload manageability, and administrative/principal support, and they identified a need for skilled judgment and independence.

In their study of 34 teachers of students with ASD who were both general and special educators working in inclusive classrooms, Able, Sreckovic, Schultz, Garwood and Sherman (2015) delineated the many challenges facing students and teachers in the public sector, concluding, “Research suggests physical integration does not necessarily equate to full social inclusion” (p. 45). They supported the need for certified special education teachers in reporting that general education teachers commonly voice concerns of their lack of education and training for the inclusive classroom teaching and referred to comments that specifically spoke to the teachers’ belief that no student with ASD is the same, each is unique with their own individual
educational needs. Alexander, Ayres and Smith (2015) reviewed the literature on 23 studies, looking at the training of special education teachers in federally mandated EBP for learners with ASD. They stress that the “burden of accountability is … placed on the school district to provide staff development on EBP to educators serving individuals with disabilities” (p. 14). Marder and deBettencourt (2015) noted the critical need for educators who teach students with ASD to be properly trained in EBP teaching techniques since the faculty working with these learners face more multifaceted and challenging expectations.

The problems and challenges facing the public school districts in hiring appropriately prepared teachers for the inclusive setting was acknowledged by Ruppar, Roberts, and Olson (2014) in their study that looked at how faculty perceived teaching expertise when instructing students with severe disabilities. They believed that special education teachers have a knowledge base, skills, and qualities that the general education teacher does not possess. These researchers conclude that special education teachers can cope with teaching students as well as communicating with adults, other service providers, and the students’ families. The public and private sectors compete for these expert special education teachers (Tyler & Brunner, 2014).

In summary, literature on the differences and desirability of public versus private sector employment for teaching learners with ASD is essentially nonexistent. In support, McKinney (2011) cited four research studies which “acknowledge the paucity of data related to nonpublic educational services” (p. 10).

It was understandable from these organizational factors why special educators leave the profession of teaching or transfer to general education teaching. What was not plainly obvious, however, was the answer to the question of what motivates certified, experienced special educators of learners with ASD to move from the private school to the public school while
continuing to teach learners with ASD. Insight into the motivation to transfer from teaching students with ASD in the private sector to the public sector remained uncertain. This study was created to provide some insight.

**Workload Burden**

The majority of the scholarly works described in this literature review, and many others not specifically described, recognized to varying degrees the workload burden of the special education teacher (DeMik, 2008; Edgar & Pair, 2005; Kumari & Pandey, 2011; Macdonald, 1999; Nance & Calabrese, 2009; Shyman, 2011; Tyler & Brunner, 2014; Vannest & Hagan-Burke, 2010). For the public sector or private sector, the complaints are the same. The final report of the National Study of Personnel Needs in Special Education (SPeNSE) authored by Carlson, Chen, Schroll and Klein (2003) found that the amount of day-to-day responsibilities and required paperwork affected greatly the teachers’ ability to effectively teach. Time for planning and the degree of caseloads and paperwork were specifically identified in many studies as factors of concern to educators. Nance and Calabrese (2009) found that tenured special educators wanted their concerns valued, and felt overwhelmed by state assessment workload and legal changes, and felt overburdened by administrative responsibilities. Tyler and Brunner (2014) believed a major understudied variable is workplace decision-making. They postulated that the lack of the authority to give input into decision-making lowers the special educators’ satisfaction level.

Williams and Gersch (2004) studied teacher stress levels in mainstream and special schools in London. Although the responses of the 41 experienced teachers in this study indicated that there was, by and large, no difference in the level of stress, paperwork was identified as the most
significant cause of stress in both educational sectors (Williams & Gersch, 2004). They additionally found that teachers in the mainstream school were dissatisfied with the limited time allotted to work with students, and with students’ work attitudes, which were poor (Williams & Gersch, 2004). In a study of 36 licensed and certified special education teachers in Texas, Vannest and Hagan-Burke (2010) asked the teachers to rate, by percentage, their time spent on each of 12 time use activities. The respondents rated their time use as 16% for academic instruction, 15% for instructional support and 12% for paperwork (Vannest & Hagan-Burke, 2010).

Gersten et al. (2001) questioned 887 special education teachers in three large urban school districts about the reality of their job. The stresses delineated included “burdensome paperwork loads, extensive time spent in meetings, limited opportunities for individualization, and huge ranges in student performance levels” (p. 554). Maslach et al. (2001) discussed the effect of workload on employees and recognized a three-fold dimension of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy in the organizational context of their job demands. The reaction to overload is burnout. They believed that the organizational process and structure values are an essential component in shaping “the emotional and cognitive relationship that people develop with their work” (p. 409).

Zarafshan, Mohammadi, Ahmadi, and Arsalani (2013) studied the burnout of special education teachers for learners with ASD compared to the burnout of special education teachers for other children with special needs. The results of their study indicated that the exhaustion and depersonalization experienced by teachers of learners with ASD resulted in major differences in the level of burnout and the general health of teachers of students with ASD, those teaching students with mental retardation, and those teaching deaf students (Zarafshan et al., 2013). The
authors recommended providing better working conditions and increased benefits to special education teachers of learners with ASD to reduce their attrition.

Organizational working conditions in special education are multi-faceted and complex. Long work days were acknowledged by several researchers as barriers to teachers remaining in their teaching positions (Macdonald, 1999).

### Financial Compensation

The literature clearly substantiated the connection between teacher salary and retention and attrition (Allen, 2005; Billingsley, 1993; Boe et al., 1997; Brownell & Smith, 1992; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996; Gandara, 1992). Macdonald (1999) cited salary as a primary motivator for teachers in general to leave the profession and as an important variable in recruitment and retention. However, Macdonald found scant evidence to support the theory that higher salaries and other financial incentives by themselves significantly impact the attrition rate.

The literature on the teacher labor supply showed that financial incentives successfully affect retention of quality teachers. Gandara (1992), Gilpin (2012), and Imazeki (2005) surveyed three California schools with an ESY timeframe, concluding separately that a higher salary was a critical factor in the level of job satisfaction of a significant number of teachers. Hanushek, Kain, and Rivkin (2004) examined the basis for Texas public school teacher attrition. Using data from over 300,000 teachers in Texas during 1993-1996, they found that salary was not the predominant reason teachers left their positions, but rather the school characteristics were more responsible. The researchers sought to find the relationship between salary, working conditions, teacher attrition, and quality of instruction in Texas. They found that salary increases were
expensive and ineffective in raising student performance. Hendricks (2014), however, concluded just the opposite. Using the Texas Education Agency data from 1996-2012, he found that a higher base pay does lower teacher attrition and probably improves student performance. Darling-Hammond (2003) acknowledged the role salaries play in retention and attrition of special education teachers but affirmed that, “overwhelmingly the things that would destroy the morale of teachers who wanted to leave were the working conditions” (p. 7).

Comparing public school and private school salaries, Richwine and Biggs (2011) found in their national study that public school teachers’ salaries were 9.8% higher than private school teachers’ salaries. However, they admitted that the comparison is problematic, noting that the functions of each sector can be quite different, with different special education teaching skills needed to fulfill the mission of each respective sector school.

Allen (2005), in the report to the Education Commission of the States, discussed the impact of compensation on the recruitment and retention of teachers in general, according to 28 research studies reviewed for this question of compensation. The research reviewed in this paper strongly supported adequate compensation as a crucial component in motivating teacher retention, but Allen (2005) cautioned that there is no set or uniform formula for teacher salaries. Rather, the important factor is that salaries must represent the “local labor market” and be “comparable to those in neighboring states and districts” (p. 89). The studies in Allen (2005) also indicated that salary was not a teacher’s only motivation for staying or leaving, but rather the teacher’s working conditions and overall job satisfaction had a significant influence on the personal decision.

Work-life balance is stressed as an important factor in retention of employees by Aguenza and Som (2012). They believed salary is not the primary reason for both hiring and retaining
highly skilled employees and cited Higginbotham’s 1997 study that found a competitive salary that is “good and fair” is an incentive to remain in one’s position (p. 90).

David (2014), a psychologist and organizational consultant who studies motivation and people, discussed Maslow’s hierarchy of human needs and concluded that the basic motivational need of a high salary does not matter most in ensuring employee engagement. She believed “the pyramid version of Maslow’s theory doesn’t usually apply to the world of professional work” (p. 2); salary and benefits enhance motivation in the workplace, but emotional experiences have a greater impact on job satisfaction. In the David (2014) study of business units, only 4% of the respondents said salary was a factor, citing a strong sense of belonging and feeling autonomous and empowered as much more important in their employment.

**Extended School Year and/or Day**

The Extended School Year (ESY) has been an area of controversy and debate since the enactment of P.L.94-142 (Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (P.L. 94-142), 20 U.S.C. sec. 1401) and P.L. 93-112 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 (P.L. 93-112), 29 U.S.C., 794). These ESY laws were created to assure every child access to education that would provide the ability to achieve self-sufficiency and be tailored to each student’s need, but they place a heavy burden on special education teachers, who can suffer from a resulting imbalance in their work and personal life responsibilities (Gandara, 1992). The majority of the literature on ESY mentioned the negative effect of teacher work-life imbalance on student learning and academic achievement, although very few articles addressed teacher satisfaction (e.g., Olmi, Walker, & Ruthven, 1995; Patall, 2010; Sharpton, Sexton, Luster, & Lang, 1998; Smith, Roderick, & Degener, 2005).
The concepts of Extended School Day (ESD) and ESY were the focus of discussion in the educational community for years. News media entered into the debate with special programs and newspaper articles (The New York Times, 2013; Boston Globe, 2013; Huffington Post, 2012, 2013; USA Today, 2014; Fox News, 2009; Scholastic, The Note Book, 2009). The argument centered on the issue of quality versus quantity of teaching and the economic impact of funding the extended hours. Research data inconsistently verified increased academic achievement through ESD or ESY.

Looking from a legal perspective, Katsiyannis (1990) and Olmi et al. (1995) addressed the complexity of ESY from state directors of special education programs and local education agencies. Results showed inconsistency in the implementation of the required service provision. Noting several court decisions on the practice of providing special education learners with ESY services as needed, the rulings were consistent in supporting the right of disabled students to have ESY services. Students with ASD were noted as an increasing population for ESY services in both studies. Funding this initiative was an issue addressed to attract the qualified personnel to meet the increasing need. Gandara (1992) found that ESY contracts and programs are not appropriate for all special education teachers but do afford many teachers the opportunity to augment their salaries.

Sharpton et al. (1998) looked at the efficacy of ESY in Louisiana from the perspective of 128 families of children with disabilities. The families valued the opportunities that ESY provided them in their child’s IEP team decision-making and the increased frequency of communication with the special education teacher.

How ESY impacts experienced, certified special education teachers’ decision to move from the private sector for learners with ASD to the public sector, continuing to teach learners with
ASD, remains unknown. Typically, certified teachers are contracted for 180 days and enjoy summers off to spend with their families and friends. In many of the private schools for individuals with ASD, the programs are 12 months, meaning the ESY is a contracted requirement to reduce learner regression. Therefore, the teachers are required to teach an additional 30 days, totaling 210 days, and do not receive the summers off. This review of ESY workload on the retention of certified, experienced special education teachers sheds no light on the motivation to leave a private school for learners with ASD to teach in the public sector.

ESD is very specific to private schools for individuals with ASD. The certified teacher’s day does not end when the students leave. Many have contracted hours beyond those of public school teachers. For example, a teacher at The Apple School works minimally from 8:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. (with learners present from 9 a.m. to close to 2:45 p.m.) and provides in-home family consultation to their students in the home setting after hours as necessary (e.g., if both parents work until 5 p.m., the teacher provides family consultation services at a mutually agreed upon time in the evening). In contrast, a teacher at a public school in the same state works from 8:30 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. (with learners present from 8:45 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.) with no after-hour teacher responsibilities, and yet another public school teacher in the same state works from 8:25 a.m. to 3:25 p.m. (with learners present from 8:45 a.m. to 2:55 p.m.), again without after-hour teacher responsibilities.

Summary

In summary, no research study in this review of the literature addressed the issue of certified, special education teachers continuing to teach learners with ASD, but moving from the private school sector to the public school sector. This research study sought to fill the void. The variables were identified by special educators in the public sector universally in every study to
date. The issues of administrative and collegial support, professional development, student behavior, paperwork overload, meeting responsibilities, work-life balance, and financial compensation are central issues for both general education teachers and special education teachers.

The literature on teacher attrition and turnover in both general and special education is voluminous and clearly indicates the seriousness of the problem. Knowing that each child with ASD faces unique challenges, teachers of learners with ASD must have a teaching style that is persistent and highly structured, yet flexible. These characteristics do not fit every teacher in special education. As people struggling with the fastest-growing developmental disability in the country, individuals with ASD must have teachers who are versed and experienced in the instruction of learners with ASD, knowledgeable about early intervention techniques, and committed to assisting them in reaching their full potential. Kozleski, Mainzer, and Deshler (2000) concisely summed up the literature on special and general education in their belief that a well-prepared, caring, and qualified teacher is the most important school influence in a student’s education.
Chapter III: Research Methodology

Introduction

Chapter 3 delineates the methodology and the procedures utilized in collecting the data in addressing the respondents’ responses to the research questions. Included in this chapter is a description of the following:

- Purpose statement
- Method and process in obtaining population to be studied
- Population of study participants
- Instrumentation
- Research Questions
- Interview questions as supported by Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Theory
- Data analysis procedure

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological case study was to investigate the specific factors that motivate certified special educators who have taught in The Apple School to leave their employment at The Apple School and continue teaching learners with ASD in the public school sector in a northeastern state of the United States. It sought to additionally identify factors that influenced private school educators of individuals with ASD to leave the private sector for the public sector either with inclusion or self-contained classrooms. Guided by organizational theory, it looked to identify the extent to which organizational factors of The Apple School influenced the teachers’ decision to continue teaching learners with ASD in the public sector.
According to Billingsley (2004a), very few researchers in the areas of attrition and retention use qualitative methods as their methodology. Of the 19 special education attrition and retention studies in Billingsley’s (2004a) critique, only three authors used qualitative analyses via an interviewing technique as their methodology. The remaining 16 studies were conducted through mailed questionnaires or surveys with a few follow-up interviews. Billingsley believed these studies “provided a basic understanding of factors that influence career decisions but do little by way of depicting the lives of special educators or the critical transition points that lead to withdrawal and eventually attrition” (2004a, p. 52). She pointed out that very few researchers asked the respondents to describe their work lives (Billingsley, 2004a).

A qualitative research design was identified for this study through use of a standardized open-ended interview protocol. Various forms of interview design can be developed to obtain thick, rich data utilizing a qualitative investigational perspective (Creswell, 2007). Interviewing the leavers themselves provided information pertaining to the certified teachers’ experiences and viewpoints on reasons for leaving. Turner (2010) stated that “as the variety of qualitative research methods become more widely utilized across research institutions, we will continue to see more practical guides for protocol implementation outlined in peer reviewed journals across the world” (p. 759).

This phenomenological case study sought to identify perceptions of teachers who have left the Apple School yet continue to teach individuals with ASD. Using the qualitative research method, the researcher questioned the teachers’ understanding of the specific organizational factors in their decision to leave the Apple School for the public school classroom with individuals with ASD. The primary research questions for this study centered on the factors identified in the review of the literature and supported by Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Theory
that cause job dissatisfaction, burnout, and hence, attrition or transition. The variables of ESD, ESY, and financial compensation are specifically significant in private schools for learners with ASD. Questions were:

1. To what extent did Extended School Year (ESY) influence their retention?
2. To what extent did the school hours for teachers influence their retention?
3. To what extent did compensation influence their retention?
4. To what extent did the quality of autism intervention influence their retention?

**Methods and Process**

Permission to conduct this research utilizing past-employed certified special education teachers between 2012 and 2015 was obtained from The Apple School’s Board of Directors. Assurance was given to the Board of Directors of The Apple School that the information and insight gained by the school principal would be shared with them. Identification of eligible participants was possible since the principal of the school was required to keep the teacher’s records for six years according to the Department of State Division of Archives and Records Management. The teachers appropriate for inclusion in this research included “leavers” who were no longer employed at The Apple School and who were not currently supervised by the researcher at the time of the study. Letters of solicitation were sent via email to all former certified teachers, which numbered twelve, of The Apple School who left The Apple School for a public sector autism classroom between 2012 and 2015. The letter explained the purpose of the study, assurance of anonymity of The Apple School, and a request to schedule a voluntary interview based on an open-ended questionnaire. Specific information on the current district in which they were employed was not collected. The interview was estimated to take 60 to 90
minutes and was conducted in-person or by telephone; either way, the interview was to be audio-taped, if given permission, for accuracy of response coding. If no permission for audio recording was granted, detailed notes were to be taken. Random selection of interested participants was made from the initial list of potential candidates. All leavers were female with varied years of experience.

Of the 12 potential participants, 10 responded that they would participate in this research. After demographic data was collected, the subjects were given open-ended questions with regard to their decision to leave the private school. Specific emphasis was placed on their private school experience of working with individuals with ASD and the factors that led up to moving to the public school. The questions guiding the interview were open-ended and written according to the following advice of Billingsley (2004a) in designing questions. She stated, “Researchers will clearly get different kinds of information, depending on how these questions are asked” (p.51). Through the following interview process, insight was gained into the reasons that certified teachers leave the private school for public school.

**Setting**

The setting of this phenomenological case study was The Apple School, an approved private school for individuals with ASD in a northeastern state. The school had a twelve-month program with a 1:1 staff to student ratio. It enrolled 32 students ages 3 through 21, all with a diagnosis of ASD, across seven classrooms. Each classroom had four to five students in the class with one to two certified special education teachers, and the remaining staff members were bachelor-level paraprofessionals. In-home family consultation was provided by lead staff, including all employed certified special education teachers. From 2012 through 2015, The Apple School lost twelve certified teachers representing 86% of the certified teaching faculty.
Population of Study Participants

In this study of teachers of learners with ASD, criterion sampling was used to select participants. Specifically, nine certified special education teachers from The Apple School who left the private school to work in the public school in the same northeastern state of the United States between 2012 and 2015 were interviewed. One certified special education teacher did not meet the criteria for participation in this study since after she left The Apple School, she was not able to continue teaching the public sector due to family circumstances. Non-certified teachers were not included in this study. All participants were female.

**Former Teacher Demographic Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant #</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Year Received Baccalaureate Degree</th>
<th>Degree Received</th>
<th>Certifications</th>
<th>Year Began Teaching</th>
<th>Teaching Area</th>
<th>Years in Private School</th>
<th>Years in Public School</th>
<th>Was a private school your first teaching experience?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>BS Health Sciences</td>
<td>NJ and NY: Elementary K-6, Students w/ Disabilities</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Special Education: Autism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>BS Inclusive Education</td>
<td>NJ: Teacher of the Handicapped</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Special Education: Autism</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>BS Integrated Elementary Education and Special Education</td>
<td>NJ: P-3, K-6, Students w/ Disabilities</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Special Education: Autism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Bachelor in Fine Arts</td>
<td>BCBA NJ: K-6, Students w/ Disabilities</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Special Education: Autism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>BS in Education</td>
<td>BCBA NJ: K-6, Students w/ Disabilities</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Special Education: Autism</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>BA Psychology</td>
<td>NJ: K-6, Students w/ Disabilities</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Special Education: Autism</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>BA History</td>
<td>NJ: K-6, Students w/ Disabilities</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Special Education: Autism</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>BS Social Work</td>
<td>NJ: Teacher of the Handicapped</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Special Education: Autism</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>BA Liberal Arts &amp; History</td>
<td>NJ: P-3, K-6, Students w/ Disabilities</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Special Education: Autism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter 4 will present detailed demographics for all nine participants.
Instrumentation

The instrument containing the interview questions initially asked for the overall profile of the teacher. This included demographics of age, year received baccalaureate degree, degree received, certifications, years teaching in The Apple School for learners with ASD, years now teaching in public school in a classroom for learners with ASD, and if the private school was their first teaching position. The second part of the instrument addressed the organizational and motivational factors that led to the decision to leave The Apple School for the public sector. The 19 questions were open-ended to extract as much information as possible on the decision making process for each participant. There were no questions that could be answered with “yes” or “no.”

The Jury of Experts for this study reviewed the instrument to assess content validity. The Jury of Experts consisted of two approved private school masters-level principals of schools for children with ASD from the same northeastern state and one retired approved private school doctoral-prepared principal for children with disabilities also within the same northeastern state.

Once permission was obtained from The Apple School’s Board of Directors, the solicitation email was sent out to the leaver of The Apple School. As respondents agreed to participate to the study, a time was scheduled for an in-person or telephone interview depending on the subject’s preference. The location of the interview was the subject’s choice, but could not be at the school at which they were currently employed. The location must be conducive to audio recording of the interview (i.e., quiet enough to hear speaking clearly). Each interview was audio-taped with permission of the subject and later transcribed.

The questions (Appendix A) were based on the findings in the review of the literature on the variables that appeared to differentiate the factors public school special education teachers
identified as areas of discontent from the factors identified by private school special education teachers, namely the ESD, ESY, and economic status. Flowing from Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, the questions were designed to find the motivational dynamic that led to the move from private sector employment to public sector employment, while continuing to teach learners with ASD. An assumption made during the construction of this questionnaire was, as O’Connor and Yballe (2007) stated, “that in ordinary life, behavior is often multiply determined, that is, several needs can and do operate at once” (p. 740). The levels of needs were fluid in concert with the life experiences of each person. Maslow was very clear that an individual could be in the self-actualization level and then, due to a life situation, find themselves in the physiological needs level or safety needs level (Kenric, Griskevicius, Neuber, and Schaller, 2010).

### Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Applied to Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Question</th>
<th>Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs</th>
<th>Motivation Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. To what extent does ESY influence retention?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. How did mandatory ESY requirement impact your decision to leave private school?</td>
<td>Esteem Needs</td>
<td>Independence to control after class time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-Actualization Needs</td>
<td>Seeking personal growth and peak experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. If the public school has an ESY, what are the differences between the private</td>
<td>Love &amp; Belonging Needs</td>
<td>Enhanced appreciation of one’s knowledge, skill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>school and public school ESY?</td>
<td>Esteem Needs</td>
<td>Status related to experiences and skill in special education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-Actualization Needs</td>
<td>Realizing personal growth potential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. If the public school does not have an ESY, what are</td>
<td>Love &amp; Belonging Needs</td>
<td>Increased family time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the differences between the private school and public school ESY?</td>
<td>Esteem Needs</td>
<td>Independence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
<pre><code>                                                                               | Self-Actualization Needs   |                                                                                  |
</code></pre>
the benefits of not working an ESY program? | Self-Actualization Needs | Pursue free time activities.
---|---|---
D. If the public school does not have an ESY, what are the consequences of not working an ESY program? | Safety & Security Needs | Less financial compensation.
E. What are some recommendations you could make to the private school for improvement of the ESY program? | Esteem Needs, Cognitive Needs, Aesthetic Needs, Self-Actualization Needs | Increased autonomy, feedback, Provide paperwork time during school hours, Professional development.

### 2. To what extent do the school hours for teachers influence their retention?

| A. How did working additional hours preparing reports and materials impact your decision to leave the private school? | Physiological Needs, Safety & Security Needs, Love & Belonging Needs | Stressed and tired, Time away from family responsibilities, Sense of aloneness in writing reports.

| B. How did the additional hours worked providing Family Consultation services impact your decision to leave the private school? | Love & Belonging Needs, Esteem Needs, Cognitive Needs, Self-Actualization Needs | Team member value, Respected by family, administrators, Possessed knowledge and skills to participate actively, Reputation increase for professional skills, Decision making involvement.


| D. What are your current Physiological Needs | Long working day/year.
### E. What are some recommendations you could make to the private school for improvement of teacher hours?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Esteem Needs</td>
<td></td>
<td>Problem-solving inclusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-actualization Needs</td>
<td></td>
<td>Appreciation for potential growth and life experiences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3. To what extent does compensation influence retention?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Describe your main concerns regarding compensation.</th>
<th>Physiological Needs</th>
<th>Housing, food, clothing.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Safety &amp; Security Needs</td>
<td>Stability to pay bills, living expenses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Esteem Needs</td>
<td>Knowledge and skills valued.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B. Discuss the salary earned and the workload at the private school.</th>
<th>Love &amp; Belonging Needs</th>
<th>Colleagues in other schools compensated much better for less knowledge and skills.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Esteem Needs</td>
<td>Total compensation balance not commensurate with knowledge, skill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-actualization Needs</td>
<td>Unable to meet potential in personal growth.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C. Compare the salary earned and workload difference from the private school to the public school.</th>
<th>Love &amp; Belonging Needs</th>
<th>Belonging to a larger cohort of teachers with like pay.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Esteem Needs</td>
<td>Total compensation balance worth of knowledge, skill less in private school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-actualization Needs</td>
<td>Using knowledge and skills on larger student cohort with less severe disabilities in public school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D. What compensation attracted you to the public school?</th>
<th>Esteem Needs</th>
<th>Salary commensurate with colleagues salary with similar education, experience and skills.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-actualization Needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Benefits provide personal growth and ability to explore new adventures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal growth and ability to explore new adventures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**E. What are some recommendations you could make to the private school for improvement in teacher compensation?**

- **Esteem Needs**
  - Acknowledge value of work accomplished.
  - Showcase teacher skills that assisted learners’ progression.
  - Monetary incentive reward for work accomplished.

### 4. To what extent did the quality of autism intervention influence retention?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Compare the quality of services for individuals with autism you experienced in the private school versus the public school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Esteem Needs**
  - Value skill and experience in teaching learners with autism spectrum disorders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>What are some recommendations you could make to the private school for improvement in autism intervention?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Self-actualization Needs**
  - Acknowledge creative personal potential and continued “becoming”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>What incentive(s) caused you to leave the private school for the public school?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Esteem Needs**
  - Value of skills and experience.
  - Achievement of expertise in special education.
  - Increase level of autonomy and empowerment.
  - Prestige in teaching larger number of students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>What incentive(s) causes you to stay at the public school?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Self-actualization Needs**
  - Personal growth within general education setting.
  - Pride in achievements and potential.
  - Increased responsibility and interaction with others.
Data Collection

An interview protocol was used to obtain the data for this study. The researcher was granted permission by all nine participants to audio-tape the interviews. Each interview was then transcribed.

Data Analysis

Upon completion of the nine interviews, qualitative analysis was conducted utilizing an inductive approach. Transcripts from all interviews were read thoroughly. Open coding was conducted by reviewing the interview responses line-by-line in order to break the responses down into thematic codes to better interpret them. The response of each participant was then analyzed and coded, based on categorical responses taken from the interviews and categorized into themes. Explanations were identified to support the thematic data from each respondent. Responses were organized by each research question and then categorized by content and the appropriate level according to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs presented in the following table form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME</th>
<th>EXPLANATION</th>
<th>CONTENT CODE</th>
<th>MASLOW HIERARCHY OF NEEDS CODE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>Salary; Stipend; Health Benefits; Tuition Reimbursement; Means to Increase</td>
<td>COMP</td>
<td>SAF-SECN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule</td>
<td>Work Hours; Work Week</td>
<td>SCH</td>
<td>SAF-SECN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload</td>
<td>Paperwork; Timelines</td>
<td>WKLD</td>
<td>PHYSION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>Enjoyed Working; Personal Satisfaction; Great Experience</td>
<td>JSAT</td>
<td>L-BN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Choice; Optional; Less Supervision</td>
<td>IND</td>
<td>ESTMN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>Overwhelmed; Exhausting; Tough; Strain on you</td>
<td>STR</td>
<td>PHYSION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>More relaxed; Less Strict; Wild West Like; Low Keyed; Fun Activities</td>
<td>STRUC</td>
<td>L-BN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All responses were analyzed for themes, both in content and level of need, and assigned a code. From this framework of themes, the data was analyzed and the findings are reported in Chapter 4.

**Internal Review Board**

The researcher submitted an application to Seton Hall University’s Internal Review Board for review and approval before proceeding with the study. Approval was granted.

**Ethical Considerations**

The researcher needed to be open to hearing others’ experiences and opinions by putting personal biases aside. Phenomenological research involves collecting privileged information from people, about people (Punch, 2005) and, therefore, ethical considerations must be managed at all times. The following safeguards were used to protect the subjects:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flexibility</th>
<th>Timeframe; Own Discretion; Personal Time</th>
<th>FLEX</th>
<th>ESTMN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Support</td>
<td>Advisement; Resources; Left to own devices; Under Staffed</td>
<td>ADMS</td>
<td>L-BN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth Potential</td>
<td>Years of Experience; Potential for Growth; Move Up; Room to Grow</td>
<td>GROWP</td>
<td>SAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-Life Balance</td>
<td>Family Time; Personal Element; For My Family</td>
<td>WKLF</td>
<td>SAF-SECN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commute</td>
<td>Distance to Work</td>
<td>COM</td>
<td>SAF-SECN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracts</td>
<td>Separate Contracts School Year and Summer Program</td>
<td>SPC</td>
<td>SAF-SECN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Training and Development</td>
<td>Training Programs; Training I’d Take All My Life; Learned More Than I Can Imagine; Helped Me So Much In My Career; Good To Have On My Resume</td>
<td>PROFD</td>
<td>COGN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>SEC</td>
<td>SAF-SECN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interventions</td>
<td>Model For Other Schools; Best of the Best; Ongoing Research</td>
<td>INTERV</td>
<td>SAN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Permission to conduct this research utilizing past-employed certified special education teachers between 2012 and 2015 was obtained from The Apple School’s Board of Directors.

• Assurance was given to the Board of Directors of The Apple School that the information and insight gained in this study would be shared with them.

• The teachers appropriate for inclusion in this research were leavers no longer employed at The Apple School nor supervised by the researcher.

• An email of solicitation was emailed to all former certified teachers of The Apple School who left for a public sector autism classroom between 2012 and 2015. The email explained the purpose of the study and assured confidentiality of The Apple School, the public school in which they were now employed, and the special education teacher responses, along with a request to schedule a voluntary interview based on an open-ended questionnaire.

• Subjects who responded to the letter of solicitation were asked to review and sign an informed consent letter. The informed consent letter contained two signature areas, one for interview consent with audio-recording of the interview and one for interview consent without audio-recording of the interview. The subject could sign the area with which she was most comfortable.

• Once the informed consent letter was signed by the subject and received by the researcher, the interview was conducted.

• The interview concluded either after the last question, or in the event the subject discontinued her consent.
• No identifying data of the subject was recorded, so that no one would ever be able to link the responses.

• Subjects were assured their names, present employment schools or positions, years teaching at The Apple School, or years terminating employment would not be disclosed.

• To maintain confidentiality, all recordings and notes were stored electronically on a USB memory key and kept in a locked, secure drawer to be saved for 3 years after the study is completed.

• All responses were kept confidential.

• Each respondent was provided a code (numbers 1 through 10) in place of identifying information.

• Confidentiality was guaranteed to the subjects, but not anonymity simply because the interviews were conducted in person by the researcher.

Summary

In summary, Chapter 3 presented the methodology and the procedures utilized in the collection of the data, and in addressing the participant responses to the research questions.

Discussion topics included the purpose of the research, the method and process in obtaining the population to be studied, the population of the study participants, the instrument developed for this research, the research questions and interview questions as supported by Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Theory, the thematic coding of relevant ideas in the interview text (which allowed the researcher to identify how the respondent felt or thought about the research questions), the data analysis procedure, and the ethical considerations.
Chapter IV: Findings

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings obtained from the interviews conducted to investigate the specific factors that motivated certified special educators who have taught in a private school for learners with ASD in a northeastern state of the United States to move to the public school sector in the same state and continue to teach learners with ASD. The multiple dimensions of the nine certified special education teacher responses to the research questions will be presented in this chapter. Included in this chapter is following:

1. Demographic data;
2. Content analysis of responses to each question’s sub-question; and
3. Level of need interpreted and aligned with Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.

Demographic Data

Former Teacher Age Demographic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents’ average age was 31.

Former Teacher Year B.S. Degree Received

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years With B.S. Degree</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>9 years</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>9 years</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>17 years</td>
<td>6 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents’ average years since B.S. degree was awarded was 7.8 Years.

Degree Received

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B.S. Degree Received</td>
<td>Health Sciences</td>
<td>Inclusive Education</td>
<td>Integrated Elementary Education and Special Education</td>
<td>Fine Arts Education</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>History</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Seven respondents each have a B.S. degree in a different discipline. Two respondents hold a B.S. in History.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-6; Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All nine respondents held certifications in New Jersey, with one also certified in New York. Seven respondents held certifications for Students with Disabilities. Two held certifications as Teachers of the Handicapped. This certification type is no longer available, but it has been placed under the umbrella of a Students with Disabilities certification. Seven respondents were certified for K-6; two respondents were additionally certified for P-3. Two respondents were also BCBA (Board Certified Behavior Analysts) certified.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Began Teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Area of Expertise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area of Teaching Expertise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nine respondents’ teaching expertise was in special education, specifically autism.

**Research Questions Response Data**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the specific factors that motivate certified special educators who have taught in one of the private schools for learners with ASD to leave the private school to continue teaching learners with ASD in the public school sector in a
northeastern state of the United States. Specifically, the questions asked to identify four major areas included the following:

1. To what extent did the Extended School Year (ESY) influence their retention?
2. To what extent did the school hours for teachers influence their retention?
3. To what extent did compensation influence their retention?
4. To what extent did the quality of autism intervention services influence their retention?

These four questions were designed from an extensive review of the literature on retention and attrition among both general education teachers and special education teachers and Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Theory. Subset questions to each of these four overriding questions were designed to enhance the depth of the respondents’ answers. The methodology—Chapter 3—presented the research questions as they align with Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. Each question, with the coded respondents’ discussion, was presented.

Every effort was made to maintain the strict confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents. In any response that identifies the respondents’ public school, substitute wording has been inserted and identified by brackets [ ]. If the name of the private school is given, its name will be replaced with [The Apple School]. A total of nine interviews were conducted over a three-week period. Responses varied from lengthy to quite brief.

**QUESTION 1: To what extent does Extended School Year (ESY) influence retention?**

**Sub-question A: How did the mandatory ESY requirement impact your decision to leave the private school?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MANDATORY ESY IMPACTED DECISION TO LEAVE</th>
<th>MANDATORY ESY DID NOT IMPACT DECISION TO LEAVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Responder #1: The mandatory ESY really did not have an impact of why I chose to leave [The Apple School], because I've taught ESY before, and I actually enjoy working over the summer. I like the frequent breaks throughout the school year, and working in a private school, and even working in the summer. It's a good schedule for me personally, as well as it also really benefits the student. All-in-all, it really didn't impact my decision to leave.

Responder #2: I think the fact that the hours remain the same. The extended school year program that I have now is only nine to one and I think it's a little bit shorter. It's only five or six weeks. I think even that, where I am now, is even longer than what other public schools do. We even do more than that. I think that probably was just the hours.

Responder #3: Okay. I don't think it was—Yeah. It really honestly didn't because all my experiences prior to this position have been in private school. So I'm used to going year around, so it was like benefit that they weren't in school for 12 months. So it wasn't really like a major impact in the decision.

Responder #4: Private school, when you hear about extended school year like in college you're like, okay, well it's more short term. Being in a private school setting, you don't realize, oh okay, your work now is a twelve-month period versus a ten-month period like in a public school. You're like, okay, as a teacher you always have the mentality, oh my summers, I have my summers off. Then when you're like, I was like, oh okay, all right, I'll work. The training, oh the training is mostly August, okay. Extended school year is almost in July, full day, when you hear, oh, my ESY is only three days a week and half a day. As a teacher, you're like, oh okay, you can mentally plan yourself for that almost. Seeing that, I was like, oh okay. Do I need my summers off or do I have the break that I have, that I want, that I anticipated on having? Versus like, where now I didn't plan on working full days in the summer as a teacher and hoping to make more money on top of the salary I had and can't do it but you already have a set salary. All of those factors kind of came to account once you work all school year and you look forward to that break, and then still having the same group of students through the extended year already, and then continuing again with September kind of, you know, puts strain on you. As a teacher, you're like, oh so do I see the growth, because I was with them all like last year and in the summer and continuing on. Like, am I really making a difference, did I impact them in that way? It kind of all jumbles almost, so you don't . . . you feel like you're constantly going, and going, and going, and you're like, where is the end? Then September comes right away, and between the training and then September and okay, then back to the swing of things and before you know it, it's back to school night again and back to this.

Definitely, there was just a continuation of everything, and you don't know, kind of, when, like okay, you're going to pause, and then okay, have a break. In a public school setting, now you get the difference. You work for only a ten-month salary, and then you have like, okay, then you have the two months to do whatever that you can do in a summer. Do you want to do ESY? You don't have to do ESY. Do you want to do ESY? You get those options, where in a private school you're like, this is it, this is a twelve-month period, it's part of your contract, you have to do it. That's where, like, okay, is this where I want to be? It's a great experience, obviously. I've learned more than I can imagine. Coming, like I'm thinking back now, like wow—that helped me so much in my career.
That training that I had for those two weeks that we get when we're working here, that training I'd take with me all my life.

I remember back what I learned and stuff, and like wow, and I use that through my training. It's so important, it's understandable why we meet in this setting, in this class in school. In public school, you don't get that support. I understand why it's important, but when you're a teacher, it is exhausting. Ten months, like oh my god, six months, and sometimes like, okay, I'm ready for spring break or something, or my Christmas break. You feel it and, like, you understand why you need to do it, almost.

Responder #5: It didn't directly impact it [my decision]. But then, when I had the opportunity to be somewhere where that was an option, then I started thinking about it. Yes. As well as the fact that, there, your salary was based on those 12 months, and then when I had the option of going somewhere where if you chose to do the ESY, it was extra.

Responder #6: I don't think that influenced my leaving, because I think we had enough time off that it didn't affect my decision to leave.

Responder #7: Honestly, it didn't impact my decision much at all. Maybe the hours could've . . . If the hours were different I would've maybe been a little more . . . If the hours were different I guess, it would've been harder to leave [The Apple School]. The hours definitely impacted it a tiny bit but honestly the school year, I work in the summer anyway, so it had really no effect besides I wish the hours were a little bit shorter.

Responder #8: Okay, I can just say, it wasn't the full reason why I left. Should I explain that? Okay, the extended school year at the private school did not impact my decision to leave; however, there are some changes and differences that I do find.

Responder #9: At the time, it didn't impact it, but when I look back now it definitely did because there have been years where I've chosen here in the public school not to apply for the extended school year so I've had lost the whole entire summer. So it's a little easier on the public school because it's not a full day, it's only a half day, so I didn't get out until 12:30.

As reported by frequency distribution, two out of nine respondents stated the mandatory ESY impacted their decision to leave while seven out of nine respondents reported that the mandatory extended school year did not impact their decision to leave the private school. Seven respondents stated that mandatory ESY did not impact their decision to leave the private school. Two of the seven respondents for whom ESY did not impact their decision to leave elaborated that, while it did not impact their decision at that time, once they experienced the extended school year at the public school, they appreciated what the public school ESY had to offer.
Responder #4 described, at length, the differences between the private school ESY and the public school ESY without actually stating ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to whether the ESY influenced her decision to move. With deliberation and analysis, it was determined that the private school ESY program did, indeed, influence her decision to move to the public school. Buried in her dialogue was the sentence: “That's where, like, okay, is this where I want to be?”

Three other respondents gave lengthy details in their responses. Responder #5 stated, “It didn’t directly impact it. … then I started thinking about it.” At the time of her move to the public sector, however, it did not impact her decision to leave The Apple School. Responder #7 also stated, “Honestly, it didn’t impact my decision much at all.” She continued, “The hours definitely impacted it a tiny bit but … had really no effect besides I wish the hours were a little bit shorter.” Responder #9 stated, “At the time it didn’t impact it, but when I look back now it definitely did…” This respondent was categorized as “not impacting her decision” at the time she left. The themes the respondents seemed to present were centered on dissatisfaction with their hours, days, and insufficient compensation for their participation in The Apple School ESY program.

**Sub-question B: If the public school has an ESY, what are the differences between the private school ESY and the public school ESY?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIFFERENCES IN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SCHOOL ESY</th>
<th>NO DIFFERENCES IN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SCHOOL ESY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responder #1: There are differences between the public school and [The Apple School]. Public schools do offer a stipend for working an extended school year, and also they only offer it for one month. Also, it’s only four hours a day. As far as I know, at [The Apple School], there’s no extra income for it. It’s a full day, and it lasts at least six weeks.

Responder #2: I don’t think so, no. Here, definitely, I think the requirements remain the same with the teachers. In the public school, it's a little more lax over the summer. I don't think that that's necessarily a fault. I don't think that's something that would make me leave here because you're doing it for the kids.
Responder #3: We go from June 24th to July 24th. Public school ESY is way understaffed. It's hard to ... There's no administrators. There's a principal, but that's about it. I had to fight to have a nurse there, because one of my students has seizures. So you're kind of left to your own devices. Whereas, here, you're operating as you would in the normal school year. Like, it definitely feels less structured . . . a more Wild West, you know?

Interviewer: Okay. Are the hours the same as a school day? Are they shorter?

Responder #3: They're the same except Friday's are half days. It's for the staff to kind of meet with the BCA and the administrators and stuff, and catch up, kind of.

Responder #4: You have to apply for it, versus it's automatic [and] you have to do it. If I chose not to do it, then I just didn't apply for it, I don't get the extra salary part. It's a stipend, yeah. That goes on, too, if you do summer school teaching. It's only four days a week, half a day, versus a full day all day every day of the week for the whole month. It's only three weeks versus, yeah, three weeks, three and a half to four weeks, actually. So three and a half to four weeks versus the full six weeks of summer; so it's a big difference. There's my salary on top of the stipend I'm already getting, so it played a factor. I'm like, okay, so then I had Fridays off, so it was only four days a week, and I'm out by noon every day . . .

Responder #5: It's just July, so I think it runs for about three and a half weeks. It's optional, but for the most part, everybody does it. It is optional. It's a choice. It's half day, so it runs for 3 hours. I'm doing 7:30 to 12:30, and then you get paid hourly. It's structured the same— we do our trials, but it is a little bit more low key. In fact, once a week, we go on a trip to the water park or we do a couple more fun activities than we would typically do during the school year. It's a little bit more relaxed than the regular school. We do a couple more art projects than we typically would or play more games than we typically would, but we still do run our daily program.

Responder #6: The public school ESY is not mandatory, although being in the ADA program, unless we have a pretty good excuse or there's not enough kids, we pretty much have to, like an unspoken thing. The extended school year, in my school, is only Monday to Thursday, and I believe it's four hours a day. From my experience, it's much more like a camp. It's not as strict programming-wise. It's not required one-to-one. I had much less to do than I do during the regular school year because it's only who signs up to get into the program. It's much more laid back. A lot of leisure activities, like more camp-style things that go on in my school. It's a separate contract and we are paid hourly for the extended school year.

Responder #7: I think it's important to keep structure going throughout the year, even in the summer. I do think there is a little more flexibility in the summer in the public school. There's some more field trips. It's a little more about having fun and social skills, but we still do our full day academics. It's a half day, actually. We still do ABA therapy throughout the day and Discrete Trial, just shorter, and it's a little more fun.

Interviewer: Do you know how many weeks it is? Is it a half day; is it five days a week?
Responder #7: Yes, and it's a thirty day program. No, honestly, everything else is pretty much the same.

Interviewer: How about pay? Do you get a stipend, is it part of your contract like at the private school?

Responder #7: No. I get paid on a ten month cycle, so, like, the . . . I guess a stipend you'd call it.

Interviewer: Is it hourly?

Responder #7: Yes. We have to fill out a different form. It's your choice but they . . . I mean, it's a good idea to do it.

Responder #8: At the private school, it was a required, Monday to Friday, full day, which was, I believe, an 8:30 sign in and a 4:15 sign out. Here at the public school, it is, you can request to be an extended school year teacher. An extended school year teacher is not mandated in my district. It's optional and it's also an additional pay. They pay hourly per diem. The hours are also an 8:30, which is a half an hour later than our typical school day, it's an 8:30 to about 12:00 school day, Monday to Friday.

Responder #9: Shorter hours, and it's only for the month of July. It's only one month long. It's optional, yes. So it's not included in your contract.

Interviewer: Is it a stipend or is it hourly? How do they pay you if you do choose to do it?

Responder #9: It's hourly. It's a little bit more laid back, I would think, in the public school than it is in the private school because it's more maintenance. You're not going into something new, teaching them something new.

As reported by frequency distribution, eight out of nine respondents stated that there were differences between the private school and public school ESY programs, while one out of nine respondents said there were no differences. Upon elaboration, the responses suggested several themes:

1. The ESY at the private school is within the annual salary, and there is no additional compensation. The public school ESY offers extra compensation, usually in the form of a stipend or hourly pay.

2. The ESY at the private school is longer than the ESY at the public school. While the private school ESY is a six week, thirty day program, some of the public school ESY
programs vary. Examples provided during the interviews mentioned one-month ESY programs with shorter hours and a reduced number of days per week.

3. The ESY at the private school is more structured than the ESY at the public school.

Sub-question C: If the public school does not have an ESY, what are benefits to not having to work an ESY program?

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<tr>
<th>PUBLIC SCHOOL DOES NOT HAVE ESY PROGRAM</th>
<th>BENEFITS TO NOT HAVING ESY PROGRAM</th>
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No respondent discussion. All of the public schools’ respondents were employed at a school that offered an ESY program.

Sub-question D: If the public school does not have an ESY, what are the consequences to not having to work an ESY program?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUBLIC SCHOOL DOES NOT HAVE ESY PROGRAM</th>
<th>CONSEQUENCES TO NO ESY PROGRAM</th>
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No respondent discussion. All of the public schools’ respondents were employed at a school that offered an ESY program.

Sub-question E: What are some recommendations you could make to the private school for improvement of the ESY program?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOMMENDATION FOR IMPROVEMENT OF ESY PROGRAM IN THE PRIVATE SCHOOL</th>
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<td>COMPENSATION/STIPEND</td>
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Responder #1: If the private school offered a little bit more compensation, or even hourly, for ESY, for teaching ESY, and I also think that power to have the half a day, it would be much more beneficial to the staff. Summer is the time when a lot of people, most people, take vacation and they want to spend time with their families, or friends, that they didn’t have during the year. Those would be my recommendations.

Responder #2: Probably just to shorten the hours, or even do, I don't know, four days a week.

Responder #3: Jeez. I don't know because, like I said, it was never really like a major issue for me because I was so used to it. I guess maybe even . . . I don't know if it's even feasible to
have occasional half days. Like the early release on Friday for us is really nice because it kind of gives us a chance . . . I mean, I always wind up staying anyway, but it gives us a chance to catch up on paperwork and then, if you have something, if you want to go away for a weekend, since it is the summer, you have that little half day to go and get a head start.

Responder #4: I would say, it's hard for summer because a lot of people want to get things done in the summer. Just, maybe, the amount of hours it requires, or maybe the amount of, almost, would be like activities. You know, make you feel like more, like I would try to do one day, we go for a walk. Like, extended, you know, do outside activities, or, like, go to more community outings during that time: make it not as school demand, demand, demand, almost, and have it almost, more lenient. But, again, you understand the learning is important, because want to continue the learning. In summertime, the teachers get tired, students get tired, you know; doing the same thing over and over again becomes strenuous. Things like hours and how many days per week make a big factor as a teacher because, you're like, okay back to, like, having a nine to five all year. When you think of it as a teacher like, oh, I have my summers off, like no, I don't have my summers off: I'm not that kind of teacher. I have to work twelve months out of the year. People are like, “Oh, why are you teaching there? As a teacher, don't you want your summers off?” You know, it's a different environment, so the stereotypical teacher has summers off. And so, when I say, “Oh, I do extended school year, I do summer school,” they're like, “Oh really, why?” I'm, like, “Well it's, you know, with my students” and if it's my students in a public school, but here you have no choice. It's a twelve month contract. I think, for the extended school year, it should be almost an option as a teacher, so your salary . . . I do prefer that how I have, like, my ten month salary and then I get my stipend for the extended school year. I'm willing to be there; I want to be. You have the teachers that want to be there versus the teachers that are forced to be there. Having that like, okay, I know I want to be there and they want me to be there too, they are willing to have me there and they are willing to compensate me for my time for my teaching almost. It's helpful.

Responder #5: Yeah, I would say maybe to do more field trips. Make it a little bit more low key than the typical school year. I just feel like it's nice to just have that little bit of break. Not a break, but, like, more of a relaxed summer feeling. And a chance to make it more . . . it is nice to have the shorter hours. I don't know, but maybe on Friday leave a little early. Make fun Friday either something like that, where it gives you something to look forward to and get you through the week . . . We might play more games, but we're still teaching social skills and stuff like that. But it is more like doing something a little different than you're doing the other ten months of the year. But I think it makes a difference just knowing duty is over, now we can relax a little and have more fun. And not just be so bombarded with everyday stressors. Just making maybe more salary, but I don't know if you guys can do that. It definitely helps to just know that I'm going to make a little bit extra money on top of it, so, even though my salary is this for the year, if I opt to do the Extended School Year, I have an opportunity to make more money. Money is very important, especially when you're having a family.

Responder #6: I think, without venturing too far in the direction of where my school is, where it's much more camp-like, I would say including more activities like that for the kids to . . . Like
going out and playing in the sprinkler for a little while instead of gym one day a week or something like that. Some more . . . a planned trip somewhere. Something maybe a little bit different that was more like giving them a break, almost, without giving them a break. I think maybe a few things like that would make it seem a little bit more fun in the summer. The only thing I think that people . . . Maybe if the hours were changed to, say, you still had to obviously take of all of your responsibilities, but maybe as long as you did that, you didn't have to stay until four or five or 4:30 or something, on Friday, where you were able to leave earlier because a lot of people like to do things in the summer. I think something where it gave them more time, the day shorter, or like Fridays, you’re always getting out at three o'clock or something like that. I just think that an extended school year obviously is really important and being out of it, I realized how important or good an extended school year could be. If it is in the way that the kids aren't doing as much, the children would have lost. That's why I think a lot of things need to stay the same in the extended school year. If the kids benefit, then everyone benefits in September.

Responder #7: I think probably just the hours. Summertime, I think, is a time for everybody to relax and enjoy a little bit and I wish that maybe instead of going the full day until 2:45 and having teachers staying until 4:15, it could've just been a little bit less. I like the structure. Honestly, I wish we had a little more structure. That, I wouldn't change; just the hours. I never complained about the extended school year. I liked it. I liked working in the summer because I really can't sit still very long. I do like the extended school year program anyway. I'll always do it, even if it's volunteer.

Responder #8: I would say, maybe, a little less time in the summer, fewer days. I would mainly make it, I know here in summer school, the summer ESY program, we follow weekly themes. It's a little bit more open to the teachers, a little bit lighter, but we're still implementing ABA during that time; it’s just a little less strict in the summer. I think that's something that draws a lot of teachers to want to do the summer school. I think those were the two things that I saw a major difference and impacted me for wanting to do summer program here.

Responder #9: For the private school? I don’t know. It's a little bit more, it's harder because I would say it's more structured. Way more structured in the private school. Maybe making it shorter hours. Maybe making it just the month of July. I don’t know.

As shown in the frequency distribution, three out of nine respondents stated that their recommendations for the improvement of the private school’s ESY were to provide additional compensation. Two of the nine respondents felt that the private school’s ESY could be improved by being less structured, with more field trips and less school work. Four respondents recommended more flexible teacher hours. Five out of the nine respondents reported that an additional recommendation would be to decrease the number of school days in the private
school’s ESY, while eight of the nine respondents recommended decreasing the number of school hours during the ESY program.

**QUESTION 2:** To what extent do the school hours for teachers influence their retention?  
Sub-question A: How did working additional hours preparing reports and materials impact your decision to leave the private school?

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<tr>
<th>SCHOOL HOURS IMPACTED DECISION TO LEAVE PRIVATE SCHOOL</th>
<th>SCHOOL HOURS DID NOT IMPACT DECISION TO LEAVE PRIVATE SCHOOL</th>
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Responder #1: The hours were . . . it was a good thing. It was beneficial to have those extended hours, because it was already built into a work day. However, the hours could have been pushed back a little. 7:30 could have been . . . 7:30 to 3:30, would have been a better time spot for us to be there, for me to be there, just because I had no kids, and I had to do things around the house, and I had a family. That’s really where an hour could be paid. I don’t think the amount of hours was a problem, or an issue, I just think exactly when I was required to be there, and when I had to leave was the least benefited.

Responder #2: I definitely think I always had to stay past the 4:15 or get here before 8:30, which I still do at my current job, too. I think that maybe the amount of the paperwork that was required compared to a public school had a lot to do with it. I don’t want to say that there is . . . that’s hard because I don’t really want to say that there’s that much more paperwork here than there is. It’s just a different . . . I don’t know. Maybe it’s not as strict, like, when the things have to get done. Then again, I really respect and appreciate everything that I’ve learned and done here because it got me to where I am, so I don’t know. It’s hard to say. I think coming down, basically, moving jobs, it was just because of the stress of having to have all the paperwork done.

Responder #3: I almost feel like I didn’t have enough time here. Like, I was always staying past 4:30, and I guess that could be own fault since I was kind of a new teacher, so time management, I hadn’t really like mastered that yet. I think that there was a lot of paperwork here. I felt, like, I was always behind. I mean, honestly, there’s a lot of resources; you can ask for help, but I felt like I just had, like, a stack. Leaving, I had to just cut myself off and go home, because I felt like I still had so much to do. So that was . . . yeah. That was something with that.

Responder #4: Well, the workload was definitely high working here, but, again, it’s important for the type of school that it is. My workload now—I’m only contracted to work until 3:15. I start at 8:20 to 3:15. It’s obviously a big change, like when, in your contract, you have to be here until 4:30 and, you know, those days are longer. It benefits me, say I have a doctor’s appointment or something at 3:30. I’m willing, I’m able to leave right away, where working in a private school, your contract is, like, 4:30. It’s a pretty long day, 8:30 to 4:30, and then plus hours, plus making sure your materials are done for the day and
everything is up to date and what you're teaching the next day, planning for what's ahead and group lessons and all that fun stuff. It became a very long day after dealing with a long day working with the students, then having another long portion of after school hours. You know, it was tough.

Responder #5: It's interesting because when I left the private school, I didn't even know how it would be like going to a public school. I didn't know the workload was going to be the same. I kind of went into it blind-sided. They didn't really do anything different there. When I think about it and compare, it is different. But that wasn't something that was impacting my decision to leave at the time. I wasn't like, oh my goodness, the workload here is too much. I need to go find a public school job. That's not where I was coming from, but once I was in the public school, it is different. And comparing it . . . that's something I would compare it to.

Responder #6: I think that did have an impact on my decision, just because, at least in my experience, I felt like, no matter what, I was going home and getting the work done, but the fact that we had to be there to complete it, especially once we were able to access things online, I didn't think was necessary. I was still getting the work done, but I would much rather have been going home at three o'clock and getting the work done maybe later in the night that I was going to take care of anyway, rather than staying, being required to stay at school for a certain amount of time to complete that, those responsibilities. As long as the responsibilities were being completed, I didn't see a need to be there, beside the training portion.

Responder #7: At the time, honestly, the hours and the workload seemed like a lot, but now, not having that time, I wish I had a little bit more. I can stay as long as I want, but having to work until 4:15 and making yourself stay those extra hours, you have more time to do things and I liked that a little bit. At the time, I didn't think I did, but I do miss it sometimes now.

Responder #8: The workload was heavy. It was very heavy in the private school. I wouldn't say it completely, not as heavy in the public school. It's just that it's a different type of work. At a private school, you could take work home with you, but I still feel that I still take work home with me in the public school. When I was there, it was still paper and pencil. I know now you guys have transitioned to more of an iPad and paperless. Here in the public school, I had that opportunity to leave at an earlier time if I need to. It's nice if I need certain days to leave early, I can. I can always pick up . . . In the private school, I can come early in the morning to get work done.

Responder #9: I would have to say, though, I probably put in the same amount of hours in the public school now with all the amount of paperwork that I have to do, so that really didn't impact me at all.

As found by the frequency distribution, seven out of nine respondents stated that the school hours impacted their decision to leave the private school, while two out of nine
respondents said that the school hours did not impact their decision to leave. Upon elaboration, the responses revealed the theme that the amount of paperwork to be completed did not enable teachers to leave on time each day and required much work to be taken home or teachers to stay past their contracted hours.

**Sub-question B: Did the additional hours worked providing Family Consultation services impact your decision to leave the private school?**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>FAMILY CONSULTATION SERVICES IMPACTED DECISION TO LEAVE PRIVATE SCHOOL</th>
<th>FAMILY CONSULTATION SERVICES DID NOT IMPACT DECISION TO LEAVE PRIVATE SCHOOL</th>
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Responder #1: It didn’t at all.

Responder #2: It didn’t. In my current job, I’m still required to offer it once a month, and it’s an hour or more. It’s up to the teacher’s discretion when we go.

Responder #3: I actually didn't wind up doing it, because you were going to re-evaluate them in August, and then place in August, but I wound up leaving. I mean, I'm used to doing home programming anyway, so it really wouldn't have been much different for me. It's just that it would be mandatory instead of something that I just do for extra money.

Responder #4: It didn't, actually, because the only consultation was, like, you could have left during your contractual hours, so it didn't really bother me too much. I was already on my way home, so that didn't play a factor. I didn't mind family consultation.

Responder #5: Once again, it’s the same thing. I wasn’t at a time that family consultation made me say I gotta get out of here and look for a new job. When I did have my job interview and that wasn’t a requirement, that was a nice thing to just have to not do in my work description. It is, to be honest, a very nice option. We still do keep in touch with the parents. We have family clinics and stuff like that. It's nice to have one less responsibility. I was never like, Oh I can't do this anymore, I need find another job, but when the opportunity was suggested to me, and that wasn't a requirement, it might of led me in that direction.

Responder #6: I think that also is a big commitment. I think that it did impact it a little bit because that is a good amount of time that, A) you’re taken away from the responsibilities that you have in terms of graphing and data to go to the house once a week. Also, I feel like it depends what case you get, because that really affects it. If you just get stuck with somebody who lives far away, then you could potentially be sitting in traffic for another hour because you have to go there once a week. I know how important it is to the families, but I think it's a lot of extra commitment.
Responder #7: None. Again, at the time, I wished there was more of a compensation for going out of your way and driving wherever you had to drive, past the hours of school to be there. It was all under one contract. We don't have any family compensation hours at the school, so that's something I think is such a pro to being in a private school. That didn't really affect my decision at all.

Responder #8: The consulting hours . . . the parents, in my experience, were pretty flexible, and they worked with my schedule as well. However, I did have an experience where it needed to be later in the evening, so that kind of left me with time waiting in between from my work day to go to the family's house. I think that was my only experience that kind of impacted me.

Responder #9: That did impact it just because, sometimes, when you do have kids, that extra day that you had to put in was a little bit harder, depending on where the family lived, were the hours that they needed you to go to it. So, it did impact it a little bit.

As found by frequency distribution, three out of nine respondents stated that providing family consultation services impacted their decision to leave the private school while six out of nine respondents said that providing family consultation services did not impact their decision to leave. Upon elaboration, the responses resulted in the theme that the amount of hours required providing family consultation services lengthened the workday even more, especially when teachers are waiting around for evening visits.

**Sub-question C: How did attending school fundraising events after school hours impact your decision to leave the private school?**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTENDING SCHOOL FUNDRAISING EVENTS AFTER SCHOOL HOURS IMPACTED DECISION TO LEAVE</th>
<th>ATTENDING SCHOOL FUNDRAISING EVENTS AFTER SCHOOL HOURS DID NOT IMPACT DECISION TO LEAVE</th>
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Responder #1: My decision wasn't impacted from the fund raiser or the school activities after school.

Responder #2: It didn’t, no.

Responder #3: That didn’t really impact it. I don’t mind doing that.

Responder #4: That didn't really impact me, either, because fundraising, if it was an event, you weren't forced to go. If I couldn't attend, I couldn't attend. As a teacher, you want to be there, you want to show your face, you want to support your school. I loved it here, I really did,
but just, for me, it was just I wanted to see where I could go as a teacher. I’m sure more questions about that but, so, fundraising had . . . I love the families here, I loved participating in Respite Night, it was very enjoyable. I love Respite Night. You're so appreciated, too. I didn't mind that at all.

Responder #5: No.

Responder #6: I don't think that had an effect. I always wanted to volunteer and do anything that I could for the school. I don't even remember anything being super mandatory, but I always wanted to go anyway. That didn't make me not want to.

Responder #7: No. I liked being involved in all of that. I still do that now for the school I'm at. Sometimes, it felt a little forceful when schools, "You have to do this. You have to do that," but in the long run there aren't enough people to volunteer so, sometimes, you have to make them. I actually told my principal we should do more incentives for staff to be a part of those things because not many people volunteer in the public school.

Responder #8: It didn’t impact me in a negative way. I would say it's after school and all fundraising, for the most part, is beneficial to me.

Responder #9: No, that didn’t impact it at all.

As found by frequency distribution, zero out of the nine respondents stated that attending school fundraising events after school hours impacted their decision to leave the private school.

Sub-question D: What are your current hours?

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<th>CURRENT WORKING HOURS IN PUBLIC SCHOOL</th>
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Responder #1: 8:00 to 3:30.

Responder #2: 8:25 to 3:30

Responder #3: 8:10 to 3:20. Then there’s staff meetings one Monday a month, and you’re there until four.

Responder #4: 8:20 to 3:15. It's obviously a big change, like when, in your contract, you have to be here until 4:30 and, you know, those days are longer. It benefits me if, say, I have a doctor's appointment or something at 3:30. I'm willing, I'm able to leave right away, where working in a private school your contract is, like, 4:30. It's a pretty long day: 8:30 to 4:30.
and then plus hours, plus making sure your materials are done for the day and everything is up to date and what you're teaching the next day, planning for what's ahead and group lessons and all that fun stuff. It became a very long day after dealing with a long day working with the students, then having another long portion after school hours. You know, it was tough.

Responder #5: 7:55 to 2:45.

Responder #6: 8:15 I have to sign in, which is only five minutes before the children arrive, to 2:52. My classroom, at least, leaves at 2:30. That’s just because of our program, so we’re not leaving in the rush hour when everybody is leaving. Then we’re required for the faculty meeting once a month, which is an extra hour. I think that’s it. Oh, and we are required for a half an hour tutoring once a week, to offer it, but if you don’t have any sign ups, one sign up, then you don’t have to do it.

Responder #7: 8:25 until 3:15.

Responder #8: They are, sign in is at 8:00 am until 3:00. Once a week, we have to stay, on Wednesdays, we stay until 3:30pm

Interviewer: Is that for a staff meeting?

Responder #8: Yes.

Responder #9: 8:30 to 3:20. Not a huge decision. I mean, 3:20 is good because sometimes I can get out of here if I have to get my kid from school, so it does make a little bit of a difference, but most days I am here until 4 o’clock either way.

As found by frequency distribution, all nine respondents were contracted for fewer hours than they worked at The Apple School, at which their contracted hours were 8:30 to 4:15.

Sub-question E: What are some recommendations you could make to the private school for improvement of teacher hours?

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<tr>
<th>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF TEACHER HOURS</th>
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<tr>
<td>SHORTEN WORKING HOURS</td>
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Responder #1: Like I said before, I think it’s not necessarily the amount of hours that we work. It’s the time you had to be at work, and the time you had to leave, were set. That would be my only recommendation.
Responder #2: It didn't bother me that much, I don't think. It was hard to get the work done, but while I was here, I didn't mind the hours. Now, looking back on it and knowing that I can leave at 3:00, 3:30. Now it, but . . . Well, when I was here, it didn't bother me.

Responder #3: I mean, I don't think the hours are that bad because of the amount of work you had . . . I mean, if you felt like you were done quick enough, being able to leave early might be beneficial for some of them. I feel like shortening the year just wouldn't be possible because of how much paperwork we kind of had to do. I think having more time to do the work would be beneficial. I mean, I can't speak for everyone here. I mean, I have to say, leaving at 3:20 is nice, it's nice, but I always wind up staying later because of paperwork.

Responder #4: I guess it would just be how to, like a shortened day. It's almost like, you know, if you feel like you want to stay, that's your obligation, but this is kind of your job duties and you need to be done at this certain, you're obligated to stay this time to this time, but obviously you can stay longer. In a public school, I sometimes stay until five, but it's my choice to stay to five. I think like, oh I have to stay to 4:30, like, no matter what, like bummer, I won't get out until four thirty. Then, you know, the kids leave at three o'clock, 2:50, three o'clock, and you're like, okay, I'm here until 4:30 today because I have to be here when I know I can get my work done in a half an hour but I can't leave. That kind of thing I think is kind of important.

Responder #5: That's a good question. It's interesting because when I had my probation there, I was with a family who required late hours. That was, like, extra nice, not to have to come home, and it was 7:30 every other week. I'm trying to think. It was tougher for me. I would imagine morning would be similar. But I don't think I went in the morning. The family consultation hours were, I was able to leave, work earlier, and go to my family consultations. Or I think I would leave when the kids left and then my family consultation would end the same time as my regular work day. That wasn't as much of a deterrent. It's interesting, because when I was at [The Apple School], I was never like God, this work week's too long, I gotta find a new job, I gotta apply. I don't like getting home so late. But, now, the fact that I am working at a place where sometimes I'm home by 3:15 is glorious. When I'm comparing, and now I'm thinking back, I'd get home sometimes at 5:30 and it'd be dark out. It is a world of difference getting out early and being able to go to the gym or pick up another work case or go food shopping, come home and it's not like really late. It's a nice thing to have. Thinking back, I wouldn't want to go back to working later.

Responder #6: I think at least for the teachers, when you get to be a teacher, you have responsibilities and they need to be completed, obviously. I think if you're able to get them done from home . . . Oh, some things you can't. You can't laminate stuff at home, obviously. You can check your graphs online at home; you can even write up your behavioral data at home; things like that. I'd rather be able to do that on my own time, sitting on my couch comfortably, than being at work stuck there another hour. I think, as long as things are being completed, it should be you're done at the end of the day, but you're expected to have it done by tomorrow. You need to have everything checked by tomorrow without having to be there physically.
Responder #7: From when I was there, the workload was a lot of paper and a lot of upkeep with maintaining the books, the data books. At the time, that was a lot, just to do the everyday routine data. Meanwhile, having to complete other things, such as progress boards and the behavioral data and things like that. I think, given the opportunity, it's possible to shorten it. If people need to leave for a second job, they have time to work a second job.

Responder #8: Again, it’s different because the workload is much different at [The Apple School] than it is in a public school. However, I think a shorter day for the staff overall would be better. Maybe all staff could have 3:30, or the aids could have a sheet or something. It’s different because of the requirements and all the paperwork involved. You can’t shorten your hours there, I guess. Maybe a little bit of flexibility. But, again, I think a lot of people take advantage of that. If you tell me I can leave at 3:00 every day, I’m probably going to leave at 3:00 every day. [The Apple School] is the kind of place where if you want to keep your job and you want to be successful and have an impact on the lives of students you teach and people around you, you need to stay and do your work. I guess . . . I don’t know. If there was ever a way to find a way around so much paperwork . . . but there’s really not. With the pay, the salary, most teachers have to have second jobs, like me, so getting out at 3:15 is a benefit. I work a second job. I don’t know, maybe every Friday you can get out at 3:00 instead of one time a month or . . . it’s just so hard because I remember what it was like with the workload, it’s a lot, so you really . . . unless there was a way around that . . . I don’t know.

Responder #9: The teacher hours? I would say maybe just give them the option of working the school hours. Well, it ends at what? 2:30?

As found by frequency distribution, three out of nine respondents stated that The Apple School could improve teacher hours by shortening their working hours, while six out of nine respondents felt that flexible working hours could improve teacher hours. One out of the nine mentioned that scheduling prep time into the teacher’s day would be helpful, while two of the nine respondents felt that decreasing the workload would be beneficial. Finally, one out of the nine respondents recommended changing the time that family consultation services are provided.

QUESTION 3: To what extent does compensation influence retention?

Sub-question A: Describe your main concerns regarding compensation.

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Responder #1: Okay. To the salary compensation. With my years of experience prior to working at [The Apple School], I would have definitely appreciated a higher salary. I understand that Alpine requires a lot of hard work and dedication, which I was performing at, but I also think that all of that hard work and dedication, which I'm actually not required to do at the public school level, that has a problem with the higher compensations for salary. I don't know if you want me to get more specific?

Responder #2: I actually, for me at the time in my life, the benefits and all of that, that was really good for me. The salary was a big thing for me, but I guess I also understood it was a private school, so I accepted that. A big decision to leave there. Then being compensated for the family consultation, we were always compensated for the respite nights and all of that. That wasn't really part of it. I think the biggest thing that made me want to leave was just the salary.

Responder #3: Okay, that was probably my main reason for leaving. I think I mentioned to you I have issues with my family and I have to kind of help them out with money right now. So it was a pretty big gap for the public school that I wound up transferring to. So if I were just kind of living at home and I didn't have any bills to pay, this was fine, but it was hard for me to, like, save up for my own place and help my parents out with what I was making here. So you kind of have to be in the right place in life to be able to afford it.

Responder #4: Compensation, so, when I chose to go into public I'm like, all right. You always hear, like okay, what's the difference between the salary you make at a private school versus a public school. All right. Public school, you always have the steps, you always go up the steps; you know you're going to get that raise every year, whether it be a thousand dollar raise or whatever raise. Also, the growth you get when you have MA, or like BA-fifteen, BA-thirty. My district, for instance, goes like from fifteen to thirty then masters, then fifteen thirty. You always have a chance to grow compensation wise. Then you always have a chance, like if you want to do, say, you want to be coach gymnastics, you have that opportunity to get a stipend for that. You have an opportunity to get a stipend if you miss your prep and then you have to cover a class for your prep period and you get reimbursed for that. It's a lot of opportunity that we have to be able to get compensated for our time, and because public school is so contractual, you have to have your five preps a week. If you don't have your five preps a week, okay, then you can put in for it. Then you get reimbursed for not missing your prep. All those things that you can, you know, it adds up; sometimes, you don't realize it. Say I have a meeting, an IP meeting during my prep, like three days a week. That's three prep periods that I'm contractually obligated to have that you can get compensated for. There's always that opportunity to get that extra growth and that extra paycheck, and then I was supposed to do after care tutoring, so then I do tutoring there, so that's an extra; like, it provides a lot of, you know, ways to be compensated more. I don't mind; I'm there anyways. I don't mind having, like, after term, having the class in my classroom and watching them and still getting my work done.

Exactly, and I'm there until 5:30 anyway. Might as well. Okay, I can like, you know, have them homework help and then also get some of my work done because then they want to help me set materials, so it's easy. It has a good balance, it works, you know? A
private school doesn't have it. It doesn't offer aftercare things, and doesn't offer extracurricular activities that you can get compensated for.

Responder #5: Tuition reimbursement was nice when I was there. I think now you guys increased it little bit, which is good, because school is super expensive and having that tuition reimbursement was a good incentive to go back, get another degree. I think tuition reimbursement is really important. There was compensation for the family consultations, I remember. That was actually a positive thing. It was nice. At least you were making extra money if you had to go after hours. It's a lot because you'd get home so late. The compensation was nice for that.

Compensation for health benefits, I always thought was good. I never had to put too much money towards them, so that was a plus. I was always pretty happy with the health benefits there. The only thing I can recommend for that would be to make it cheaper for families, maybe. If that's possible. I remember, if you were going to put your husband or your child on it, it was super expensive. In my new school, it's manageable if you were to do that. I was always pleased with the health benefits.

I felt that the salary was okay for a starting position. I just felt that there wasn't much potential for growth. I just felt like I was almost capped out. That was actually a decent reason for me to accept a new position where there was the potential for making more money in years to come, make a decent amount more. Of course, more money is always an incentive. I feel that when someone's going to offer you more money to do a similar job even if you might not like that job as much, it's one of those things where you do it because you need the money.

Responder #6: I just think, in comparison to what I was offered in the public school, it was a big enough jump that that was the main thing that really had me leave, I would say. I don't ever think the compensation was not good, but I also think I had been there for quite some time and I had moved up, but I was one of the people who was there for five, six years, and I was making barely more than somebody else who had just come, just because the longevity compensation, I don't feel, was enough. Then, comparatively, when this job was offered to me, it was significantly more money for my same credentials and whatever.

Responder #7: Just kind of what I said, with the hours and the workload, it was hard to keep a second job. With the compensation, it's definitely higher than most places, don't get me wrong, for teachers. To have a family and buy a house one day . . . it would be tough on just that salary. That's the problem with every teacher, I think, but to have a second job as a tutor after school, the hours were just . . . not getting home until 7:00 at night was hard.

Responder #8: At the time, the compensation was working for me, up until my life started getting more expensive. I was looking at going back to school and to afford living on my own, that got a little difficult. Meanwhile, working there and maintaining my lifestyle.

Interviewer: Would you say that it contributed to your decision?

Responder #8: Yes.
Responder #9: I would say salary was a big issue—that I wasn't making enough.

As found by frequency distribution, nine out of nine respondents stated that the overall compensation was inadequate. Teachers felt they were not making enough money.

Sub-question B: Discuss your satisfaction with the salary earned and the workload at the private school.

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Responder #1: Okay. I was quite dissatisfied with the ratio, I guess you can call it, of salary versus workload. The workload at [The Apple School] is more than I’ve ever had to do, which they appreciate, at the same time, because I learned so much by working there. It takes a lot to learn a school such as [The Apple School]. The organization, the detail, the preparation, I understand that all. I do feel the salary could have been much more for how much we were worked there, how much we were expected to do during my daily job.

Responder #2: No. I felt the workload was too much for the salary that I earned.

Responder #3: I would say I feel like we do a lot more work here for the amount of money. I don't want to say I do less in the public school; I think I, for myself, because my standards are so high coming from a place like this, I create more work for myself. I know that I could get away with doing less in public school and making more. For me, we didn't have books at my school or anything like that. I made behavior books, I made . . . because I'm so used to that here [at The Apple School], and I needed to have them for myself, but teachers there don't have to stay until 4:15, and I feel like they do a little bit less work, and get paid more. Yeah, I guess that's that for that.

Responder #4: I felt like, as a teacher, when my first year was set I was like, wow okay, it's a pretty good salary, but that's also through a twelve-month span. Going into the public school, it was like, oh okay, step one is like this much of a difference and it's only a ten-month salary. The private school, I was satisfied coming from being a paraprofessional level two, one, two, and then I'm a teacher. For me, that's great because it was all right. I'm finally a teacher, you know. I have that title. It was a good stepping stone. I didn't mind that. I was pretty satisfied.

Responder #5: Yes, absolutely. I was . . . when I was working in private school, I had a decent amount of responsibilities and workload and I was making less money. Versus in (public school) I feel like the hours kind of match as well. [At the private school], I had more work. I was
working more hours and getting paid less versus the public school, where I’m working less hours and the workload is a decent amount less. As well as I feel like the, I don’t know what the right word is . . . pressure or expectations. That’s still not exactly the right word I’m looking for—versus, I’m getting paid more in the public school but work less hours in less amount of months as well as different kinds of work. Also, I’m given more time to do . . . the work might be similar, the load; but I’m given more time to do it during the work day. I’m having to work through my lunch, but I just don’t like to have to work after school. I end up getting about an hour and a half of lunch/prep time every day, so I’m really able to get my work done within that amount of time. And that I never have to bring anything home, so that’s really nice to be able to focus and get whatever I need to get done within my work hours that I’m getting paid for.

Responder #6: I think there were times, it wasn’t all the time, but there were times when just happened to be the classroom that you had that I had to check 40 programs a night versus another classroom that maybe was only checking 20 at night. The number aren't right, but depending on what kid you had and what group you had and what those students were working on, there were times where, yeah, I was really staying there and checking, doing a whole lot of paperwork, and I felt kind of overwhelmed that I’m staying there late, I’m going home and finishing work. What am I getting for this? Stressed out trying to get it done.

Yes, the money wasn’t bad, but for all this work I’m doing, sometimes there were days when I was like, okay, I’m doing this, I’m going to going to family consultations. You’re at family consultations for a little extra time, you’re at here for a little extra time, and all that time adds up [so] that sometimes it’s like, Is this really worth all the work that I’m doing when maybe after school I could be tutoring and making a good amount of money there for less work?

Responder #7: Honestly, I was happy. I was fine living off of that salary. It's not much different than . . . It's actually only about a thousand dollar difference right now to what I’m making, but it's all those . . . The workload was heavy. To be as organized and as wonderful, [you] need that workload, so it's a tough situation, I guess. I don't know how to understand that.

Responder #8: As a first job, I didn’t have a comparison to another salary job, but, you know, I felt like the overtime work, the extra work that I was doing outside of the contracted school day, was a lot more than I think, a little more than would have balanced out than what the salary was at the time. I would say, if you were willing to put in the extra time to complete extra work, it wasn’t a very equal balance.

Responder #9: That’s where there was a problem. I would say I didn’t feel I was making enough for the amount of work and time that I had to put in.
As found by frequency distribution, two out of nine respondents stated that they were satisfied with the salary earned and the workload while seven out of nine respondents felt the salary was inadequate given the heavy workload.

**Sub-question C: Compare the salary earned and workload difference from the private school to the public school.**

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Responder #1: The public school that I work at now, I do earn more money, a significant amount, and I do happen to do a significant amount of less work. I do strive to emulate as much as I can, that I learned at [The Apple School], but I'm not expected to do as much as I was at [The Apple School].

Responder #2: I think it's more equal. I feel like, also, the work done, we're just expected to get it done. We're our own boss in a way, so we know that we have to get it done, so we're not under such strict guidelines and strict . . . What am I thinking? Guidelines and . . .

Interviewer: Timelines, right, right.

Responder #2: Timelines, right. I think, in that sense, that also eases the stress a little bit and then, so, I feel like because that extra responsibility of being our own boss is put on us, I feel like that's the extra salary, too. I don't know. We're just expected to do it and we do it and we get it done. I think it's just a little more fair. Plus, with the kids that we work with, I think the day to day . . .

Responder #3: Right. The salary . . . Yeah, so I think I did probably . . . I guess it's a personal standard, whatever you set for yourself. I think I probably do the same amount of work there, I just don't have anyone checking my work there. Like, I don't have to get edits done, stuff like that. I'm the one editing everything. So, I think I probably do a similar amount of work to here, but I get paid more to do it there.

Responder #4: Okay, so, the salary increase, almost, like, for now it's about, like, ten thousand dollars more, so I mean, being my age, wanting to support myself, that salary, it makes a big difference. You know, it's like, car insurance, bills that I pay, and all that stuff. I'm an adult now, obviously, when, you know, like, when I started teaching, I was younger, living at home, so it plays a different factor. Now, okay, I'm older, I have more expenses, and I want to purchase this, I need to do this, I want to go here, travel here, it just gives you more of the options of doing that. There was a part about health benefits. Okay, so health benefits, like that's the one thing that I miss from here, because health benefits,
being in a public school, it's all about contract and negotiation, so seeing how, like, my district now is going through negotiation process. Your health benefits will get negotiated, so you're like, oh, okay, so what does that mean? Do I need to pay more next year? Because every year, your contribution changes. Where, when you're at a private school, it's, oh, it stays the same because that's the rate the school has, so that's what you try to do. You try to keep the same rate. Where a public school, the Union negotiates, okay this much here, oh you're in this tier, so you've worked this much years, so you need to contribute this much money, so you had to like . . . so in the end it is not good; like, you obviously have your pros and cons with both things, and, like, I pay different dues and I pay when I was here. I never paid Union dues until now.

The taxes, I think, I feel like are a bit worse now. Since you're a state employee, it's different, you get different taxes, you get different things coming up. I also chose to get paid through a twelve-month period versus a ten-month period, just for myself. Like, okay, I know I'm getting paid on that day and that day. I'm getting something, because for me, as a person, I don't budget myself.

Like, oh my god I'm going to be broke as a joke, like why am I like . . . and then summer school, you don't get the summer school stipend until the end of the summer, so like, all right. I'll just do the twelve month . . . definitely had to learn how to budget myself more working like, the past two years, seeing like, okay, like all right, what can I spend this much, how much is like, and seeing like my the deductions are a lot different. Different deductions a lot. The state, like all the state stuff which I didn't see working in a private school setting.

Interviewer: You're making more. Do you feel like the workload is less, more, comparable between the two?

Responder #4: I think like it's almost a different type of workload. I still do all of my materials, my planning and all that, but I have my prep period to do that, so I'm not doing, planning any afternoon. I'm planning a lot more in the morning for my day, and I'm like, okay, my day is that. I know what I'm doing, I know what time I'm doing it, I know who's going where, who's doing what, what services are being done, kind of in the day, and the next day is just fresh again, where, in the end, it's just kind of clean up, wrap up, all right, good to go. Since it is an ABA room, there's steps, so whatever their step is, we just do it like that. Okay, there, done, done, done. Next day's ready to go already, after you just finished teaching that program, so you already know where you're going to be tomorrow. It's just that much planning, per se. It's like, okay, like, I just jot down what I need to like, what materials I need to make, like I do during my prep, or I have a lot of aids that do it. I have a support staff in my classroom. It's me with four paraprofessionals in there.

I have four students and four aids and myself, so right now we're above staff, which is, you know, like—oh my God—perfect. I'm getting so much done now and I'm like, Oh thank goodness, after the holidays. You know, I have those aids, you know, like okay, I don't need to go run make that copy, and I have like my printer, my computer in my room versus like, okay, like in private school we didn't have access to a printer in your classroom, so that didn't take time away in there. If I need to print something, I'll quickly
just have everything ready for me to go and it’s there. Definitely an easier way of making materials and making . . . say you need to print out that graph right away. I have it, right there: click print done; in the book done, ready to go. Where, when you’re teaching here, it was almost impossible. It makes a little difference. You can’t take your, like, get the data sheet, print it out, and then go get it, like, what do you do with your student? Just, okay, they have a break, let me just quick print, done, there, go. So, it made a difference in workload.

Responder #5: It’s a hard question to answer. There was a decent amount of work, but any job is going to have a decent amount of work; that’s what a job is for. I think that if you were making more money it would make it seem more manageable. You have all this stuff to do and I feel like getting paid more money . . . it’s for a week you’re getting paid for it, and not like we were getting paid anything. I think, when I left, People made less than that at that job. It’s always nice to make more money. Towards the end of working at [The Apple School] . . . they implemented a catalyst and stuff like that for being on the computer. Or stuff started to get a little easier, but I'm also thinking, when I first started, everything was in paper and pencil. You never go could do any of your stuff at home; it had to all be done at school for that reason. It was harder then, but, as I was leaving things were transitioning over to a more technological age. I remember I used to come home and look at my graphs, so that was a little better than having to stay at [The Apple School] until 5:30 and do it.

Responder #6: The workload is different in the fact that no one’s really checking on me. If I had missed checking a graph, like, someone would quickly review. No one is checking my graphs, no one is checking my data, no one is checking that type of stuff. Also, at the same time, my aids are taking the data, they're not entering any data. In that aspect, I have to get the data and put it into the computer all myself and, for the most part, my aids are not making any material, so I’m making material. I’m finding material, problem solving, stuff like that. At the same time, as long as I know that he didn’t get it and we problem solved it and now we’re going to this, there is no rush for me to get things into the computer. That alleviates a lot of the stress, because it’s not a big deal, because I know I gave the student a set of spelling words [and] he’s mastered tons of spelling words. Whether they’re in the computer or not, I still know that. I still have the data. No one is checking to see if the data is in the computer, and even if I had the data in the computer. Unless there's a problem, no one even is looking at [that] or anything like that. I feel there's less time, stress, like you have to get this done, you have to get this done. It's more like I put the data in, I do what needs to be done first, and move along that way, but I’m not taking nearly as much work home with me. Whether that's my own decision, but other teachers, the other teachers that I work with are the same way. We do what needs to be done at home, and if it’s something extra, I know I have something today after school, I'll have an hour or two to put data in. I'll take them home, but I’m not taking work home every night, much less in terms of the data getting in there.

Responder #7: I’ll say that we have one behavior in some staff, and so the amount of support you get at [The Apple School], with the paperwork and with the workload, it kind of helped ease some of the pain. We don't get as much of that in the public school. The workload is pretty much . . . actually, it's a little bit lighter. It's definitely lighter but [The Apple School] was a little more . . . the paperwork was a lot at [The Apple School], the
workload with the paperwork, but it wasn't anything I couldn't handle. It's definitely a
lot. It's a lot more than what I'm doing now.

Responder #8: Yes, the salary now that I'm making, it is higher than it was in the private school. With
the workload, it does feel different because I am able to get out at an earlier time here,
and I get a prep time, so I'm able to get a lot of my work done during the prep time. I
have a little bit of a longer lunchtime, so I'm more productive within my classroom while
I'm here, so when I look at completing my day at 3:00, it feels like, you know, I got a full
day. I balance out more of my salary.

Responder #9: The public school, I would say, depending on which public school you're in would be, I
would think . . . I mean, now it's getting a little bit harder. There is a lot more
paperwork, but we were getting paid a lot more money for not having to do as much
paperwork. And here I would say, in the public school, a lot of that paperwork and
behavior plans, and all that lays on the behaviorist, not so much the teacher.

As found by frequency distribution, nine out of nine respondents stated that the workload
at the private school differed from the workload at the public school. Specifically, you get paid
more to do less at the public school and get paid less but are expected to do much more at the
private school.

Sub-question D: What compensation attracted you to the public school?

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Responder #1: It was the salary. It was the benefits. It was the hours, and then, also, it was partly
because of the summer, the fact that you don't have to work over the summer. It was
everything.

Responder #2: No, for me, at the time, the salary.

Responder #3: The salary amount, it was like a $15,000 raise.

Responder #4: Salary, and I guess that I can always increase my salary. I know what I needed to do to
increase it. Where, here, it's like, Oh this person's started here, and then the next year,
like, Oh, I make the same money you did, like how come I'm there now, how come
you're making this pay, half, because you're like making more, because you started this
year and I haven't received that increase, almost? You know, through the contract
where you will go, step by step and year by year, based on how many credits you have,
like what's coming next. You always know your salary. I knew what I was going to get
this year from last year because that was in my contract already. You see the difference.
Okay, I know like, year four, I'm going to make this much of a jump, and then I'll have that. By that time, you're planning to have your BA plus thirty. Okay, like, I know I'm going to be making around that compensation. It's already kind of set. So, public school, my school, does it around like a three year contract, so you always know for the next year, like, so we're in negotiations now, so this is going to be for, like, this school year, next school year, and the following, you know—it's a three year. You see three years of tiers of increasing. So, and that leaves me, like okay, like, you know, Where I'm going? Can I financially afford maybe, like . . . maybe my goal is to buy a condo kind of thing. Can I actually afford it next year? I know once I saw my contract I'm good, I'm golden. Then, you also have a tenure, and once you're tenured you're like, All right, I know I'm going to like, once, I'm tenured I'm going to be making this money. I know I'm not going to, you know, I know I have job security because I am tenured or what not, so you know already. You don't have that worry. In private school, it could be like the school is closed, and then open, and then—oh, okay, like you don't have job security, so then that scares you. You don't know if you need to save that money or can you use that now. Can you put it down on something? Can you put it down on a car? Like, Oh, I'm going to work here. It's just very . . . you just don't know. That, for me was important. Like, okay, I know what I'm going to be making, what I'm going to be doing [. . .] and then I know I get that stipend there. Then you kind of figure everything out and it kind of becomes like the everyday.

Responder #5: Does that mean-

Interviewer: Was it the salary? Was it tuition reimbursement? Was it the extra stipend for ESY? All of the above? Something different?

Responder #5: I think it would be a combination of all of the above. I don't think it would really be one particular thing, but more like the package.

Responder #6: I think, knowing I could be out earlier and the amount of money. Being out earlier, once I found out that. And then you get paid on top of your salary for extended school year, which I'm going to do anyway. I think it was all those things combined that pushed me to go for it.

Responder #7: I think it's just the ability to move up . . . the steps and to be able to . . . I don't know. I guess just the room to move up.

Responder #8: Honestly, it was a mix between a little bit of a higher salary and it was a mix of my commute. My commute was not easy at the time, so that was something that I needed to make a factor. Not only was I working those hours in a private school, but it was also about an hour commute for me each way.

Responder #9: Well, right now, we have no contracts here, so I would just say the salary.

As found by frequency distribution, eight out of nine respondents stated that the salary is what attracted them to the private school, while three out of nine said that the benefits, one out of
nine said that a shorter commute, one out of nine felt that the stipends, and one out of nine said that the tuition reimbursement attracted them.

Sub-question E: What are some recommendations you could make to the private school for improvement in teacher compensation?

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<th>INCREASE SALARY</th>
<th>WAYS TO MAKE EXTRA MONEY</th>
<th>PERFORMANCE BASED ASSESSMENT</th>
<th>INCREMENTAL INCREASES IN SALARY PER YEAR</th>
<th>REIMBURSEMENT FOR FAMILY CONSULTATION</th>
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Responder #1: If the private school is not able to offer a large salary up front, perhaps they can do a performance based assessment on the teachers, and then increase their salary from there. That would help retain more employees, especially those with children and families at home.

Responder #2: I think that if it's possible to raise the salary for teachers, I think that's a really big deciding factor, especially with the nature of what we're expected to do everyday.

Responder #3: I know, that's hard. I don't know how any of this stuff works when it comes to, like, I mean, I know everyone always says, "If I could have made more money, I would have stayed here," because the learning experience here was unlike anything I've had. That was a hard decision to make because I felt like I still had so much more to learn from here, but, at the end of the day, if I wanted to move out and afford things on my own, it was kind of nice to have that extra money for sure.

Responder #4: I think, offering, when I say like, offering different ways to earn extra because, you know, the economy is not that great and everyone's looking for ways to get compensated more for their time. I help out in another county, like I said, because I'm already in school. I enjoy it. I don't mind my time being there. You know, getting that extra compensation helps. Giving options like that I think is so like, it helps you out, and like, Oh, okay, I made that extra two hundred bucks, I know I can put it towards this, or I made an extra hundred, you know, seventy dollars for not having my prep for the month. I missed two classes this month; I've got, like, seventy bucks. That's seventy dollars you don't think about, so it's like almost extra money you don't factor in. So, like, okay, like, I have that. It's almost like a luxury.

I just think now, like, with teachers, it's all about compensation now, which is kind of like it's sad, almost, but it's a reality now because, you know, we're working so hard it's like such a . . . I just think, Oh I'm in this district, why does that district make that much money? Should I look into going to there, or should I look into like, you know, if I'm tenure, and then, like, Oh I'm not going to be marketable anymore because who's going to want to hire a teacher who's on step six already? I'm going to have to. They're going to make more step six when I can hire a teacher who's going to be step one for a lower
salary? You have to think about, like, okay, Is this where you want to stay? Like, Is it where you see yourself? Because once you hit step seven, step eight, you're not going anywhere because no one's going to want to hire a step nine in a public school. Because, it's just, why would they?

Because their budget, there's a lot more budget issues that I see in public than I did here; and, like, okay, everything's about the budget, everything's about the budget, everything's about the budget. Which is understandable because it's state money. At a private school, we do have . . . we're able to get smartboards right away because we fundraised for it. Where, in public school it's a lot harder . . . the political, you know, all those different factors. Money plays a big part, I feel, in the public sector. It also plays a large part in private school, like fundraising and all the other things we had to do, geared to make the school the way it is. Money makes the schools go around now.

Responder #5: You can always have an increase in salary. Per year, instead of only making . . . I think I was making $800 give or take more per year I was there . . . increase that a little bit. The school where I work now, you have a certain salary. You go off, you make a certain amount of money, and the longer you're there . . . Say you're there for years. You get a really decent raise. It's incentive to stay. If I stay for seven years, my increased salary might be like $6,000. That's an incentive for me to be like, Okay, let me make it to this year mark so I can have this huge jump in salary. So that's kind of an incentive. It's similar to [The Apple School], where the longer you stay in, your retirement is increased. You guys kind of did that, too.

Responder #6: I would say family consultation plays a big role in it because, at least on a case by case basis, it's like some people would have someone who you needed to go every week and they usually give you two who are twice a week or something, but then you have to take into consideration, which I know, they pay mileage. But I think family consultation is a big part of it because it's a big commitment that you have to be there every week at the same time, and the parents are counting on you for that. Other than that, I think it's just that after school time is really what the most . . . it's very valuable time, I feel, like, for people in our field, as well, because there are so many people who go to public school and want you to do extra tutoring hours after school.

The amount of money you can make doing that can be pretty good, but if you can't get out until 4:30 or whatever, or by the time you're able to get to wherever that person is, you lose that case because they're going to take somebody who can come at three o'clock or whatever. I think having to be there is what's really the worst part about it, I guess. I think the salary could be more. I don't think it's so far off, but I think if you compare it to what most public schools will give you, I think, for a teacher, that it could be more money, to look at it that way.

Responder #7: I think maybe something like a step . . . Which it does kind of do . . . No, there's not a lot of money. Maybe. I think even, if you did something like . . . A little more room to grow. After two years, after three years. I think salary way.

Responder #8: Understanding the circumstances, that it is private sector, if there is a way to cut on other things to give, where you get that balance out, or taxes being taken out and more
for health insurance. Health insurance goes up and taxes are raised and more money comes out of your salary. If they could raise it, make it a little more balanced. If possible, turning more, taking more money each year, if possible, to put towards the staff members. I will say that the private school gave a better reimbursement policy for going back to get additional certifications or taking extra coursework.

Responder #9: I would say, for compensation for reimbursement for graduate school classes and even supplies, the private school is much better with that. I mean, right now, here, if we went back to school, because we have no contract, we wouldn't get compensated, and here we shell out a lot of money that I would never get reimbursed for.

As found by frequency distribution, nine out of nine respondents stated that the teacher compensation at the private school could be improved by increasing the salary, while two out of nine recommended finding ways to give teachers extra money, and one out of nine suggested using a performance based assessment. Two out of nine respondents recommended incremental salary increases each year, while one out of nine stated that it would be beneficial to reimburse teachers for their time spent providing family consultation services.

**QUESTION 4: To what extent did the quality of autism intervention influence retention?**

**Sub-question A: Compare the quality of services for individuals with autism you experienced in the private school versus the public school.**

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Responder #1: Fortunately, or unfortunately, there is no comparison between the programs that [The Apple School] offers versus the public school. Alpine, and the private school, is the top-notch preferred, in terms of their teaching and their programs, and their personal element, their strategies, and their training, which is extremely important because we rarely, at the public, school get training in special ed, or our teaching assistants never get training. That's so important, not only the initial training when you first get hired, but ongoing training. Yes, you can choose workshops and whatnot, but at the private school, we were constantly being trained to do the work. We were constantly getting to see that. We always had an advisor with us helping us . . . to just have them follow programs. Unfortunately you don't get that because the ratio from student to teacher is
a lot higher, as well as the administration oversees so many more students and so many more teachers.

Responder #2: It's much better here than it is at my public school. I don't want to say that all public schools are like the one I'm at. I do have a behaviorist in the classroom with me, but the parents never get trained and I've never been . . . I don't have more ongoing training. I'm more than confident to say that I am where I am because I worked here and I'm beyond grateful for that. I didn't realize at the time how good the training was when I was here. I feel like I can . . . from the training I got here, I feel comfortable enough also passing that onto the parents in the room to make the classroom successful and, hopefully, have the kids learn.

The more public school training that I get is still more, it'll be for special ed., but it'll still be more on reading curriculum or things like that. There's always something, though. It's also hard because there are only two or three teachers that are in the ABA program, so we're constantly fighting, but we're such a small group, they're not going to do something that's just for the . . . They know it's a problem. I do have to say, the interventions here in a private school are way more advanced. We do have to offer the home visits. The behaviorist will come if we ask, but other than that, they won't accompany you. I know, here, it was required that they go at least once a month.

Responder #3: Oh, I could say without a doubt this is exceptionally better. If I could, off the record, refer all of my students to here, I would. Unfortunately, I have to promote my program since it's . . . I do the best I can to replicate what I've learned from here, but you don't have the staff that are trained, you don't the support you have here, the administrators who know what they're doing. I only have a BCBM, it's like twice a week for me. Other than that, it's like kind of figure it out on your own. I think the nice part about the public school is that peer buddies are easily accessible. Here, you have to bring somebody in, whereas I set up a program where, every Wednesday, a fifth grade classroom sends down two kids and we do peer groups. We'll do games or . . . yeah, they're super willing, too. I had put these PowerPoints together because the kids . . . It's completely new the building; they'd never even seen any of this before, so they were very curious. So I put these PowerPoints out about having a friend with autism, what's it like, what can you do to help them, and then I had all these kids come to my room and ask to play games with my kids. So, yeah, I didn't expect it, because my kids, they have a lot of vocal stereotypes, lot of behavior issues, so it's completely unlike [what] these kids have seen. So, that aspect, I have to say, is nice; getting the kind of awareness out there. But I think that also, it's a downfall of public that they don't a gym that I can just go to. Here, you facilitate gym with their activity schedules. But, me, I have to send a paraprofessional with them to a gym, if they're even appropriate to go to gym classes. I have a third grader who's functioning probably around kindergarten level, and it's hard for him to follow instructions in a group. I send them with a para for the, like, the exercise portion, but when they play the organized games, it becomes a behavioral issue, because they can't perceptually understand what the gym teacher's saying. So I'm responsible, doing yoga in the classroom, or something like that. It's under my request. My principal's really awesome if I think one of my students can handle a special art, music, or gym. And I send a para with them. They obviously all have their motivational systems with them, and if there's an issue, we'll pull them out. I have one that goes to music and gym. He
has language. It's not always functional, but he's got more language than the other two. I have one who, he's got nothing. He speaks with an iPad [and has] behaviors [that are] like out of control. He has seizures, so I can't send him. He's missing out on art, gym, music, [and] that type of stuff. That's the whole day. Well, we rotate. That's another thing I completely changed when I got there, because one person was with one kid all day, and I said, "That's horrible." So I made a schedule. Every hour we rotate, because they get sick of you, you get sick of them.

I walked in and was I was like, Oh, four on four. Something they do get away with there—the classroom beneath me has nine kids in it, and since not all of them are technically classified as ASD (I think there's six that are and three that aren't), they have, I guess, they kind of get away with it by giving it a different name. They call it an LLD room, when it's really not. All the kids are doing different things and the teacher is drowning. That's just unnecessary. So you have nine adults and nine kids in this tiny room, and it's pretty awful. I got lucky this year. It's four, but next year I'll have five. So I'll have, I think, five, and the year after, I'll have six. If they change the title of my room, they can get away with putting more than six in there. Legally, six is the cap for a room for students with autism, but that's the part that . . . I was the only one that . . . It's not that I know what I'm doing, but I have more experience than my paras, so it's like running four home programs.

I feel like sometimes I'm putting out fires all day. I can't do my program because I have to jump in and help someone work through a behavior, which has been much better now, but at the beginning of the year, it was chaos. My behaviorist was only there on Wednesdays. Yeah, and there's no training that goes into . . . Staff leave right at 3:00, so I'm lucky I have two that are like, "What do you need me to do before I go?" type of people, but [crosstalk 00:14:11] you're not always going to find that. So I come in a little early to create materials, and I have no one to bounce ideas off of, because Jen's spread so thin. So, I mean, like I said, I do the best I can for these kids, but do I think that they would be better off in an environment like this? Absolutely. The hard part. Yeah, exactly. The hard part, for me, because in my heart I'm like, "You should go to [The Apple School]," but I can't. I can't say that.

Responder #4: Okay, so here, the quality . . . I mean, you get the best. You get such great training here as a teacher. You learn so much more and honestly. The training that I received here has helped me so much as a teacher in a public school. You definitely have a lot of support and you don't realize it. Like, say, when I was being an aid to a teacher, like, why I had to do these steps in order to do this. You don't realize it. When you first start, you're like, Oh my God, the workload, like, what did I get myself into? Now, as a year in school passed, I'm still doing it, essentially. Not as, like, regimented, like, as a private school has, but what a private school has to be because they have certain standards that they have to fulfill and, in public school, you can get away with a lot more. You have the support, but you don't have the support that everybody around you understands. Kind of like, I have my special ed. department. That's the only people that know what I do and what goes; versus, when you're in a public school. If you're in a private school, everybody knows what you have to do, and everybody understands what needs to be done. In a public school, you have your one class, your one box. Your bubble, and that's your bubble.
Third grade's bubble is a completely different bubble. You have the support of a school, a lot more families, and a lot more people in a private school than you do in public school, for sure. The training you get here is completely different. I had to train my aids. It gets tiresome. Like, you get a new person, like, okay, all right, let's go. Where, here, they're required to have training by supervisors and by, you know . . . they have the summer training, which is important. As a teacher, I'm trying to feel like, Why don't we have our aids get the extra training that they have so when they enter the class they're ready to go. So that's what the private here offers. You're ready to go, once you have that two-week summer and you're new.

I'm fortunate. I started August here, so I had the two weeks before kids came. I had training, then I had the kids, and then I had you train me. So, like, I had, like okay, I had a good foundation. I was ready to go. I obviously had the support of the teacher already who's been there and all the other staff had already been to their training. Coming to public school, you can have new aids start in September, all new, and then you're back to square one, and it's all on you again. I get support, through . . . we contract through Region Five, which is the special ed. type of Burnham County's services that come in. We have a behaviorist that comes in through there and we had, like, you know, OTPD come through there. You're not alone, but you are alone almost. As a teacher you're alone, and you have to train the aids. I train and handle with care, like, every year, before we had, like, you know, we were all trained yearly. I'm trained to train people, so it's like a different role now. Which is interesting.

I like how I'm the teacher and it's my room. Like, you know, like okay, this is what I see; it's the best fit; this is how I think it's going to work, and let's go with it. I don't have to kind of, like, okay go do this. If I tell one of my aids, this is it. I will listen to you, what your feedback is, but if I don't think it's appropriate or I don't think it's going to work, it's like, let's try my way first. I kind of have the hearsay there. I like it, but at the same time, I don't have anyone to communicate with. Like, what do you think? You know, someone that's kind of like at my level almost. Someone that's where I came from. I have my behaviorist, but she only comes two days a week. I would ask her, like, “I'm going to try this, what do you think?” That's my support right now, but I don't have another teacher in a similar situation in the same building. I have one friend who teaches the same type of classroom I teach in, so I will communicate with her. I'm like, “What would you do if you had this situation?” Or like, “I heard one of your kids went to this after school thing, did you see an increase in behavior, what did you notice?” When you're here, you have other people right there, right there who have experienced that already.

Responder #5: Yes. I can look at it in two ways. I feel like the quality of education at [The Apple School] . . . you just have more resources available and more mentors there to help guide you. All the families there are super involved; not all, but most of them. There's the parental involvement, which is nice. I feel like things were looked at more with a fine tooth comb. If things were going wrong, people were there to help make sure things are going in the right direction. It's interesting because if I look at the public school now and compare it . . . if I look at my classroom, I feel like my classroom is very similar to [The Apple School]'s in a sense because I'm taking what I did there and I do it in my classroom. In my classroom, the quality and direction of services is pretty decent. Overall, as a whole, the model is super similar to [The Apple School]. There's a pre good-decision protocol so
the program’s moving in the right direction. There’s parent clinics. There could be a little bit more support from my behaviorists, but I feel like, as a whole for the program, the behaviorists are spread thin. At [The Apple School], it was really nice that there was a supervisor for one or two classrooms and that they can really concentrate on making sure those kids’ behaviors and interventions were successful and progressing. In the public school I’m in right now, that’s not the case. The behaviorists are spread between a lot of classrooms, and I feel like other classrooms where behaviorist might be really needed . . . it’s not as good quality as when I was working at [The Apple School]. As well as, you are kind of more on your own. We do talk to each other, teachers and colleagues, but there’s no one that has so much experience to bring to the table. I feel like there aren’t really many mentors. I’ve learned so much by working at [The Apple School] that my classroom shows it. I have my husband to talk to, and he’s pretty knowledgeable. If I don’t know something, we’ll try to talk it out sometimes. So that’s really nice. In my classroom, I don’t really need a behaviorist; I am a behaviorist. In my classroom, I do everything a behaviorist should be doing. I do everything because that’s how I’m trained and that’s my mentality and that’s my education. The other classrooms aren’t all like that. If I didn’t have all that background experience that I did have, I would feel differently. And I might feel a little bit more frustrated.

Responder #6: In my opinion, it’s like comparing apples to oranges because Alpine gives the best training for their staff, I feel like. Everyone there knows what’s going on and so those kids are the luckiest kids ever, I feel like, who are there, because they really are getting the best quality. Even just the school and materials and things like that, but especially the staff training and staff members there . . . really, you can’t compare. Where I am right now, I have aids who have trouble understanding their English, so obviously a child with autism is really going to have a hard time understanding them or generalizing skills from them. Also, material-wise, I have little to nothing to make materials, like Velcro and laminating. I’m buying myself off Amazon, things like that. I think we do have a computer program, but I don’t like it. It doesn’t really give me anything to help train these aids. Everything is left to me, myself.

Yeah, compare it to even that, it’s not the same. I think, really, the support system is very poor, at least in my opinion. We don’t have a BCBA on staff. We have, I believe, one or two that I’ve seen twice so far this year. I don’t know when they’re coming. They show up for an hour and that is it. It’s like, whoever has a kid who’s really having problems, they’re going to get them, or if you really need something. Other than that, even my administration support is really lax. If I have a problem with an aid, too bad; deal with it. We don’t have anybody else, so you’re keeping them.

Or if an aid is out or an aid quits, it’s like, well, you’re going to have to deal with it for three weeks until the next board meeting. Too bad. They don’t move anything around. They don’t help very much in any way in that sense. I think it’s really the quality that my kids are getting is not nearly what it could or should be. I’m doing the best that I can with them, but there are teachers, and I work with some of them, who don’t really care and they’re just going through the motions. Their kids are not doing half the things that they could be or should be doing because they don’t want to put in the extra effort and no one’s checking on them.
Unless the parents have the problem, that's literally the only time that any administration gets involved: if someone really makes a big stink about something... that they want their kid with this aid or they're going to call a lawyer. Everything else is just... yeah, it's bad. This has opened my eyes. I'm just like, Oh my gosh, how can I have an aid who does not speak English working with this student who has a hard time understanding me? You can say it fifty times that you give them a non-great review, and she's like, "Well, the mom wants her with him," so okay. It's tough.

Responder #7: Yes. I think that the amount of knowledge and supervision and people you have working behind you at a private school is much stronger than what you have at a public school. My behaviorist is wonderful, I love her. The principal's wonderful and very understanding but having that 24/7 support where you can walk down the hallway and run into someone and ask a question was, I think, pretty important. My job and the way I taught, that's... yeah. All the trials we're doing, everything's the same, everything else was the same. I think the support system that a private school has in that play is a big asset.

Responder #8: Sure, in the private school, the autism intervention services were just extremely amazing and... At the private school, the services were just so, more individualized and very dedicated to each student. There was a whole team of people to work with each individual and it was constantly updated and constantly overlooked to make sure there's progress. The public school, I feel like it's [special education] a growing field here at my district and it is improving, it's just not a lot of help comes from the administration or the child study team and it's definitely still not, it's still a little overlooked, the [inaudible 00:14:06] and intervention that we have here. It's definitely progressing, it's just not nearly as esteemed as working in a private school. It's a little more self-directed here as a teacher. You know, we don't have a full certified behaviorist on staff, so a lot of it is taking or making decisions in your own hands, whereas in a private school, you had people to go to and different opinions.

Responder #9: Oh, private is ten times better and I say that all the time. If was a parent of a child with autism, I most definitely would send them to a private school if I could because you can't compare. Here in a public school, we're dealing with advocates day in and day out coming in to compare the programs, completely ripping you apart for what you're not doing. They don't have the necessary materials or the funding to be able to provide as much as a private school would. There's not enough bodies here to do what the private school can. If you have a behavior issue you just call it in [to staff at the private school]. Here you're basically on your own. You're providing those training to the aids. You're not coming in getting trained aids and you're getting aids that could be 50, 60 years old. It's a whole different ballgame.

As reported by frequency distribution, nine out of nine respondents stated that the private school quality of autism intervention outperforms that which is provided by the public school.
Sub-question B: What are some recommendations you could make to the private school for improvement in autism intervention?

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<th>Increase compensation</th>
<th>Working Hours</th>
<th>Training Programs</th>
<th>Ongoing Research</th>
<th>No Recommendations</th>
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Responder #1: Just what we were talking about now in terms of compensation, and salary, and working hours. That's the only thing I would change, because I've seen the turnover of staff. There's a lot of turnover at the private school. If something was different, it would be the money and the health benefits, or the hours. To keep them there longer, that would help the turnover rate, and then the students wouldn't be subjected to all these new teachers all the time. It would be more consistent.

Responder #2: I don't have any.

Responder #3: I mean I don't think so, honestly.

Responder #4: You guys offer, I remember when I first started, you offered like people [who] came in to train. I don't know if you still offer that, during the two week summer training? Yeah, that I think is beneficial because you get such good training here [at the private school]. I think offering . . . to go to a school setting, to train the assist staff, and you know like kind of have it as a resource, because a lot of parents now in public school, they want like, Where were you trained on ABA?, to the teacher. We're like okay, well where did that teacher get that ABA training? For instance, my ABA training can be completely different than somebody else's ABA. I still do my mentality, like oh the hard way, my pre-test, post-test, like all that. I know people who taught ABA who don't do pre-test post-test, who just do data and that's it and change the condition. I'm like, but wait, you teach the pre-test, you need the pre-test to make sure they don't know it first. It's based on it that way.

You realize . . . some schools do only data once a week—I was like, No what are you talking about?—but that's their, that's the way they do it in some public schools. For me, . . . I kind of like, okay, data's taken every [so often]. . . that's just because the demand, parents want to see it there, you want to see it. I have like an open book. I have learned here [at the private school] open communication is so important. You want to see it? Here it is. I don't like sending things home still, like, my mentality is like . . . What I learned is like a good method, so I always go back. That's why I am grateful for where I started, basically my teaching career, you know?

Responder #5: No, not really. Not that I can think of. You guys [at the private school] have it down pretty tight. I think you serve as a model for other public schools. Any recommendations . . . no, not that I can think of.

Responder #6: You guys [at the private school] are the best of the best. I really don't see anything. I'd love for you guys to have a training to train that I could pay to come see you that trains
me a better way to train them or something like that, or . . . you guys should outsource training. There’s no way they [at the public school] would send the aids in for an extra two hours with me, but like send someone to become a certified trainer or something like that. Other than that, you guys are the best of the best. You guys are the best.

Responder #7: There really aren't many. Maybe if you offer classes and training all year long, I wish that there was more of that in the public schools. I can't think of anything.

Responder #8: Just ongoing research and staying relevant with studies and with what other programs are doing.

Responder #9: There would be no improvements for . . . a private school, you can't beat it. [For] a public school there could be a lot of recommendations, but the private school, no.

As reported by frequency distribution, five out of the nine respondents stated that they had no recommendation for the private school’s improvement in autism intervention, while three out of the nine recommended providing training programs to public schools, and one out of the nine recommended increasing compensation, decreasing working hours, and continuing to conduct ongoing research.

Sub-question 4C: What incentive(s) caused you to leave the private school for the public school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salary</th>
<th>Workload</th>
<th>Work Hours</th>
<th>Professional Growth</th>
<th>Commute to Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responder #1: I really enjoyed ... I really enjoyed working at [The Apple School]. I really, really did. For my family, I just felt like I had to move on.

Responder #2: I think just the salary and the amount of work.

Responder #3: I think the main thing's salary. I was having a hard time in the room I was in, with the age group, that was difficult for me too, but I had already talked to Bridget about it and she had said just kind of hold out, we make changes. It was a great learning experience, I learned how to handle aggressive behavior, but I love the little . . . the younger age. I know you can't . . . Every kid needs a teacher, you can't be partial, but that was tough for me to be in the older kids. I didn't really know what public was like so I didn't know what I was getting myself into. I knew it was going to be a lot less structured. It was
mostly just the salary, and then less, shorter days too. I still do tutoring after school so that was nice to not be done at 7:00 every night.

Responder #4: Definitely the growth because I see myself as an LBTC. More like a learning disabilities person, well obviously I've been doing it for four years now, five years. I love it. I like the population I work with. What I see myself as one day, like director of special services and stuff, well so how do you become that? You kind of have to be in a public school. That's where you have to get all your steps. Over here [in private school], where can you go after a teacher? Become a behaviorist. Is a behaviorist the route I want to go? Not necessarily. I think everyone has their own personal route that they want to go, and where they see themselves. To be director of special ed, you have to potentially be in a public school. Just so you get the different experience. Next year, if I want to teach [in the] resource room, I have that opportunity. I have the opportunity to go into a general ed classroom and seeing kids and do in-class support for that. You have those different options as an educator, which is I want. You know, like I see myself doing.

Responder #5: When I left, it wasn't a time where I was like, "Oh, let me get a new job. Let me apply to these schools. I need out of here." I wasn't doing that. I really didn't even apply for any jobs. I was talking to someone and they're like, "Oh, there's this opportunity, give me your email. Send me your resume." And I was like, "Okay." Then I heard back from them the next day and then they confirmed my interview. So fast. When I went to the interview, when I weighed out the pros and the cons, that kind of led me to leave and pursue the public sector in my teaching career. I thought it would be good to have on my resume just to be in a private school and have some experience a public school. I was going to be making more money and working a little bit less time. The extended school year was optional with compensation, if you get it. The work hours were . . . I don't know if they're exactly shorter, but I'm still home a lot earlier. I think that kind of led me to it. I went to see this school before I left and it was very similar to [The Apple School] in a sense that there's one-to-one instruction, each student has their own workstation, each student has their own data book and their individualized programs. But if I had once reviewed a program and it wasn't like that, I might not have left. I also felt like at [The Apple School], I didn't have room for advancement and making more money eventually. I think that was another reason too, for me to leave. I didn't want to leave. I was hard for me to leave; I miss [The Apple School] so much.

Responder #6: I don't think ... You guys were much better, like the tuition [reimbursement program], you can't even apply unless you're tenured. Even that, I believe I've heard a lot of people say they don't get really anything for reimbursement-wise. It was because it was down the block from my house [inaudible 00:24:03].

Responder #7: Probably the hours and the workload. It was just really stressful on me and the hours were a long day.

Responder #8: It was honestly an offer that just came into my hands through a family member of mine and the reason why I did accept is because it was an easier commute, there was a difference in salary, and it was a classroom that I was interested in. It was preschool special education classroom, which is the age group that I like.
Responder #9: Most would be the salary.

As reported by frequency distribution, six out of nine respondents stated that the salary was the main incentive that caused them to leave the private school, while three out of nine stated the public school working hours were an incentive, two out of nine said the workload and professional growth was their incentive, and one out of nine named a shorter commute as an incentive.

**Sub-question 4 D: What incentive(s) causes you to stay at the public school?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salary</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Summers Off</th>
<th>Tuition Reimbursement</th>
<th>Autonomy</th>
<th>Workload</th>
<th>Job Security</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Relaxed Structure</th>
<th>Commute</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responder #1: The salary, the benefits, the summers off, and eventually, the tuition. They do pay 100% of tuition if you do choose to continue to go on to your master's, or even higher education. I don’t know how personal you can get with your questions, but maybe seeing where you do ask the age, perhaps to say, are you married and have a family? I do know that a lot of the teachers at Alpine are young, and not even married, freshly out of college. They don't have the extra responsibilities that come with a family, and this house.

Responder #2: The salary. Then also I think going back to that whole thing where we were [on] our own [in the public school] . . . not that there's not someone. Obviously, my principal. Just that we're more of our own boss a little bit. Then there's a flip side to that too because my principal has no idea what ABA is. I remember, not even the special ed director really knows what it is. No, I really think it just came down to the salary and the amount of work. Another thing, just transferring with the staff meetings, we're supposed to have one once a month or once a week. I'm sorry. We don't always. Every Wednesday, one meeting will be. We're allowed to meet with just our team. Me and the other ABA and the other special ed teacher will be able to meet on our own. Then the next week it'll be a full staff meeting. Then the week after that, it might be a reading thing. I don't know. That was something, because I think here [at The Apple School] it was every week? I think I felt maybe with the workload, maybe at the end of the day on top, and then knowing that we had to go to the staff meeting, that was a lot. I feel like that's a little more laid back in the public school too. While I appreciated it, but now looking back on it, but at the time, the two week, the training in August, that was a lot. Now looking back on it, I can appreciate it. I'm still thankful for it. I think just at the time when I was in it, it was a lot. I didn't even really think about that to be honest until you brought it up. How much of a thing that was.
Responder #3: Personally, other than salary which is always nice, and the potential to get those raises. As you move up every year you get a pretty decent raise, that's nice. I mean, I like that it's a challenge, it's completely different. I feel like I have all this knowledge that I got from here [The Apple School] that I want other people to have and my kids in my room now, they've already made . . . it's such a difference from where they came from, which is nice. I think the only reason I'm there because I'm like, Oh my gosh, what happens when I leave you guys? I know everyone here, all the kids here are going to be fine, because they have staff that know what they're doing, they have support. These kids, and these parents, have no idea.

It's really . . . they're really clueless. I think that's been one of the hardest things for me, is dealing with parents who aren't fully on board. Here they're like, “Whatever you guys say, we're going to do it.” Public school, some of them are still like, "Oh, no. Yeah, no, we've never heard of this." I'm like, well, I feel like I can't leave at this at this point, because I have these kids that I'm going to have three years probably.

Responder #4: To know that I basically have job security after being there for four years, because now tenure is four years and a day. To know after four years, like okay my time was well spent, I know I'm there, I know I, kind of like proved myself almost, and personally like okay, the community is like oh the teacher is there. The teacher was earning tenure, like okay. It's almost like a validation. A lot of teachers want that security because, you know, especially with the economy, you want like okay I know I'm going to be working there next year. Whereas with a private school, do I have a contract next year? I don't know. Am I going to get a pay raise? I don't know, it depends on the budget, and knowing again that I will have that pay raise.

Responder #5: I like it. I have a really good relationship with my principal, I did that at [The Apple School] too I think. But I do enjoy working with my principal, which is important to me. I also like the hours. It's also a lot closer to my house, so that was an incentive. My commute is a lot less stressful. I have a lot of room to make my own decisions about everything. What I say is kind of what goes. I have a lot of control over that myself so I don't have to check in with people as much. I really enjoy that aspect of it. I would say that . . . can I say something that I don't really love that much? I feel like where I work now is super . . . I'm the teacher, I'm training my staff—I love training my staff, that's something I do enjoy. But it's more challenging to keep adults of all different ages happy at all times and getting along with each other. That is very challenging and more challenging to me than classroom management. It's staff management that's very challenging. No, I keep telling them. My goodness. It has to come from administration. It's coming from me, I implement it. I came up with my own classroom code of conduct but there isn't that strong professionalism from administration at all. They really rarely do anything. Things won't get solved because administration isn't going to step in and be like, "No, this is not how you act in a job." It makes it very challenging to have one person carry everything when you're in charge of eight students or six students as well. I would say that is the most challenging. Then the students, I have down very well. I have so much experience from you guys [at The Apple School] and I use everything that I've learned. With the students, I don't really find that challenging. It's more staff management; that is very difficult. But there isn't that. And I also feel like at Alpine the
staff was all similar ages. Everyone was pretty young when I was working there. In the public school, everyone's different ages. I'm working people who are 55 and some are 23, some are 40. It's difficult to have them all work together and be able to make it about the kids and not so much about themselves. I find that very challenging. I do a decent job with staff management and I'm sure people are trying to get along but no matter how much I do, there's still a little dissention and people not getting along all the time. It makes sense, you're in this little tiny room with all these people, every day, it's hard to all be positive. So I would say that's the most challenging part. I did like that at Alpine, where everyone met about it. Everyone problem solved it. The atmosphere was a professional environment and this is how you learn to be a professional. Even though I keep suggesting it. There needs to be a team work meeting. There needs to be someone stepping in and saying this is how we become professional.

It may be the sense that I was just getting older and staff was getting younger. And I felt like I didn't see myself being there when I was 45. That just wasn't the age of the employees. I felt that if I was going to make a move, to make it to get settled somewhere else eventually. But then again, I might not stay at my job that I have now forever either.

Responder #6: I think the more relaxed environment that nobody is really not to say on my back, but no one is really checking, checking so much that I need to have this done, if I don't have it done tomorrow, I'm going to get in trouble type thing. The hours of being able to just get out at 3:00 has really kept me because I've taken on more tutoring cases that I really wasn't able to do any of when I was at [The Apple School]. I think just the salary overall are the biggest things. I think really the only thing was that, at least for me, I had been there for quite some time and I felt like it was time for me to try something new. I never had any complaints about leaving there. I think that what you guys do over there is ... I wish I could do it where I am right now and I wish all my kids could get what the kids over there are getting. No, I think really the time after school, having to really be there is really the biggest thing that I think makes people ... I don't know.

I just feel like people always say, “You're out at three o'clock,” whatever. I would always be like, “No, I'm a teacher but I'm not out at three o'clock. I have to stay until 4:15.” I think that extra hour or hour and a half, whatever it is, is a lot to ask because it takes away from a lot of things that you could do outside of it. Other than that, no, not really.

Responder #7: The hours, the vacation days, the break in August is nice. That's pretty much it.

Responder #8: It was honestly an offer that just came into my hands through a family member of mine and the reason why I did accept is because it was an easier commute, there was a difference in salary and it was a classroom that I was interested in. It was preschool special education classroom, which is the age group that I like.

Responder #9: Right now, it's just tenure and job security and the salary.
As reported by frequency distribution, six of nine respondents stated that the salary was the incentive that caused them to stay at the public school, while three of nine said the hours caused them to stay in the public school, and two of nine also cited having summers off, job autonomy, and job security as incentives to stay, and one of nine respondents said their incentives to stay included benefits, tuition reimbursement, manageable workload, relaxed structure, and easier commute.

Response Alignment with Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs was utilized as a framework to guide the research instrument. To be successful, an organization must assist in meeting human needs. Decisions are driven by motivations which are unique to every individual, and impact how they solve problems to meet their specific needs. This human needs theory assisted this researcher in gaining insight into the motivation of the respondents to leave the private sector teaching learners with ASD to teach these same learners in the public sector school classroom. The thematic code presented earlier in this chapter illustrates the human needs recognized in each participant’s response. The following table articulates the human needs illustrated in the participants’ responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Question</th>
<th>Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs</th>
<th>Motivation Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To what extent does ESY influence retention?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. How did mandatory ESY requirement impact your decision to leave private school?</td>
<td>Physiological Needs, Safety &amp; Security Needs, Belonging &amp; Love Needs</td>
<td>Stress of working all year, Exhausting, Workload heavy, salary Insufficient, hours too long, Enjoyed working over summer, Lack of support in public school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>How did working additional hours preparing reports and materials impact your decision to leave the private school?</td>
<td>Physiological Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Safety &amp; Security Needs</td>
<td>Time away from family responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Love &amp; Belonging Needs</td>
<td>Sense of aloneness in writing reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Esteem Needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| B. | How did the additional hours worked providing Family Consultation services impact your decision to leave the private school? | Physiological Needs | Big commitment, sitting in traffic for another hour |
|    | Safety & Security Needs | Do for extra money, harder when you have kids |
|    | Love & Belonging Needs | Didn’t at all, loved the families, you are so appreciated |
|    | Esteem Needs |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| C. How did attending school fundraising events after school hours impact your decision to leave the private school? | Did not impact decision, wanted to go as a teacher, I liked being involved in all of that | Weren't forced to go | Teacher’s discretion when to go, nice option, wasn’t a requirement |
| D. What are your current working hours?                                | Long working day/year, it was tough | Strict required hours | Work-life balance activities |
| E. What are some recommendations you could make to the private school for improvement of teacher hours? | Staying late because of paperwork, hard to work second job | Shorten the day, work-life activities time, want to keep job, salary requires second job | Complete tasks on own time, set time to start and leave work hard, give choice to stay, permit flexibility |

### 3. To what extent does compensation influence retention?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Describe your main concerns regarding compensation.</th>
<th>Lifestyle changes, needed second job, was hard</th>
<th>Higher compensation for years of experience, help support family, salary difference is a big gap, contracts required step increases in salary, absence of means to make extra money</th>
<th>My hard work and dedication, significantly more money for my credentials</th>
<th>Knowledge and skills valued, years of experience still earning close to new teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B. Discuss the salary earned and the workload at the private school.</td>
<td>Not making salary for amount of work and time, quite dissatisfied with workload – salary versus workload, stressed out trying to get work done</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Needs</td>
<td>Total compensation balance not commensurate with knowledge, skill, do less work and get more salary at public school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-actualization Needs</td>
<td>Standards are high at private school but not at public school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Potential for growth limited</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. Compare the salary earned and workload difference from the private school to the public school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physiological Needs</th>
<th>Significant more money for significant less work, stress decreased with ability to work at home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safety &amp; Security Needs</td>
<td>Paid more for same amount of work, more expenses now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love &amp; Belonging Needs</td>
<td>Support staff ease workload, printer in classroom eases workload, administrative support stronger at private school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esteem Needs</td>
<td>Flexibility in time eases workload</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-actualization Needs</td>
<td>Own boss, less strict guidelines, little more fair, independent in daily work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D. What compensation attracted you to the public school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safety &amp; Security Needs</th>
<th>Salary and benefits, summers off, ability to increase salary, mix of higher salary and less commute time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-actualization Needs</td>
<td>Growth potential, ability to move up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E. What are some recommendations you could make to the private school for improvement in teacher compensation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safety &amp; Security Needs</th>
<th>Increase salary, provide other means to make money, tuition reimbursement and supplies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Esteem Needs</td>
<td>More room to grow monetarily with experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Needs</td>
<td>So much more to learn from private school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. To what extent did the quality of autism intervention influence retention?

A. Compare the quality of services for individuals with autism you experienced in the private school versus the public school.

| Love & Belonging | Ratio of student to teacher much higher in public school, more resources and mentors available, everything is left to myself at the public school, support system at private school is a big asset |
| Esteem Needs | Private school more structured because of the level of students, support of everyone who understands what needs to be done, my classroom is conducted my way- I have the hear-say there, basically on my own in public school |
| Cognitive Needs | Strategies and training extremely important, confident because of private school training, ready to go after training at private school, good foundation, learned so much at the private school |
| Self-Actualization Needs | No comparison between programs, private school top-notch preferred, interventions way more advanced, exceptionally better at private school, you get the best, trained to train people, ten times better |

### B. What are some recommendations you could make to the private school for improvement in autism intervention?

| Safety & Security Needs | Change compensation, salary and working hours |
| Cognitive Needs | Offer training to schools and assistant staff, outsource as a training program |
| Self-Actualization Needs | Serve as a model for other schools, you are best of the best, continue ongoing research, no improvements |

### C. What incentive(s) caused you to leave the private school for the public school?

| Physiological Needs | Amount of work, hours and workload really stressful |
| Safety & Security Needs | Salary, easier commute, benefits, potential for raises, job security |
| Love & Belonging Needs | Less structured, more laid back |
| Esteem Needs | On our own, it’s a challenge, room to make own decisions |
| Self-Actualization Needs | Growth potential, good on resume, room for advancement, use experience and training from private school in public school |
D. What incentive(s) causes you to stay at the public school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Needs</th>
<th>Incentives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physiological Needs</td>
<td>Better hours, Salary and benefits, summers off, commute less stressful, work-life balance with family, tenure and job security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety &amp; Security Needs</td>
<td>Challenging to manage staff, can’t leave at this point, enjoy working with staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love and Belonging Needs</td>
<td>On our own, room to make own decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esteem Needs</td>
<td>Getting older, staff getting younger, time to try something new</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Actualization Needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**

This research study sought to investigate the specific factors that motivated certified special educators who taught in The Apple School to leave their employment at The Apple School and continue teaching learners with ASD in the public school sector in a northeastern state of the United States. The study also sought to identify factors that influenced private school educators of individuals with ASD to leave the private sector for the public sector either with inclusion or self-contained classrooms. Guided by Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Theory, the study furthermore looked to identify the extent to which organizational factors of The Apple School motivated the teachers’ decision to continue teaching learners with ASD in the public sector. Chapter 4 presented, in detail, the multiple dimensions of the nine certified special education teachers’ responses to the 14 interview questions. The four primary questions sought information on how the organization structure of the working conditions of: the ESY, longer school hours, and salary compensation in private sector schools influenced their decision to move to the public school system. This presentation included the demographic data, a content
analysis of the responses to each question’s sub-question, and the level of need as interpreted by the researcher from the respondents’ answers and aligned with Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.

The dominant findings derived from the nine interviews presented in this chapter to the primary and sub-questions research questions were as follows:

1. **Q:** To what extent did the Extended School Year (ESY) influence their retention?

   The ESY was not a major influence in the respondents’ decision to move from the private school to the public school. The major differences in the ESY program between the private school and the public school were compensation, hours, structure, and the individual teacher’s option to participate. Recommendations for improving the ESY program included increasing base compensation, providing a stipend for ESY, providing less structure and more flexible teacher working hours, lowering the number of school days, and reducing the number of school hours for the teachers.

2. **Q:** To what extent did the school hours for teachers influence their retention?

   School hours had a large impact on the special education teacher’s decision to leave the private school. However, the work hours required for family consultation services and attending school fundraising events after school hours did not greatly influence the decision to leave the private school. Working hours at the public school for all of the nine respondents ranged from 7:55 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., with some variation. Recommendations for improving teacher hours were to provide a shortened work day, offer more flexible work time, give the special education teacher the independence to decide the time needed to successfully complete the required work, and decrease the required workload.

3. **Q:** To what extent did compensation influence their retention?
All nine respondents described their compensation at the private school as inadequate and the major reason for going to the public sector. The nine respondents addressed their inability to increase their salary through stipends, additional work, or contract raises at the private school. The workload at the private school did not compensate for the insufficient salary; in fact, the public school provided higher compensation with less work and time required. Furthermore, salary was the number one reason for the attraction to the public school. The recommendation from all nine respondents to improve teacher compensation was undisputed: increase salary compensation.

4. Q: To what extent did the quality of autism intervention services influence their retention?

All nine of the respondents rated the quality of services of the private school to be a higher level of service than the quality of services provided by the public school. Five respondents did not give any recommendations to improve the private school’s autism intervention. Three respondents requested The Apple School to provide outsource training to other schools and individual teachers.

Salary, work hours, workload, professional growth, and commute to work were given as variables which caused the respondents to leave the private school for the public school. Salary, job security, hours, summers off, autonomy, relaxed structure, commute and benefits were listed as variables to remain in the public school.

Chapter 5 will develop with deeper insight the opinions of the nine certified special education teachers with regard to the content of their responses and the motivations of human needs according to Maslow, as recognized by this researcher. From this outcome
data, recommendations will be made for organizational structure, policies, and compensation.
Chapter V: Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter is to present the multiple dimensions of the responses of nine certified special education teachers to the interview questions. Interviews were conducted to investigate the specific organizational factors that motivated certified special educators in a private school for learners with ASD in a northeastern state of the United States to move to the public school sector in the same state and continue to teach learners with ASD. This is an extremely important issue for The Apple School, which experienced the attrition of 12 certified teachers from 2012 through 2015. This researcher could not find a study in the review of the literature that addressed the issue of certified special education teachers moving from the private school sector to the public school sector, while continuing to teach learners with ASD. This research study sought to fill the void.

Included in this chapter is:

- A summary of the study;
- An analysis of the major findings of the study and the relationship of the data to the review of the literature in Chapter 2;
- The relationship to the conceptual framework using Maslow’s Hierarchy of Human Needs as presented in Chapter 1; and
- The researcher’s recommendations regarding the motivating variables that influenced certified special educators to move from the private sector to the public sector while continuing to teach learners with ASD.
Summary of the Study

The purpose of this research was to determine from telephone or face-to-face interviews the reasons nine certified, experienced special education teachers left The Apple School during the three-year period of 2012 to 2015. Based upon the insight gained from an extensive review of the attrition and retention literature of general and special education teachers, a series of questions were developed to elicit in-depth information from the participants. The nine participants were asked four primary interview questions and subsets to each question regarding their motivations to move to the public sector. In addition to their beliefs about their workload, work responsibilities, and compensation, their perceptions on how the private school organization served their needs in comparison to the public school sector were sought. The four primary questions asked were:

1. To what extent did the Extended School Year (ESY) influence their retention?
2. To what extent did the school hours for teachers influence their retention?
3. To what extent did compensation influence their retention?
4. To what extent did the quality of autism intervention services influence their retention?

The questions were designed following Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Theory and had subset questions to enhance the depth of their answers.

1. To what extent did the Extended School Year (ESY) influence retention?
   A. How did the mandatory ESY requirement impact your decision to leave the private school?
   B. If the public school has an ESY, what are the differences between the private school and the public school?
   C. If the public school does not have an ESY, what are the consequences to not having to work an ESY program?
   D. What are some recommendations you could make to the private school for improvement of the ESY program?
2. To what extent do the school hours for teachers influence their retention?

A. How did working additional hours preparing reports and materials impact your decision to leave the private school?
B. How did the additional hours worked providing Family Consultation services impact your decision to leave the private school?
C. How did attending school fundraising events after school hours impact your decision to leave the private school?
D. What are your current hours?
E. What are some recommendations you could make to the private school for improvement of teacher hours?

3. To what extent does compensation influence retention?

A. Describe your main concerns regarding compensation.
B. Discuss the salary earned and the workload at the private school.
C. Compare the salary earned and workload difference from the private school to the public school.
D. What compensation attracted you to the public school?
E. What are some recommendations you could make to the private school for improvement in teacher compensation?

4. To what extent did the quality of autism intervention influence retention?

A. Compare the quality of services for individuals with autism you experienced in the private school versus the public school.
B. What are some recommendations you could make to the private school for improvement in autism intervention?
C. What incentive(s) caused you to leave the private school for the public school?
D. What incentive(s) cause(s) you to stay at the public school?

Analysis of the Major Findings of the Study

Primary Question 1

This study sought to find the organizational factors that influence the attrition of experienced teachers of learners with ASD that impact the quality and resources of the educational program. The first overarching question asked to what extent did the ESY influence retention. The variable of ESY indicated the degree of impact on the respondents’ decision to leave the private school, the differences in the ESY programs at the private and the public
schools, the benefits of having and the consequences of not having an ESY program in their school, and what recommendations the respondents could offer to improve the private school ESY program.

The objective of this question flowed from the review of the literature on ESY and ESD that addressed the controversy surrounding ESY as a response to the mandate of the P.L. 94-142 (Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (P.L. 94-142, 20 U.S.C. sec. 1401) and the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) (United States Department of Education, 2016). The literature addressed the need for public schools to outsource learners who have been diagnosed with ASD of whom some are significantly impaired, nonverbal, and at times exhibit challenging behavior. Private schools of learners with ASD must assist their learners in becoming as independent as possible in both functional academics and self-care skills. To meet the ESY mandate, The Apple School work day for special education teachers during the ESY program was eight hours, five days a week, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. with the learners present from 9:00 a.m. to 2:45 p.m., generally. The teachers were contracted to work over the summer for an additional 30 days as part of their teaching contract. The purpose of this scheduling requirement was to lessen the learner’s regression during the summer months.

Given the exacting work hours requirement in The Apple School, this researcher was surprised that seven of the nine respondents stated that the ESY program did not directly impact or influence their decision to leave the private school. Two respondents did not give a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer, nor specifically attribute the ESY program to their decision to leave. Rather, they talked about the long hours of the ESY program and discussed, at length, the scheduling, compensation, stress of continued teaching all year, and lack of having the option to participate in the summer program. Without a clear, specific ‘yes’ or ‘no’, this researcher deliberated and
meticulously reviewed their responses. Based on this knowledge and belief, the decision was made that the ESY program for these two respondents did impact their decision to leave the private school.

The respondents identified five major differences between the private school ESY program and the public school ESY program. All nine respondents discussed the scheduling difference between the two programs. All of the public school ESY programs were approximately four hours a day, four days a week, except that described by Responder #8, whose ESY program was active five days a week for one month, for four hours a day. Seven respondents stressed the optional participation in their ESY programs and being offered a stipend as extra compensation for teaching in the ESY program. Five respondents described their ESY programs as “less structured,” with one saying “Like it definitely feels less structured, a more Wild West, you know.” Other differences were summed up as “more flexible,” “It’s a little bit more relaxed than the regular school,” and “It’s a little bit more laid back.” Only one described her ESY program as “understaffed.”

The final sub-question asked the respondents for recommendations to improve the ESY program at The Apple School. A consistent recommendation for the ESY program given by the respondents was to reduce the school hours and the number of school days. Responder #1 referred to the work-life issue when discussing the ESY program, saying, “Most people take vacation, and they want to spend time with their families, or friends, that they didn’t have time during the year.” Responder #4 identified the same issue, saying, “It’s hard for summer because a lot of people want to get things done in the summer.” She also referred to the stress of the long hours, saying, “In summertime, the teachers get tired; students get tired you know doing the same thing over and over again becomes strenuous.”
Less structure and more flexible teacher hours were acknowledged by six respondents as a strong recommendation. Responder #8 summed up the structure recommendations of five other respondents by saying, “It’s just a little less strict in the summer.” Responder #5 described the need for the private school to become more flexible in the work day, noting, “It gives us a chance to catch up on paperwork and then if you have something, if you want to go away for a weekend, since it is the summer, you have that little half day to go and get a head start.”

The compensation concern was voiced by only three respondents in this sub-question. Responder #1 referred to the compensation issue by presenting the idea that “if the private school offered a little bit more compensation” or even hourly compensation for teaching ESY, it would be an improvement. Responder #4 said, referring to her experience in the public school sector, “I have my ten-month salary and then I get my stipend for the ESY… and they are willing to compensate me for my time for my teaching.” Responder #5 was very clear about the salary issue, recommending for the private school, “Just making maybe more salary, but I don’t know if you guys can do that. It definitely helps to just know that [in the public school] I’m going to make a little bit extra money on top of it so even though my salary is this for the year, if I opt to do the ESY, I have an opportunity to make more money. Money is very important especially when you’re having a family.”

Of interest to this researcher was the response of the nine participants regarding their satisfaction with the ESY program. The majority of the ESY research reviewed in the literature centered on student learning and academic achievement with very little emphasis on teacher satisfaction. Yet of the nine respondents, only two indirectly stated their dissatisfaction. Responder #1, in fact, stated, “I actually enjoy working over the summer.” Responder #4 was candid about her thoughts on the ESY program, saying, “As a teacher you’re like, Oh so do I see
the growth because I was with them all last year and in the summer and continuing in, like, am I really making a difference, did I impact them in that way?” But she acknowledged her dissatisfaction with the stress level of the ESY program, stating that it “puts strain on you,” and “you’re constantly going, and going, and going, and you’re like, where is the end?”

The dominate recommendations of shorter school hours, fewer work days, less structure, more flexibility, and increased compensation given for improvement of the private school ESY program aligned with this study’s results with the attrition and retention literature for both special education and general education teachers.

In summary, the first primary question of: To what extent does ESY influence retention? was answered by the responses to the sub-questions of the mandatory ESY requirement as impacts the respondents’ decision to leave the private school, the differences between the private school and the public school ESY programs, and the recommendations the respondents would offer to improve the private school ESY program. The ESY program at The Apple School was not a factor in the decision for seven of the nine respondents to leave for the public sector and was not identified as a major factor by the remaining two s. However, it became very clear that although the questions asked only about the ESY program impacting their decision, the respondents centered their responses on the factors of the scheduling of working hours and days, the rigid structure and lack of flexibility in the ESY program, and the insufficient compensation for this program.

**Primary Question 2**

The second primary question asked the respondents to discuss to what extent the school hours for teachers influenced retention. Five sub-questions were developed to address this factor, including the additional hours preparing reports and materials, additional hours providing family
consultation services, mandatory attendance of school fundraising events after school hours, current hours working at public school, and recommendations the respondents could make to the private school for the improvement of teacher hours.

Workload burden on special education and general education teachers was addressed abundantly in the literature as described in Chapter 2. Assessment of the numerous research articles reviewed revealed a consensus with Darling-Hammond’s (2003) vision that what matters most in reducing teacher turnover is improving working conditions, and when providing good working conditions, a school would become a magnet to attract and keep teachers.

The majority of respondents in this study clearly confirmed the burden of long work hours: seven respondents stated the hours did impact their decision to leave the private school. Two respondents did not believe the school hours impacted their decision. Responder #5 believed both private and public hours and workload were similar, stating, “I didn’t know the workload was going to be the same ... they didn’t really do anything different there. But that wasn’t something that was impacting my decision to leave at the time.” Responder #9’s response was: “I would have to say, though, I probably put in the same amount of hours in the public school now with all the amount of paperwork that I have to do, so that really didn’t impact me at all.”

It is interesting to note that analyzing the participants’ responses revealed that six respondents spoke about the workload in conjunction with the school mandated hours. Responder #3 “felt like I was always behind. Leaving I had to just cut myself off and go home, because I felt like I still had so much to do.” Responder #4 aligned the workload, level of the learner, and stress level, saying, “Well, the workload was definitely high working here, but again it’s important for the type of school that it is. My workload now, I’m only contracted to work only until 3:15 … after dealing with a long day working with the students, and then having
another long portion of after school hours. You know, it was tough.” Two respondents gave positive comments about the required school hours. Responder #1 said that “the hours were, it was a good thing. It was beneficial to have those extended hours because it was already built into a work day.” But she added, “However, the hours could have been pushed back a little. That’s really where an hour could be paid.” Responder #7 gave a fresh, uplifting comment in stating, “At the time, honestly, the hours and the workload seemed like a lot, but now not having that time, I wish I had a little bit more. At the time I didn’t think I did, but I do miss it sometimes now.”

Four respondents addressed their feelings about the level of independence and flexibility at the private school. Responder #2 thought the public school was more lenient and flexible, stating, “Maybe it’s not as strict like when the things have to get done.” Responder #6 felt strongly that “as long as the responsibilities were being completed, I didn’t see a need to be there beside the training program.” Responder #8 said that “here in the public school, I had that opportunity to leave at an earlier time if I need to.”

Additional hours worked providing family consultation services impacted only three of the respondents in their decision to leave the private school for the public school. Six respondents were definitive in their response that family consultation did not influence their decision to leave the private school. The three respondents who stated family consultation services did impact their decision to leave the private school related this issue to the time that they had to wait to meet the family. Responder #6 thought the requirement of family consultation was “a big commitment,” stating that “you’re taken away from the responsibilities that you have in terms of graphing and data to go to the house once a week.” She continued, “then you could potentially be sitting in traffic for another hour because you have to go there once a week.” Responder #8
described her frustration at the need to have a late evening consultation “so that kind of left me with time waiting in between from my work day to go to the family’s house. I think that was my only experience that kind of impacted me.” Responder #9 said family consultation did impact her decision because “when you do have kids that extra day that you had to put in was a little bit harder depending on where the family lived, and the hours that they needed you to go to it. So it did impact it a little bit.”

Of the six respondents who replied that family consultation did not impact their decision to leave the private school, Responder #1 stated that at the public school, “It’s up to the teacher’s discretion when we go.” Responder #3 did not stay at the private school long enough to participate in the family consultation, but stated that “it’s just that it would be mandatory instead of something that I just do for extra money.” Responder #7 said that although family consultation requirement “didn’t really affect my decision at all,” she “wished there was more of a compensation for going out of your way and driving wherever you had to drive, past the hours of school to be there, it was all under one contract.” She also praised the private school’s family consultation service, saying, “We don’t have any family consultation hours at the school so that’s something I think is such a pro to being in a private school.”

The next sub-question asked how attending school fundraising events after school hours impacted the respondent’s decision to leave the private school for the public school. All nine respondents said that attending school fundraising events after school did not impact their decision to leave. Five respondents simply stated that it did not impact them. The other four described their feelings about fundraising for the private school. Responder #4 said that “if it was an event, you weren’t forced to go. If I couldn’t attend, I couldn’t attend. As a teacher you want to be there, you want to show your face, you want to support your school. I loved it here …. I
love the families here … you’re so appreciated, too.” Responder #6 responded, “I always wanted to volunteer and do anything that I could for the school. I don’t even remember anything being super mandatory, but I always wanted to go anyway.”

The response to the question concerning current public school hours was unanimous in the timing of public school hours ranging from 7:55 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., generally. Only two respondents commented on the flexibility of the public school schedule allowing them to leave if they have a family or personal commitment.

The final sub-question regarding teaching hours asked the respondents what recommendations they could suggest to the private school for improvement of teacher hours. Six of the nine respondents believed the best recommendation was more flexible working hours. Three respondents suggested decreasing the working hours, two wanted a lightened workload, and one felt better family consultation times would be beneficial.

Responder #1 voiced the sentiments of six respondents concerning teacher working hours, saying, “Like I said before, I think it’s not necessarily the amount of hours that we work. It’s the time you had to be a work, and the time you had to leave was set.” Responder #4 elaborated, adding, “The kids leave at 3:00, 2:50, 3:00, and you’re like, okay, I’m here until 4:30 today because I have to be here when I know I can get my work done in a half an hour but I can’t leave. That kind of thing I think is kind of important.” Responder #5 stated, “But now the fact that I am working at a place where sometimes I’m home by 3:15 is glorious. I don’t want to go back to working later.” Responder #7 felt that the tasks of paperwork and upkeep of data books should be lessened or lightened because “if people need to leave for a second job, they have time to work a second job.”
Responder #8 acknowledged the difference in learners at The Apple School, stating, “The workload was heavy. It was very heavy in the public school. It’s just that it’s a different type of work.” However, she still believed in the possibility of shortening the day. She said, “Again, it’s different because the workload is much different at [The Apple School] than it is in a public school. However, I think a shorter day for the staff overall would be better.”

It was of note that three respondents talked about the lack of decision-making or independence. Responder #4 said that “in the public school, I sometimes stay until five, but it’s my choice to stay to five.” Responder #6 stated, “When you get to be a teacher, you have responsibilities and they need to be completed obviously … I’d rather be able to do that on my own time sitting on my couch comfortably than being at work stuck there for another hour.” Responder #9 simply remarked, “I would say maybe just give them the option of working the school hours.”

In summary, the second primary question of to what extent the school hours for teachers influence their retention was answered by five sub-questions. These sub-questions addressed the factors of working additional hours preparing reports and materials, attending family consultations, and attending school fundraising events after school hours, as well as how these factors impacted their decision to leave the private school. The final sub-question asked for their recommendations to improve the teacher hours at the private school. Answers to these questions clearly showed that the required school hours for teachers did impact the majority, seven of the nine certified special education teachers’ decision to leave the private school for the public school. They all acknowledged the heavy workload at The Apple School and did believe the workload could be lightened, the school days shortened, and more independence given to the teachers to complete their teaching responsibilities at their own discretion. Attending school
fundraising events after school hours did not impact the decision to leave the private school for any of the nine participants. Family consultation was a decisive factor for three respondents who saw this requirement as a big commitment in time in terms of waiting for the scheduled appointment, travel time, and having to adjust the teacher’s family schedule to meet the family consultation time. The current hours worked at all of the public schools were shorter than at The Apple School.

The respondents all referred to the factors discussed in the other four sub-questions. They articulated strongly the need to be more flexible in the teachers’ working hours and provide more latitude to them in the decision-making process regarding their work responsibilities. Also suggested were to shorten the working hours for the teachers, lessen the workload, and have better family consultation hours.

The findings to the primary question of the extent to which school hours for teachers influenced their retention definitely coincided with the attrition and retention review of the literature. A majority of the scholarly works reviewed and discussed in Chapter 2 articulated the workload burden of special education teachers. As noted by Williams and Gersch (2004), the issue of burdensome amounts of paperwork was identified by the experienced teachers in their study as the most significant cause of stress. Billingsley (2004b) called attention to workload conditions in special education and raised the question of the necessity of all the requirements placed on special education teachers by the school, the district, as well as the state and federal mandated rules and regulations. Certainly, the responses of the nine participants in this study gave this researcher insight into their perceptions of the ordinary work day at The Apple School and their analysis of the organizational work requirements factors that impacted their decision to move to the public school.
Primary Question 3

Primary question 3 asked the respondents to what extent compensation influenced retention. The five sub-questions were designed to draw out deeper insights into the respondents’ mind-set on their compensation. The sub-questions asked the respondents to describe their main concerns regarding compensation, to discuss their satisfaction with the salary earned and the workload at the private school, to compare the salary earned and the workload differences from the private school to the public school, to enumerate what compensation attracted them to the public school, and to list some recommendations they could make to the private school for improvement in teacher compensation.

As with the workload concern, the variable of salary or compensation contributing to attrition and retention of special education teachers was discussed at length in the literature. Financial considerations were frequently the first organizational factor described in the literature. The nine respondents in this study did not hesitate to affirm their belief that the compensation they earned at The Apple School was not appropriate compensation. Responder #1 immediately got to the core of her feelings, stating, “With my years of experience prior to working at [The Apple School], I would have definitely appreciated a higher salary.” Responder #9 simply said, “I would say salary was a big issue.” Responder #2 described, “Actually for me at the time in my life, the benefits and all of that, that was really good for me. The salary was a big thing for me, but I guess I also understood it was a private school, so I accepted that. I think the biggest thing that made me want to leave was just the salary.” Responder #3 offered, “That was probably my main reason for leaving. So it was a pretty big gap for the public school that I wound up transferring to … it was hard for me to like save up for my own place.” Responder #4 gave examples at length on the way the public school offered opportunities to supplement teacher salary, including contracts that delineated the incremental steps for years of service and further
educational degrees, and the stipends for various activities in the school. She said, “There’s always that opportunity to get that extra growth and that extra paycheck.”

Responder #5 took this question to a broader level than just salary. She discussed her satisfaction with The Apple School’s tuition reimbursement plan and compensation for health benefits. She “felt that the salary was okay for starting position. I just felt that there wasn’t much potential for growth. I just felt like I was almost capped out. That was actually a decent reason for me to accept a new position where the potential for making more money in years to come, make a decent amount more. Of course, more money is always an incentive … and we need money.” Responder #6 echoed the previous sentiments with, “I just think in comparison to what I was offered in the public school, it was a big enough jump that that was the main thing that really had me leave I would say.” She then qualified that statement with, “I don’t ever think the compensation was not good, but I also think I had been there for quite some time and I had moved up, but I was one of the people who was there for five, six years, and I was making barely more than somebody else who had just come, just because the longevity compensation I don’t feel was enough. Then comparatively, when this job was offered to me, it was significantly more money for my same credentials and whatever.” Responder #7 explained her need to have a second job to complement her salary. Responder #8 spoke to the change in moving forward in her lifestyle. She said, “The compensation was working for me up until my life started getting more expensive.” The descriptions given in the answers to this sub-question clearly indicate that compensation was indeed the main concern in the respondents leaving the private school for the public school.

The second sub-question dovetailed on the first sub-question, asking the respondents to discuss their satisfaction with the salary earned and the workload at the private school. Seven
respondents stated they were dissatisfied with the salary earned and the workload. Two respondents were satisfied. Responder #4 said, “I felt like as a teacher when my first year was set I was like, Wow okay, it’s a pretty good salary, but that’s also through a twelve-month span. It was a good stepping stone. I didn’t mind that. I was pretty satisfied.” Responder #7 replied, “Honestly, I was happy. I was fine living off of that salary.”

Responder #1’s explanation essentially summed up the reactions of the other six respondents’ beliefs about their satisfaction with the salary earned and the workload at the private school. She said, “I was quite dissatisfied with the ratio. I guess you can call it, of salary versus workload. The workload at [The Apple School] is more than I’ve ever had to do, which they appreciate, at the same time, because I learned so much by working there. It takes a lot to learn a school such as [The Apple School], the organization, the detail, the preparation, I understand all that. I do feel the salary could have been much more for how much we were worked there. How much we were expected to do during my daily job.” Responder #2 and Responder #9 said, respectively, “No. I felt the workload was too much for the salary that I earned,” and “That’s where there was a problem.”

Responder #3 added, “I don’t want to say I do less in the public school, I think I, for myself, because my standards are so high coming from a place like this [The Apple School], I create more work for myself. I know that I could get away with doing less in public school and making more.” Responder #5 felt that “when I was working in private school, I had a decent amount of responsibilities and workload and I was making less money. Versus in (public school) I feel like the hours kind of matches as well … as well as I feel like the, I don’t know what the right word is … pressure or expectations. That’s still not exactly the right word I’m looking for—versus I’m getting paid more in the public school but work less hours in less amount of
months as well as different kind of work. Also, I’m given more time to do … the work might be similar, the load, but I’m given more time to do it during the work day. I’m having to work through my lunch but I just don’t like to have to work after school. I end up getting about an hour and a half of lunch/prep time every day so I’m really able to get my work done within that amount of time. And that I never have to bring anything home so that’s really nice to be able to focus and get whatever I need to get done within my work hours that I’m getting paid for.”

Responder #6 referred to her perception of an imbalance between classroom workload at the private school where she would have 40 programs to check while another classroom teacher might only have 20 programs to check. She elaborated, “But depending on what kid you had and what group you had and what those students were working on, there were times where, yeah, I was really staying there and checking, doing a whole lot of paperwork and felt kind of overwhelmed that I’m staying there late, I’m going home and finishing work. What am I getting for this? Stressed out trying to get it done.” Responder #8 concluded her description with, “If you were willing to put in the extra time to complete extra work, it wasn’t a very equal balance.”

The same opinions flowed over into responses to the third sub-question, which asked the respondents to compare the salary earned and workload difference from the private school to the public school. All nine respondents stated that the ratio between salary earned and workload was different in the public school. Their perspectives, though, did disagree on the specific differences. Responder #1 said that at the public school, “I do earn more money, a significant amount, and I do happen to do a significant amount of less work. I do strive to emulate as much as I can, that I learned at [The Apple School], but I’m not expected to do as much as I was at [The Apple School].” Responder #2 and Responder #6 both recognized the level of independence they had in their teaching responsibilities. Responder #2 explained, “We’re just
expected to get it done. We’re our own boss in a way, so we know that we have to get it done, so we’re not under such strict guidelines and strict … timelines. I think in that sense, that also eases the stress a little bit and then so I feel like because that extra responsibility of being our own boss is put on us, I feel like that’s the extra salary too.” Responder #6 believed that “the workload is different in the fact that no one’s really checking on me. …no one is checking my graphs, no one is checking my data, and no one is checking that type of stuff.” Responder #3 reiterated that she does about the same amount of work at the public school for more money. She added her feelings about the independence she is given, stating, “I think I probably do the same amount of work there, I just don’t have anyone checking my work there.” Responder #4 described teaching at the public school was “almost a different type of workload. … I have my prep period to do that, so I’m not doing planning any afternoon. I’m planning a lot more in the morning for my day, and I’m like, Okay, my day is that.” Responder #5 thought that “it’s a hard question to answer. There was a decent amount of work, but any job is going to have a decent amount of work; that’s what a job is for. I think that if you were making more money it would make it seem more manageable.” Responder #7 said that “the amount of support you get at [The Apple School], with the paperwork and with the workload, it kind of helped ease some of the pain.” Responder #8 said of her workload with the prep time allotted in the public school that “I balance out more of my salary.” Responder #9 stated, “And here I would say in the public school a lot of that paperwork and behavior plans and all that lays on the behaviorist, not so much the teacher.”

To the sub-question of the difference between the private school and the public school in regard to the salary earned and the workload, the answers showed a better balance of workload to salary for all nine respondents. A big difference that seemed to make a distinction in their
satisfaction with their workload, expressed in various ways, was the level of independence they felt they had in their teaching.

The fourth sub-question asked what compensation attracted the participant to the public school. Eight respondents stated salary was the attraction. Three respondents included benefits, one also mentioned tuition reimbursement, another mentioned the appeal of stipends to increase her salary, and one specifically cited her shorter commute along with the higher salary. Responder #3 said, “The salary amount, it was like a $15,000 raise.” Responder #4 elaborated on the benefits of a contract with “three years of tiers of increasing” her salary, and the benefit of tenure for job security. Responder #7 deviated from salary per se as the attraction and stated, “I think it’s just the ability to move up … the steps and to be able to … I don’t know. I guess just the room to move up.”

This sub-question’s responses supported the findings from the three previous sub-questions: that salary was indeed the attraction to the public school sector positions of all nine respondents. It also led this researcher into examining the final sub-question of what recommendations respondents could make to the private school for improvement in teacher compensation. Once again, salary was the unanimous factor. All respondents recommended increasing the amount of the salary, with two respondents suggesting the private school make opportunities or ways to make extra money, two respondents advocating incremental increases in salary every year, one respondent proposing performance-based assessment be implemented, and one respondent indicating that the teachers should be reimbursed for family consultation.

Responder #3 qualified her answer by saying, “If I could have made more money, I would have stayed here, because the learning experience here was unlike anything I’ve had. That was a hard decision to make because I felt like I still had so much more to learn from here, but at the
end of the day if I wanted to move out and afford things on my own, it was kind of nice to have that extra money for sure.” Responder #4 was realistic in her response, saying, “Offering different ways to earn extra because, you know, the economy is not that great and everyone’s looking for ways to get compensated more for their time.” Responder #6 recommended reimbursement for family consultations “because it’s a big commitment that you have to be there every week at the same time and the parents are counting on you for that.”

In summary, the third primary question asked the participants to what extent compensation influenced retention. Five sub-questions were designed to elicit their perceptions of the main concern regarding compensation, their satisfaction with the salary earned, the workload at the private school, the comparison of the salary earned and workload difference from the private school to the public school, the compensation that attracted them to the public school, and, finally, the recommendations they would make to the private school for improvement in teacher compensation. The findings were unmistakable.

All nine respondents believed salary was the main concern regarding compensation, and that the compensation at The Apple School was not appropriate for the amount of work and time required in their contract. All nine respondents felt the salary earned and the workload was different in the public school, with respondents’ view of the public school ratio to be more balanced or equal. Eight of the nine respondents identified salary as the attraction to the public school. The recommendation given by the nine respondents for improvement in teacher compensation in the private school was to increase their salary.

These findings concur with the review of the literature on financial compensation in Chapter 2 of this study that indicated financial incentives certainly are a key factor in retention but not the fundamental reason for retention. Aguenza and Som (2012) believed there are six
factors that are crucial motivators in job retention, three of which were clearly articulated by the respondents in this primary question of compensation. These three motivating factors include financial rewards, recognition, and work-life balance. All of these three factors were identified by the respondents in at least one of the five sub-questions on compensation. In an in-depth examination of the nine respondents’ discussions, it became apparent to this researcher that the foremost issue with financial compensation was not the actual amount of salary each certified special education teacher earned but rather their perception of the fairness or equality of the salary with the heavy workload, the work hours, and the work-life issues they experienced.

**Primary Question Four**

The fourth primary question asked the participants to what extent the quality of autism intervention influenced retention. Four sub-questions designed to obtain their realistic views were to compare the quality of services for individuals with ASD experienced in the private school versus the public school, the recommendations they could give to make to the private school for improvement in autism intervention, describe the incentive(s) caused you to leave the private school for the public school and conversely, the incentive(s) which cause(s) you to stay at the public school.

The response to the first sub-question of comparing the quality of services for individuals with ASD the participants experienced in the private school versus the public school was unanimous. All nine respondents stated that the private school offered a higher level of service to the individuals with ASD. All nine respondents stated that the public school offered a lower level of service to the individuals with ASD. The respondents were very vocal and enthusiastic about their intervention experiences at the private school.
Responder #1’s evaluation of the private school quality of autism intervention was “Fortunately, or unfortunately, there is no comparison between the programs that [The Apple School] offers versus the public school. [The Apple School], and the private school is the top-notch preferred, in terms of their teaching and their programs, and their personal element.” Responder #2 stated “It’s much better here than it is at my public school. …I do have to say, the interventions here in a private school are way more advanced.” Responder #3 said “Oh, I could say without a doubt this is exceptionally better. If I could, off the record, refer all of my students here, I would.” Responder #4 verbalized “Okay, so here the quality, I mean, you get the best, you get such great training here as a teacher.” Responder #5 praised “the quality of education at [The Apple School]; you just have more resources available and more mentors there to help guide you. All the families there are super involved, not all but most of them. I feel like things were looked at more with a fine tooth comb; if things were going wrong, people were there to help making sure things are going in the right direction.” She continued later in this same response “At [The Apple School], it was really nice that there was a supervisor for 1 or 2 classrooms and they can really concentrate on making sure those kids’ behaviors and interventions were successful and progressing. In the public school I’m in right now, that’s not the case. The behaviorists are spread between a lot of classrooms….” Responder #6 believed “it’s like comparing apples to oranges because [The Apple School] gives the best training for their staff I feel like. Everyone there knows what’s going on and so those kids are the luckiest kids ever. I feel like who are they, because they really are getting the best quality. Even just the school and materials and things like that, but especially the staff training and staff members there really you can’t compare.” Responder #7 continued this commendation saying “I think that the amount of knowledge and supervision and people you have working behind you at the private school is
much stronger than what you have at a public school. …having that 24/7 support where you can walk down the hallway and run into someone and ask a question was, I think, pretty important. … I think the support system that a private school has…is a big asset.” Responder #8 felt that “in the private school, the autism intervention services were just extremely amazing and at the private school, the services were just so, more individualized and very dedicated to each student. There was a whole team of people to work with each individual and it was constantly updated and constantly overlooked to make sure there’s progress.” Responder #9 thought “private is ten times better and I say that all the time. If I was a parent of a child with ASD, I most definitely would send them to a private school if I could because you can’t compare.”

Five respondents also discussed the professional development and training they received at The Apple School versus the public school. Responder #1 said of the private school, “Their strategies and their training, which is extremely important, because we rarely at the public school get training and our teaching assistants never get training. That’s so important, not only initial training when you first get hired, but ongoing training. Yes, you can choose workshops and what not, but at the private school, we were constantly being trained to do the work. … We always had an advisor with us helping us …. To just have them follow programs.” Responder #2 declared “I’m more than confident to say that I am where I am because I worked here [The Apple School] and I’m beyond grateful for that. I didn’t realize at the time how good the training was when I was here. I feel like I can…from the training I got here, I feel comfortable enough also passing that on to the parents in the room to make the classroom successful and hopefully have the kids learn.” Responder #3 said “I do the best I can to replicate what I’ve learned from here, but you don’t have the staff that are trained, you don’t have the support you have here, and the administrators who know what they’re doing. I only have a BCBA, it’s like twice a week for
me, other than that, it’s like a kind of figure it out you’re on your own.” Responder #4 discussed her development and training, saying “You learn so much more and honestly, the training that I received here has helped me so much as a teacher in a public school.” She described her experience at the public school as “You’re not alone, but you are alone almost. As a teacher you’re alone and you have to train the aides.” Responder #5 explained “I’ve learned so much by working at [The Apple School]. …if I look at my classroom, I feel like my classroom is very similar to [The Apple School]’s in a sense because I’m taking what I did there and I do it in my classroom. In my classroom, the quality and direction of services is pretty decent.” Responder #4 elaborated on the structure of the private school versus the public school, stating “Not as like regimented like as a private school has but what a private school has to be because they have certain standards that they have to fulfill and in public school you can get away with a lot more.”

Following in the same theme, the second sub-question asked the participants for recommendations they could make to the private school for improvement in autism intervention. Five respondents stated they had no recommendations, namely responders #2, #3, #5, #6, and #9. Three responders, #4, #6, and #7, requested that The Apple School provide training programs to outside special education teachers and public schools. Responder #1 suggested increasing compensation and decreasing the working hours while Responder #8 said, “Just ongoing research and staying relevant with studies and with what other programs are doing.” Responder #5 offered, “Not that I can think of. You guys have it down pretty tight. I think you serve as a model for…public school.”

The responses of the nine respondents to the first and second sub-questions offer evidence that the private school does provide a higher level of autism intervention service than does the public school, in both education to the learners with ASD and professional development
and training to the teachers and staff. Given these accolades, the third sub-question was appropriate in asking the respondents what incentive(s) caused them to leave the private school for the public school. Six respondents stated salary was the main incentive, three felt it was the work hours, two believed the workload was also a factor, two cited that the commute to work also influenced their decision, and two indicated the main incentive for them was professional growth.

Once again, salary was included in the majority of respondents’ answers. Responders #3, #8, and #9 all agreed that salary was the critical factor while responders #2, #5, and #7 considered both salary and workload to be the crucial cause of their leaving for the public school. Responder #5 acknowledged “I didn’t want to leave. It was hard for me to leave. I miss [The Apple School] so much.” Responder #7 expressed that the required hours and the workload “was just really stressful on me and the hours were a long day.” Responder #8 admitted “it was an easier commute, there was a difference in salary and it was a classroom that I was interested in.” Responder #6 explained that “You guys were much better,…It was because it was down the block from my house.”

Professional growth was the decisive incentive for two respondents. Responder #1 offered, “I really enjoyed working at [The Apple School]. I really, really did. For my family, I just felt like I had to move on.” Responder #4 declared “Definitely the growth because I see myself as an LDTC.”

The final question in the interviews is sub-question four, asking the participants what incentive(s) cause(s) them to stay at the public school. Six respondents once again specified salary as the incentive to remain in the public school. Four respondents identified the hours and workload as their incentive to remain in the public school. Responder #1 enumerated “salary, the
benefits, the summers off, and eventually, the tuition.” She explained that “I do know that a lot of the teachers at [The Apple School] are young, and not even married, freshly out of college. They don’t have the extra responsibilities that come with a family, and the house.” Responder #3 also believed the “potential to get those raises” was an enticement to remain in the public school. Responders #4 and #9 cited job security as their main incentive. Responder #9 said, “Right now, it’s just tenure and job security and the salary.” Responder #4 expounded more, saying, “To know that I basically have job security after being there for four years… A lot of teachers want security because, you know, especially with the economy, you want like okay I know I’m going to be working there next year. Whereas with a private school, do I have a contract next year? I don’t know. Am I going to get a pay raise? I don’t know, it depends on the budget, and knowing again that I will have that pay raise.”

Responders #2 and #5 articulated their desire to continue the level of autonomy they experienced at the public school. Responder #2 simply said, “I think going back to that whole thing where we were on our own … not that there’s not someone. Obviously, my principal. Just that we’re more of our own boss a little bit.” Responder #5 clarified her need for autonomy in that “I have a lot of room to make my own decisions about everything. What I say is kind of what goes. I have a lot of control over that myself so I don’t have to check in with people as much. I really enjoy that aspect of it.”

In summary, the fourth primary question of to what extent did the quality of autism intervention influence retention revealed a dichotomy in the nine respondents’ answers. All nine respondents agreed that the quality of autism intervention services at the private school were of a higher level than the quality of autism intervention services at the public school. They also commended the level of professional development and training at The Apple School. The
majority of respondents did not have any recommendations to improve the private school intervention services.

**Research Questions Summary**

Throughout the four primary research question sub-question responses, all nine respondents referred to either aspects of salary, working hours, workload, growth potential, or the commute to work as incentives to leave the private school and to remain at the public school. While they indicated the level of independence and flexibility at the private school was viewed as a hindrance to continued employment at the private school, no respondent mentioned either factor as a primary motivator to move to the public sector.

As discussed in chapter 2, the review of the literature, numerous studies have been conducted regarding the retention and attrition of special education teachers as well as general education teachers. Of the major obstacles to retention, four factors stood out on almost every research study or journal article, namely administrative support, job characteristics including heavy workload and paperwork, financial compensation, and personal life and work balance. Workplace conditions were the central focus of a large majority of studies. Sundberg (2016) revealed his exploration into the reasons people quit their jobs and attributed attrition to the four variables of training, supervision, pay, and job satisfaction. The results of this study validated Boe and colleagues’ (1997) conclusion presented in chapter 2 that “no single predictor variable alone shows the potential to improve teacher retention dramatically” (p. 407). They further recognized that besides age, the only other significant predictor for special education teacher retention was salary (p. 408).

The responses of the nine certified special education teachers to the question of what motivated them to move from the private school teaching learners with ASD to continue teaching
learners with ASD in the public school clearly indicated predominantly the factors of salary or financial compensation. Following closely were the long required working hours and the heavy workload to be completed every day at the private school. During the discussion, a number of respondents addressed the issue of the need for the private school to be less structured and more flexible with the teachers’ work hours and to give more autonomy to these certified, experienced special education teachers. Billingsley (2004b) noted the broad range of factors that promote both special education and general education teachers’ attrition. She specifically outlined the personal circumstances and priorities that impinge on retention and encouraged administrators and policymakers to set in motion the actions that will ensure better job satisfaction and the workplace (Billingsley, 2004b). The central issue of this research was to identify the organizational factors that certified special education teachers find lacking in private schools for learners with ASD that motivates them to transfer to public schools while continuing to teach learners with ASD. The respondents clearly expressed that the organizational factors of salary and workload needed to be reappraised.

**Influences of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs**

The conceptual framework for this study was organizational theory and Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. Organizational theory looks at the interrelationship between the organization and the environment within the organization. A natural flow to design the study instrument was found in Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs since Maslow focused on the human motivations in organizations.

Using thematic coding for content, this researcher examined the nine participants’ responses to all the questions in the research instrument for correlation with Maslow’s Hierarchy
of Needs. Decisions are driven by motivations or factors that, like each person, are unique in how issues or problems are solved (David, 2014). Maslow initially believed there were five sequenced needs: immediate physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs (Kendrick et.al., 2010). He later expanded on these five needs to include growth needs. The growth needs include cognitive level, aesthetic needs, and transcendence needs. Maslow firmly believed that these human needs were fluid, always moving up and/or down the need levels (Kendrick et.al., 2010).

When designing this research study, this researcher anticipated that the nine subjects had achieved the lower level needs and as certified, experienced special education teachers, would be at the self-actualization need level. To discover if this was actually true, all nine responses to every question were critiqued for motivations that fit one of the levels of need. The researcher used her knowledge, experience and decision-making ability to categorize the content theme described by the respondent that corresponded to the description of one of the levels of need. Therefore, the following content theme, as shown on the thematic coding chart in chapter 3, incorporates six levels of need throughout the nine respondents’ answers with the explanation of need level contents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physiological Needs:</th>
<th>Workload</th>
<th>paper work, timelines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
<td></td>
<td>overwhelmed, exhausting, tough, strain on you</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safety Needs:</th>
<th>Compensation</th>
<th>salary, stipend, health benefits, tuition reimbursement, means to increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schedule</td>
<td></td>
<td>work hours, work week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-life balance</td>
<td></td>
<td>family time, personal element, for my family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commute</td>
<td></td>
<td>distance to work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracts</td>
<td></td>
<td>separate contracts school year and summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td></td>
<td>tenure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love and Belonging Needs:</td>
<td>Job satisfaction</td>
<td>enjoyed working, personal satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>more relaxed, less strict, wild west like, low key, fun activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative support</td>
<td>advisement, resources, left to our own devices, under staffed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Esteem Needs:</th>
<th>Independence</th>
<th>choice, optional, less supervision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>timeframe, own discretion, personal time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Cognitive Needs:           | Professional training and development | training programs, training I’d take all my life, learned more that I could imagine, helped me so much in my career, good to have on my resume |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Actualization Needs:</th>
<th>Growth potential</th>
<th>years of experience, potential for growth, move up, room to grow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interventions</td>
<td>model for other schools, best of the best, ongoing research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data gathered from the examination of the contents in each response were reviewed in relationship to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. Findings are discussed from the perspective of the levels of need revealed relative to the responses to all fourteen sub-questions. Based on the analysis of each respondent’s answers, with regard to the level of need, safety level of need was the most identified stage. Numerous references were made by the respondents across almost every sub-question concerning the scheduled work hours and days, compensation and stipend, job security, separate ESY contract, work-life balance, and their commute. Physiological need level appears to this researcher to be the second most occurring level of need as evident from the frequent identification of the workload/paperwork required at The Apple School versus the public school. This is not an unexpected finding given the focus of primary question 1 was on the ESY, primary question 2 was on teacher hours, and primary question 3 was centered on
compensation. All three questions supported a response that included compensation, work hours/schedule, and workload.

The esteem level of needs was evident as the third most-cited level of need which indicated the pride the respondents had in their work. The recurrent reference to the respondents’ feelings regarding their level of independence and the flexibility in work hours afforded them at The Apple School, and the public school was mentioned in various degrees across all four primary questions. Respondents often referred to their ability to choose or have options in regard to workload, work hours, and ESY participation at the public school.

Love and belonging level of need was expressed throughout the interview discussion. Descriptions were given that praised The Apple School’s resources, administrative support, and giving enough time off. Their level of job satisfaction was expressed in comments like being able to see the growth of the students, that the respondent enjoyed or loved being at The Apple School, and liked being involved and volunteering, while one respondent stated, “I did not want to leave.” Responder #3 offered her feelings about The Apple School, saying, “If I could have made more money, I would have stayed here, because the learning experience here was unlike anything I’ve had. That was a hard decision to make because I felt like I still had so much more to learn from here, but at the end of the day if I wanted to move out and afford things on my own, it was kind of nice to have that extra money for sure.” However, some respondents also thought the structure of The Apple School was too restrictive compared to the public school which they described as more relaxed, laid back, low key, and lenient.

The cognitive level of need was very apparent in the commendations given by all nine respondents as to the professional development, training, and experience they received at The Apple School. Comments expressed appreciation for the continuous training and development;
constant availability of an advisor to help them as needed; and support of the school, the families, and, as one respondent said, “administrators who know what they’re doing.” Responder #2 stated, “I do strive to emulate as much as I can, what I learned at [The Apple School], but I am not expected to do as much as I was at [The Apple School].”

The positive observations continued to be expressed at the self-actualization level by the respondents. They talked about their training and experience and the growth potential they seek at the public school. Although they acclaimed The Apple School as “a model for other schools,” “the best,” and “can’t beat it,” they looked to the public school for enhancement of their potential, greater professional fulfillment, and peak experiences. Two respondents specifically addressed the confidence they gained in teaching learners with ASD and that they try to replicate the knowledge and experience gained at The Apple School in their classrooms in the public school.

The answers of the nine respondents showed how their individual priorities or needs shifted according to the stage of their life and showed fluidity of movement among the levels of need. The respondents willingly expressed their feelings concerning each of the 14 sub-questions, and offered insight into the depth and complexity of their life experiences.

**Summary**

This research study investigated the specific factors that motivated certified special educators taught in The Apple School to leave their employment at The Apple School and continue teaching learners with ASD in the public school sector in a northeastern state of the United States. It sought to identify factors that have influenced private school educators of individuals with ASD to leave the private sector for the public sector either with inclusion or self-contained classrooms. Guided by Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Theory, it looked to identify
the extent to which organizational factors of The Apple School motivated the teachers’ decision to continue teaching learners with ASD in the public sector. Nine certified, experienced special education teachers participated in a one-on-one interview, either in person or by telephone. The research questionnaire was composed to elicit in-depth information addressing four primary research questions, and the subset to each question, regarding their workload. In addition, their perceptions on how the private school organization served their needs in comparison to the public school sector were sought. The questions were designed following Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Theory. The primary questions asked were: To what extent did the Extended School Year (ESY) influence their retention? To what extent did the school hours for teachers influence their retention? To what extent did compensation influence their retention? To what extent did the quality of autism intervention services influence their retention?

With respect to the first primary question, this study found that the ESY was not a major influence in the respondents’ decision to move from the private school to the public school. The major differences in the ESY program between the private school and the public school were compensation, hours, structure, and the individual teacher’s option to participate. Recommendations for improving the ESY program included increasing compensation and providing a stipend for ESY, less structure, more flexible teacher working hours, lower number of school days, and shorter school hours.

The second primary question addressed the extent the school hours for teachers influenced their retention; it was found that the school hours had a large impact on the special education teachers’ decision to leave the private school. Family consultation services and required attendance at school fundraising events after school hours did not greatly influence the decision to leave the private school. Working hours at the public school for all of the nine respondents
ranged from 7:55 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., generally. Recommendations for improving teacher hours were to provide a shortened work day, allow more flexible work time, give the special education teacher the independence to decide the time needed to successfully complete their required work, and decrease required workload.

The third primary question concerning the extent to which compensation influenced their retention was addressed by all nine respondents, who described their compensation at the private school as inadequate and the major reason for going to the public sector. The inability to increase their salary through stipends, additional work, or contract raises was explained. The workload at the private school did not compensate for the insufficient salary. The public school provided higher compensation with less work and time required. Salary was the number one reason for the attraction to the public school. The recommendation from all nine respondents to improve teacher compensation was undisputed: increase salary compensation.

The fourth primary question centered on the quality of autism intervention services at the private school and how it influenced teacher retention. All nine respondents rated the quality of services of the private school to be higher than those provided by the public school. Five respondents did not give any recommendations to improve private school autism intervention. Three respondents requested The Apple School to provide outsource training to other schools and individual teachers. Improved salary, work hours, workload, professional growth, and commute to work were given as the factors which caused the respondents to leave the private school for the public school. Improved salary, job security, hours, summers off, autonomy, relaxed structure, commute, and benefits were listed as incentives to remain in the public school.

The respondents were quick to praise The Apple School’s resources, administrative support, job satisfaction, time off, and the quality of autism intervention. All nine respondents
acclaimed the professional development, training, and experience they received at The Apple School. Comments expressed appreciation for the continuous training and development, constant availability of an advisor to help them as needed, and support of the school, the families, and knowledgeable and experienced administrators. A theme in the majority of the responses was stated by one respondent that [I] “strive to emulate as much as I can what I learned at [The Apple School].”

This study sought to provide some insight concerning the specific factors that motivated certified special educators taught in The Apple School to leave their employment at The Apple School and continue teaching learners with ASD in the public school sector in a northeastern state of the United States. Based upon the evaluation of the responses to the four primary questions, this researcher concluded that the private school for learners with ASD un-successfully met the basic human safety and physiological needs of the experienced, certified special education teachers in relation to workload and compensation. However, the private school successfully provided the nine respondents with a level of love and belonging needs, esteem needs, and cognitive needs.

From this data, information acquired will afford the opportunity for administrators of private schools for learners with ASD to adjust their organizational design to better meet human motivation needs and retain certified, experienced faculty.

**Recommendations**

This research sought to gain insight into the issue of teacher retention. It specifically sought the perceptions of nine certified, experienced special education teachers regarding the organizational factors that influence teacher transition from private school classrooms of
individuals with ASD to public school ASD classrooms. The research instrument was designed based on knowledge acquired through a review of the retention and attrition literature as well as personal experience as a principal at a private school for learners with ASD. Each participant in the research study taught at The Apple School for a minimum of one year and then left the private school to continue teaching learners with ASD in the public school.

This researcher wanted to know what organizational factors these nine certified, experienced special education teachers found detrimental to the special educators’ continued employment at The Apple School. The nine respondents were open and candid in their responses and willingly gave their recommendations to improve the special education teaching of learners with ASD at The Apple School. From this outcome data, the following recommendations are suggested for consideration by The Apple School’s Board of Directors, based on the respondents’ points regarding school hours, number of school days, teacher flexibility and independence, and financial compensation as they relate to school policies.

**Recommendations for Primary Question 1**

Recommendations for The Apple School based on the findings of the first primary research question, to what extent does ESY influence retention, include the following proposals.

- Increase annual teachers’ salaries to better compete with the stipends offered by the public school sector.
- Incorporate more activities such as an increased number of field trips, Fun Fridays, or other school-wide activities into the ESY to offset the daily routine experienced by the private school teachers, thereby incorporating some of the characteristics enjoyed by the public school teachers during the ESY program.
• Adjust the hours of the ESY. Some recommendations include shortening teachers’ hours during the ESY program, if not every day, then minimally on Fridays, allowing the teachers to plan for an early dismissal prior to each weekend.

• Modify the weekly schedule for the ESY program to four days per week for 7.5 weeks rather than the current five days a week for six weeks, giving the teachers a three-day weekend all summer long.

**Recommendations for Primary Question 2**

Recommendations for The Apple School based on the findings of the second primary research question, i.e., to what extent the school hours for teachers influence their retention, include the following suggestions.

• Provide a prep period for teachers to complete tasks during the school day rather than outside of school hours such as reports, evaluations, and data review.

• Increase compensation for those teachers assigned to evening home visits, taking into account the time period between their contracted end time and start of the home visit.

• Provide flexibility to those teachers who have scored as satisfactory on performance evaluations for both deadlines and how they spread out their 40-hour work week (e.g., if they arrive early, they can leave early as long as they have put in eight hours, they can leave early if needed even if they have not put in their eight hours that day as long as they have put in their 40 hours by the end of the week).

These recommendations may also benefit the reduction of teacher workloads.

**Recommendations for Primary Question 3**
Recommendations for The Apple School based on the findings of the third primary research question, i.e., to what extent compensation influences retention, include the following suggestions:

- Increase the overall salaries of certified special education teachers to be more competitive with the public schools.
- Incorporate larger longevity steps into the pay scale.
- Make the pay scale document available to the teachers to enable better financial planning for future financial compensation.
- Provide stipends to teachers who take on additional projects to help propel The Apple School forward and provide additional services.

**Recommendations for Primary Question 4**

Recommendations for The Apple School based on the findings of the fourth primary research question, i.e., to what extent the quality of autism intervention influences retention, are as follows:

- Include providing in-district training to public school district employees as an additional funding source to help support the increase in teacher salaries.
- Continue monitoring ASD research and autism intervention programs to maintain The Apple School’s state-of-the-art ASD intervention program and remain a model for other programs for learners with ASD.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This study sought the perceptions of nine certified, experienced special education teachers regarding the organizational factors that influence teacher transition from private school
classrooms of individuals with ASD to public school ASD classrooms. No research study in this review of the literature was found that addressed the issue of certified, special education teachers continuing to teach learners with ASD, but moving from the private school sector to the public school sector. This study sought to fill the void. The findings indicate that compensation, workload, work schedule, and teacher flexibility and independence were motivators that impacted the respondents’ decision to move from the private sector to the public sector continuing to teach learners with ASD. As discussed in the literature review, these variables have been identified by special educators in the public sector in every study reviewed to date.

Given the insight gained from this study, further research would assist in delving deeper into the organizational factors that motivate experienced, certified special education teachers to remain in the private sector. As The Apple School policies are amended or adjusted based on the findings of this study, research must continue to address the effects of these changes in the retention of special education teachers and build the body of knowledge in the private school sector. Specific areas for future research would add substance to the job satisfaction knowledge base in private schools for learners with ASD. The potential research could focus on the following areas.

- Interview experienced certified special education teachers who remain committed to The Apple School to identify the motivational factors that influence them in their tenure at The Apple School.
- Upon The Apple School’s Board of Directors’ implementation of increased financial compensation, evaluate the effectiveness of this increase on the retention rate of certified, experienced special education teachers.
• Evaluate the impact of increasing teacher flexibility and independence throughout various aspects of their workload responsibilities on retention.

• Replicate this study at other private schools for learners with ASD, utilizing the structure of this study format for gaining insight in similar issues that may exist in other schools.

The challenge that lies ahead for The Apple School is to develop an action plan that would adjust the policies of the organizational factors of compensation, school schedules of hours and days, as well as increased teacher flexibility for certified, experienced special education teachers. Administrators and policy makers must recognize why certified experienced teachers leave or move so they can make the changes necessary to motivate them to stay.

Retaining qualified special education teachers is a priority for The Apple School, without threatening the delivery of high quality services. These recommendations will enhance the effort to continue the high quality autism intervention services The Apple School is renowned for in providing interventions for the learner with ASD.
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Appendix A

INTERVIEW INFORMATION/QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS FOR LEARNERS WITH AUTISM WHO HAVE LEFT PRIVATE SCHOOL EMPLOYMENT FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYMENT TO ASCERTAIN THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCED THEIR DECISION TO MOVE EMPLOYMENT.

Demographics: Age ___________ Year Received Baccalaureate Degree ______

Degree Received________________________________________________

Certifications___________________________________________________

Year Began Teaching ________ Teaching Area________________________

Years Teaching in The Apple School______________

Years Teaching in Public School Setting in Autism classroom____________

Years Teaching in Public School Setting in classroom for learners with autism________

Was a Private School your first teaching position? __________

Interview Questions:

1. To what extent does Extended School Year (ESY) influence retention?

   A. How did the mandatory ESY requirement impact your decision to leave the private school?

   B. If the public school has an ESY, what are the differences between the private school ESY and public school ESY?

   C. If the public school does not have an ESY, what are the benefits of not working an ESY program?

   D. If the public school does not have an ESY, what are the consequences of not working an ESY program?

   E. What are some recommendations you could make to the private school for improvement of the ESY program?
2. To what extent do the school hours for teachers influence their retention?

A. How did working additional hours preparing reports and materials impact your decision to leave the private school?

B. How did the additional hours worked providing Family Consultation services impact your decision to leave the private school?

C. How did attending school fundraising events after school hours impact your decision to leave the private school?

D. What are your current working hours?

E. What are some recommendations you could make to the private school for improvement of teacher hours?

3. To what extent does compensation influence retention?

A. Describe your main concerns regarding compensation.

B. Discuss your satisfaction with the salary earned and the workload at the private school.

C. Compare the salary earned and workload difference from the private school to the public school.

D. What compensation attracted you to the public school?

E. What are some recommendations you could make to the private school for teacher compensation?

4. To what extent did the quality of autism intervention influence retention?

A. Compare the quality of services for individuals with autism you experienced in the private school versus the public school.

B. What are some recommendations you could make to the private school for improvement in autism intervention?

C. What incentive(s) caused you to leave the private school for the public school?

D. What incentive(s) causes you to stay at the public school?