WHAT RURAL SUPERINTENDENTS IN OHIO VALUE IN NEW TEACHER CANDIDATES

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO College of Education ASHLAND UNIVERSITY

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for The Degree Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership Richard D. Smith, Jr. B.S. M.Ed

ASHLAND UNIVERSITY ASHLAND, OHIO 2012
A Dissertation

entitled

WHAT RURAL SUPERINTENDENTS
IN OHIO VALUE IN
NEW TEACHER CANDIDATES

By

Richard D. Smith, Jr.

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

The Degree

Doctor of Education in Leadership Studies

Dr. Carla Edlefson, Committee Chair  Date

Dr. Ann Converse Shelly, Co-Chair  Date

Dr. Larry Cook, Committee Member  Date

Dr. Harold E. Wilson, Committee Member  Date

Dr. Judy A. Alston, Chair, Department of Leadership Studies  Date

Dr. James Van Keuren, Dean, College of Education  Date

Dr. W. Gregory Gerrick, Dean, of the Graduate School  Date

Ashland University
March 2012
The purpose of this study was to have a better understanding of what rural superintendents are looking for in new first-year teachers, and to provide that information to future teaching candidates and colleges of education that are preparing teachers for the 21st Century classroom. Over the past twenty years, superintendents have not changed in what they value in new teachers. Rural superintendents ranked these characteristics of new teacher applicants as most important in this order: self-motivated, certification, communication skills, works well with others, and a tie among strong teaching skills, cooperative, and enthusiastic. When teacher applicant skills were grouped into personal skills and professional skills, rural superintendents gave statistically significantly higher ratings to the personal skills. Rural superintendents in Ohio value the principal’s involvement and the interviews as the most important part of the district hiring process. Rural superintendents feel there are gaps in the partnership between school districts and colleges of education, and they desire to see colleges provide more preparation with new teacher candidates in teaching experiences, student teaching, classroom management, communication skills, common core knowledge, and assessment knowledge.
DEDICATION

To my wonderful family who has patiently encouraged me to complete this task. I would not be at this point today on this dissertation or my career without the overwhelming support of my lovely wife. She has proof-read many drafts and has encouraged my professional growth. I could not have done this without her love.

I also want to make it known that I am a former special education student who has struggled with language all my life. I went to speech training as a small child in the outside trailer for special help in elementary school. My senior year was one-on-one with an English instructor. Even in college I needed assistance. My hope is that I can encourage other students with learning disabilities that, with the right tools, infrastructure, great teachers, and personal perseverance, they can achieve life’s goals. My message to them would be, “Please don’t ever give up or feel you are not smart enough, because with hard work and effort, you can overcome that which tries to hold you back.”
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank Dr. Carla Edlefson, my dissertation chair, for the countless hours she spent helping me with this document. She invested phone calls, meetings, personal time, and encouragement to help me complete this project. I would also like to thank my committee of Dr. Ann Shelly and Dr. Larry Cook for their valuable advice and assistance on this dissertation.

Again, as a special education student, I could not have achieved this without my proof-readers: Suzanne Smith (wife), Roger Shaull (father-in-law), Don and Lynne Smith (parents), and Dr. Dale Rush (cohort 9 brother). All gave hours of their time to read and re-read chapters to catch my numerous errors.

There were three professors who, early in my career, made a large impact on my getting into education and making me the administrator I am today. The first two are Dr. Patricia Bower and Dr. John Harper, both of Charleston Southern University. Dr. Bower was the Dean of Education and worked with me weekly on my writing skills until I passed the South Carolina exam to enter the college of education program. Dr. John Harper was my college advisor and a great professor who always encouraged me as a young student. I am sure these two were instrumental in my being awarded Student Teacher of the Year in 1996 and starting my career off on a positive note. Third, I must thank Dr. Gregory Gerrick at Ashland University. He was my professor, later a mentor, and today a colleague and friend. He led me, through my administration class, from principal to superintendent. He encouraged me to apply to this doctoral program. Our hours of discussions and debate have been impactful in shaping who I am as an educational leader today. These and many others -- friends, family, and the North Union Board of Education -- provide me with the strength, confidence, and support needed to complete this study and earn my degree.
### TABLE OF CONTENTS

#### CHAPTER

**I.  THE STUDY**

- Introduction ................................................................................. 1  
- Background of the Study .......................................................... 3  
  - Teacher Preparation for Licensure ........................................ 3  
  - Hiring/Organizational Fit ....................................................... 6  
  - Students As Consumers of the New-Teacher Product 6  
- Statement of the Problem ............................................................ 7  
- Significance of the Study ............................................................ 9  
- Overview of Methodology .......................................................... 9  
- Limitations ............................................................................. 10  
- Conclusion ............................................................................... 11  

**II.  REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

- Introduction ................................................................................. 14  
- Characteristics of Effective Teachers ....................................... 15  
  - Student-Teacher Relationship .............................................. 18  
- Education Colleges’ Curriculum Focus ..................................... 20
III. METHODOLOGY

Introduction.......................................................... 36

Research Methodology............................................ 37

Research Questions and Related Hypotheses.............. 38

Research Approval..................................................39

Research Context and Research Participants..............40

Instrumentation......................................................40

Data Collection.....................................................42

Validity.................................................................42

Data Analysis.........................................................43
IV. ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction ......................................................... 46

Response to the Survey ........................................... 46

Descriptive Statistics .............................................. 47

Research Questions .............................................. 50

Question One ....................................................... 50

Question Two ....................................................... 52

Question Three .................................................... 53

Question Four ....................................................... 58

Qualitative Results ............................................... 64

Analysis of Qualitative Data ................................. 71

Summary ............................................................. 71

V. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Introduction ......................................................... 73

Review of Methodology ......................................... 73

Summary of Results .............................................. 75
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Gender and Experience of Participating Superintendents………………… 48

Table 2: Characteristics of School Districts of Participants………………………… 49

Table 3: Characteristics of Teacher Candidates Ranked
by Rural Ohio Superintendents……………………………………………….. 51

Table 4: Percent of Respondents Who Rated Each Characteristic a 4 or 5……… 52

Table 5: Values Placed on Various Hiring Procedures
by Rural Superintendents in Ohio……………………………………………… 59

Table 6: Chi-Square Test of Independence between Valued Teacher
Characteristics and Importance of Hiring Procedures ………………….. 61

Table 7: Relationship between Values Placed on Hiring Procedures and Ratings
for Personal and Professional Characteristics of Teacher Applicants……… 62

Table 8: Qualitative Data Theme …………………… 65

Table 9: Comparison of Rank Orders of Valued Characteristics of New Teacher,
Various Studies ……………………………………………………………….. 79
CHAPTER I

Introduction

For decades the quality of American education has been debated and criticized, ostensibly to bring about improvement. On November 12, 2009, in a town hall event with Warren Buffett and Bill Gates at Columbia Business School, the quality of the public education system in general was discussed. The event was called “Keeping America Great,” and it was conducted in a question-and-answer format. Gates (as cited in Crippen, 2009) was asked what he worries about late at night, and he stated,

The long-term thing that I don’t lose sleep over but I worry about is that we do have our education system, particularly the K through 12 parts, not improving as much as we should. And it’s an important system for opportunity; it’s an important system for the economic strength of the country, and since it hasn’t improved that much, that’s a bit scary and needs a lot more attention. (p. 12)

Perhaps people like Gates and others hold these opinions because making improvements in education is a slow process. But is it a slowness of educators’ own making?

There is a joke that says today’s classroom is the only place where the early American storybook character, Rip Van Winkle, could wake up after sleeping for 100 years and feel completely comfortable, though he would not have a working knowledge of today’s computers, SmartBoards, and ever-increasing curriculum standards. Yet as I talk with colleagues around the state of Ohio, and when I visit many classrooms, I feel like Rip Van Winkle, sitting in the same classroom that I sat in as a student 30 years ago.
As a researcher I share Bill Gates’ concerns that America’s educational system too seldom lives up to its potential. This is especially true in rural school districts where the challenges include lack of funding, recruitment of teachers, and a culture of tradition and contentment (Gibbs, 2000). In Ohio there are 339 rural school districts out of 619 school districts listed by the Ohio Department of Education (Ohio Department of Education, 2007). These rural districts face unique challenges in finding the right individuals for twenty-first century revolutionary change in education.

What can educators do to change the conversation about our education system from negative debates to positive conversations that lead to improvements in a relatively short time? As a superintendent, I often feel detached from the classroom. No matter how much time I spend in my schools developing relationships with kids, I usually cannot impact students in the same way a teacher can. For this reason, I believe the main focus for bringing about improvement in education should be on the classroom teacher. Teachers are individuals with their own personalities and opinions, so it is important to note that change is not something that can be forced upon educators; instead there must be conversation between administrators and teachers. As Wurtzel (2007) stated, “Improving practice can only be done by teachers, not to teachers” (p. 30). This is why district administrators often remark that they look for the young, pliable, new teachers who are enthusiastic (Rutledge, Harris, Thompson, & Ingle, 2008).

Preparing someone for a career in education is a multistep process. First there is the acceptance process and standards for new recruits that are required by most colleges of education. This is followed by the design of the teacher preparation program. Programs usually range from four to five years, resulting in a bachelor’s or master’s
degree in education. Student teachers then face the accountability measures of state testing, licensure, and certification. Finally, a new teacher is turned over to the school district for candidate screening, organizational fit, and hiring. Once the teacher makes it to the classroom, the processes of gaining experience, being mentored, and annual professional development further enhance the teacher’s career.

As a superintendent in Ohio I have the direct responsibility of recommending new teachers to my board of education. There is, however, a great deal of work that goes into creating a highly-qualified teacher before his or her name ever reaches a board agenda.

Background of the Study

Teacher Preparation for Licensure

Each part of the educational process has faced its own share of criticism. Recently there have been condemnations of teacher preparation and state licensure programs (Levine, 2006; Rotherman & Mead, 2004; US Department of Education, 2002). Public Law 110-107, which is best known as No Child Left Behind (2001), (NCLB), states in section 201 that its purpose is to “increase the number of highly qualified teachers” (p. 196). U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige’s 2003 Second Annual Report said that the goal of NCLB was to have all teachers (working in their core academic subjects) to be highly qualified by the end of the 2005-06 school year (U.S. Department of Education, 2003, p. iii). The two main principles behind this goal were (a) to raise academic standards for teachers and (b) to lower barriers in order to prevent
talented people from being kept out of the teaching profession. Paige stated that it was the purpose of Title II to “create a national reporting system on the quality of teacher preparation” (p. iii). NCLB did stimulate conversation about professional training of teachers and about who should be in front of our nation’s classrooms. By 2006, school districts that received Title I funds were required to ensure that the new teachers they hired met Congress’s definition of “highly qualified” (U.S. Department of Education, 2003, p. 3). This brought a renewed focus on how teacher preparation was conducted in the nation’s higher education system.

Levine (2006) suggested that our colleges of education were ill-prepared to make these changes because there were no common standards among college programs. They all had different requirements. Levine stated that “the only commonality among teacher preparation programs of higher education is their diversity” (p. 15). He also suggested, “Current teacher education programs are largely ill-equipped to prepare current and future teachers for new realities” (p. 12). U.S. Secretary of Education, Rod Paige, implied there was “little evidence” that student achievement improved based on the amount or quality of educational course work done by their teachers (U.S. Department of Education, 2002, p. 19). Because of this limitation, he wanted to lower barriers by finding alternative ways to certify teachers and to allow states to streamline their certification process from the traditional ways in order to attract better candidates to the teaching profession.
Levine (2006) surveyed teacher preparation in areas such as “classroom management; subject matter mastery; ability to use technology; ability to apply different pedagogical approaches…” (p. 31). Subject knowledge is a key of educational programs and was rated most important on Levine’s survey by alumni, faculty, deans, and principals. Less than half the principals surveyed, however, believed that college programs were preparing new teachers even moderately well in the eleven survey areas on knowledge. Levine found that 62% of alumni believed their school did not prepare them to cope with classroom realities. The survey also revealed that principals did not believe new teachers were prepared for integrating technology, implementing curriculum, using student performance assessments, and many other important classroom tasks (pp. 31-32). This could be related to his statement that “the fundamental weakness in the teacher education curriculum is the lack of agreement about what it should be producing” (p. 35).

Biggs (2009) found that in colleges of education in Ohio the professors believed their graduates were better prepared for their first year of teaching than in the past. This was similar to Levine’s (2006) survey data where deans and faculty members of universities and colleges rated their teacher preparation higher in every category than the principals who had their graduates in the classroom. Despite what deans and faculty members believe about teacher preparation programs, Levine suggested that teacher education programs are “unruly and chaotic,” and they face extinction if they cannot demonstrate their graduates’ positive impact on student achievement (p. 3).
Hiring/Organizational Fit

There have been studies on the hiring process for teachers, organizational fit, and what school districts look for in first-year teachers (Abernathy, Forsyth, & Mitchell, 2001; Braun, Willems, Brown, & Green, 1987; Cable & Judge, 1996; Cain-Caston, 1999; Liu, 2005; Ralph, Kesten, Lang, & Smith 1998; Theel & Tallerico 2004). There are studies that have found that quality certified teachers have a positive impact on student achievement (e.g., Darling-Hammond, 2000, 2007; Darling-Hammond, Holztman, Galin, & Helig, 2005; Ferguson, 1991; Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000; Rowan, Correnti, & Miller, 2002; Sanders & Rivers, 1996). Darling-Hammond (2000) promotes hiring only teachers from fully accredited teacher programs, and her research indicates a positive relationship between professional accreditation and teacher qualifications (p. 33).

We must also consider the school districts that are employing these new college graduates. What are they looking for in high-quality candidates coming to them out of college? A superintendent of a smaller Ohio district told me it seemed to him that every year he had to interview more people to find one quality person for the classroom (B. Gast, personal communication, October 12, 2009). As a superintendent I can understand this. I feel the most important job I have is hiring the right person for the classroom.

Students As Consumers of the New-Teacher Product

There is a third component of the new-teacher process that often seems to be left out, and that is the students in the classroom. This component includes what students
want from teachers and how a teacher’s levels of skill, energy, enthusiasm for their subject, and instructional strategies impact learning (Bettencourt, Gillett, Gall, & Hull, 1983; Hattie, 2009; McCoy, 2009).

How does an administrator utilize the student body’s perception of what qualities a fresh new teacher must possess to become a high quality educator in the classroom? Who can motivate students to learn? What do students think is needed in today’s classroom, which will enhance their ability to succeed in the twenty-first century?

These questions are especially challenging in the rural environments. Schools in rural areas have been known as producers of hard-working, non-college-bound graduates, but fall behind academically in preparing students for college (Gibbs, 2000). According to Gibbs, with an ever-shrinking job market the challenge for rural districts is finding teachers to motivate students for high-skill jobs and college readiness for the twenty-first century. Barley (2009) looked at 120 teacher preparation institutions and found only 17 that had programs emphasizing rural conditions. That makes finding the right teachers for the rural student an extra challenge.

Statement of the Problem

On November 12, 2008, I attended a lecture entitled “High Quality Teacher Preparation to Address America’s Urgent Needs: An Imperative” by Dr. James G. Cibulka, the President of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. In his lecture he said, “What I have been hearing from colleagues is the need to make
changes in teacher preparation programs.” As it relates to rural schools, Monk’s (2007) study pointed out that few colleges or universities had any courses relating to the conditions or culture of working in a rural community. To understand what changes are needed we must first understand what is needed in today’s classrooms. What are the heads of educational organizations, such as superintendents of school districts, looking for in new teacher candidates? In Ohio little over half of the 619 school districts are considered rural. Gibbs (2000) suggested these districts have unique issues compared to the urban and suburban districts. Monk stated, “rural conditions can vary greatly across settings” (p. 10). He said that rural communities offer few choices for shopping or medical services, and limited housing options and aging community population make recruiting and retaining new high-quality teachers more difficult. Monk also noted that class sizes were usually smaller in rural schools, and that lower teacher salaries, lack of subject-area peers, limited resources, and fewer specialized high school course offerings are other challenges facing a new rural teacher. Recognizing all these challenges facing rural schools, my research questions were:

1. What applicant characteristics do rural superintendents in Ohio value when they are hiring new first year teachers coming out of college preparation programs?

2. Do rural superintendents value personal characteristics more highly than professional characteristics when considering applicants for first year teaching positions? Personal characteristics include caring, communication and enthusiastic. Professional characteristics are represented by certification, knows subjects and strong teaching skills.
3. Do any of these preferred characteristics vary by superintendent’s years of experience, gender, district type, student achievement, or district resources?

4. Is there any relationship between characteristics valued by superintendents and their hiring procedures?

Significance of the Study

It is the purpose of this descriptive study to help find the best teachers for the field of education and to develop new understanding between colleges of education and school districts in regards to what is needed in today’s classrooms, especially in rural areas. We might improve everything from recruitment, admissions, curriculum, student achievement, and even teacher fitness and career mortality rates (Zeichner & Conklin, 2008).

Overview of Methodology

This dissertation was a descriptive research study to gain a greater understanding of rural school districts’ needs. The purpose of this study was to have a better understanding of what rural superintendents are looking for in new first-year teachers, and to provide that information to future teaching candidates and colleges of education that are preparing teachers for the 21st Century classroom. One of the issues this study hopes to describe is the philosophies and methods of rural superintendents in Ohio that
govern the hiring of first year teachers who are recent college graduates. The methodology of this study was, for the most part, quantitative research through survey design and descriptive statistics (Creswell, 2008). A positivist approach was taken to determine what rural superintendents’ value when hiring. Direct observation, logical inference, and measurement are how a positivist gains knowledge. Analysis of the data focused on what rural superintendents value in new teachers and the hiring procedures they use. The goal was to increase knowledge of what rural superintendents believe they need in their districts.

This study used both quantitative and qualitative survey data to describe rural superintendents’ values and procedures for hiring first-year teachers. A self-reported survey I developed was chosen as the means of data collection for this study because of feasibility, low cost, and ease of response through email, thereby improving the efficiency of data collection (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009).

Limitations

This study was limited to superintendents in rural districts as classified in the Ohio Department of Education data. The results of this study may not be indicative of other types of districts in Ohio and may not be generalizable to districts outside the state of Ohio. The survey questionnaire-type of study is subject to the limitations of the respondents’ candor and honesty.
Conclusion

In 2011 the quality of education in America continues to be an important issue. It has been a central topic during Presidential and local elections, in colleagues’ discussions, and in many articles that have been published. A Columbus Dispatch article on December 28, 2008, headlined, “What Makes a Good Teacher Proves a Test-worthy Question.” This article suggested that advanced degrees and teaching experience do not necessarily predict a teacher’s success in the classroom, and that there seems to be an unquantifiable understanding that one knows good teaching when one sees it (“What Makes a Good Teacher,” 2008). This quality has been captured in movies based on the lives of real teachers such as “The Ron Clark Story,” “Freedom Writers,” and “The Great Debaters.”

Like much of the nation, Ohio has been facing the economic hardships of a down economy. This causes our political leaders to analyze how government money is being spent. Education is often one of those hot topics because human capital is valuable in changing the economic condition of the state. A sub-focus of the cost of education is on the quality of teachers in the classroom. This is noted in national programs such as “No Child Left Behind” and “Highly Qualified Teachers” requirements, which are carried out by the states. Ohio Governor Ted Strickland declared in his 2009 State of the State address: “There is simply nothing that we as policymakers can influence in our schools that is as consequential as providing top-quality teachers for our students.” He then laid out his plan to improve educator quality with ideas such as teacher residency programs, mentoring programs, career ladder changes, teacher tenure changes, and the implementation of alternative licensing programs. Governor Strickland stated that a new
type of quality teacher was needed to “meet the needs and standards of our primary and secondary schools” in educational reform for the twenty-first century (Strickland, 2010, p. 6). This State-wide challenge left many issues for rural schools to find the right teachers for limited staff positions in an ever shrinking budget.

When new teachers are interviewed, they are typically asked why they chose to become a teacher. A common answer is “because I love children.” When asked how that love for children directs their teaching in order to bring success to the classroom, or how it helps them motivate students to learn, many interviewees struggle to give an answer. Through my conversations with colleagues, I understand that district administrators are looking for more than just a love of children in their teachers. They are well aware that the honeymoon period for new teachers wears off quickly as they strive to educate twenty-five impatient students, some of whom have shown that they are hard to love. This is when new teachers are introduced to the realities of teaching. The best teachers I have observed seem to understand this, and they have a passion about their careers as educators. The worst teachers I have observed seem to view their work as a daily grind, and their jobs become more difficult each day as the initial enthusiasm is drained out of them. The purpose of this study was to have a better understanding of what rural superintendents are looking for in new first-year teachers, and to provide that information to future teaching candidates and colleges of education that are preparing teachers for the 21st Century classroom. This research was to determine rural superintendents’ views of what makes great teachers. Is it professional skills, personality traits, or a perfect blend of both? How as superintendents do we assess that new hire as possessing what our rural districts need for today’s classroom?
The review of literature in Chapter II focuses on requirements to be a teacher and what administrators are currently going through in the process of hiring new teachers. It presents the literature on what administrators are looking for in new teachers who are fresh out of college with implications for what college professors need to accomplish to prepare a student for a career in the field of education.

Chapter III provides the methodology for this study. It covers the procedures and instruments used in data collection and analysis. Chapter IV contains the data and analysis from the survey of rural superintendents in the state of Ohio. Chapter V summarizes the research findings. It provides implications for improving the preparation of teachers who are entering the field of education and for improving the hiring process at the school district.
CHAPTER II

Introduction

This literature review focuses on five areas: (a) characteristics of effective teachers, (b) education colleges’ curriculum, (c) criteria for certification and licensure, (d) district hiring tools and practices for new teacher selection, and (e) criteria used by school administrators when hiring new teachers.

Using the Internet, Google, ERIC, EBSCO, and library resources I searched the following key words: (a) teacher selection, (b) teacher screening tools, (c) hiring, (d) perceiver instruments, (e) praxis testing, (f) student-teacher relations, (g) teaching license requirements, (h) organizational fit, and (j) U.S. Secretary of Education Reports on teacher quality.

Analyzing this literature about hiring practices, screening tools, perceiver instruments, and teacher selection, I explored how school districts choose new teachers. My review included what researchers have found about the qualities of effective teachers. This process helped identify the characteristics that are important to school administrators as they try to identify the best teachers to hire for their districts.

I explored the use of state testing and certification requirements as a means of ensuring teacher quality. The websites for various colleges of education in Ohio provided insight into their teacher preparation curricula. I then used this information to determine the requirements for obtaining teaching licensure and certification in Ohio.
Characteristics of Effective Teachers

Research has linked high levels of teacher content knowledge, verbal acuity, ACT/SAT scores, and certification with higher student achievement scores (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Ferguson, & Ladd, 1996; Goldhaber, 2004; Hawk, Coble, & Swanson, 1985). Harris and Rutledge (2010) indicated that student test scores and evaluations by principals, college faculty, and researchers are most often used to measure classroom teacher effectiveness. This is difficult to do with new teacher candidates because they lack experience, evaluations, and student achievement data to analyze their effectiveness. As a result, those who hire teachers must rely upon college preparation and the candidate’s license or credentials as indicators of their qualification for a job.

Goldhaber (2004) said that in states where teacher quality was pursued through licensure, most of the states required a baccalaureate degree, acceptable college grade point average, and passage of a state standardized test. He implied that in these states, degree programs providing courses in pedagogy as well as content area were viewed as necessary for teacher quality. Goldhaber also indicated that it is important to ask questions about the significance of teacher licensing, and that “teacher quality can have a tremendous impact on student achievement” (p. 81), even though the educational community consistently debates how to define, characterize, and measure teacher quality.

Darling-Hammond (2000) studied the relationship between teacher preparation and student achievement across all 50 states. States with higher standards in teacher certification and requirements for majors in teaching fields showed high student scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress in 1992-1996 in reading and
Mathematics. She found strong, positive correlations between student achievement and percentage of fully-certified teachers, and between achievement and percentage of teachers who taught their college major or minor. She concluded that a well-qualified teacher has both subject knowledge, as indicated by a major or minor in the subject taught, and knowledge of education, as indicated by full state certification or licensure. Darling-Hammond and Youngs (2002) cited a number of studies that conclude there is a positive relationship between teacher education and teacher effectiveness. They believed that strong educational programs, which build enhanced subject knowledge, provide pedagogy, and are linked to real teaching experiences are needed in the certification process in order to have the highest quality and most effective teachers in the classroom.

Some studies have found that teachers’ own standardized test scores predict the achievement of their students. Ferguson and Ladd (1996) found an increase in student reading and math scores in classes having highly skilled teachers who themselves had achieved high ACT/SAT scores and held master’s degrees.

The state of Illinois measured teacher quality in 2002-2003 with a formula called the Teacher Quality Index (TQI). TQI was developed as an indicator of research and consisted of teacher attributes that are associated with high student performance. The index included the ACT composite score, ACT English score, teachers’ average undergraduate college competitiveness ranking, and percentage of teachers with fewer than three years of experience (Presley, White, & Gong, 2005). The goal of this research was to find the positive TQI characteristics in Illinois teachers that would increase student achievement. They did find that teachers with higher TQI had a positive influence on student achievement even in high poverty and high minority schools.
Additionally, ACT scores were slightly higher in secondary staff versus elementary and high school teachers with these higher ACT scores tended to have graduated from more competitive colleges.

In other research, Munoz and Chang’s (2007) longitudinal study of student achievement in reading looked at the Predictive Assessment Series (PAS), the teacher’s characteristics and experience, and the teacher’s education and race as predictors of success. The PAS is a series of criterion-referenced tests with 24 multiple-choice items that reliably predict student performance. Over 4,000 freshmen were tested three times in 2005-2006 for this study with the PAS. Munoz and Chang found that none of these characteristics, such as teacher experience, predicted student achievement growth rates as measured by the PAS.

Harris and Sass (2007) analyzed student-level math and reading test scores from Florida for the years 1999-2000 through 2004-2005. They were able to match students with their teachers in the data base. Their study found that neither teachers’ college entrance exam scores, nor their undergraduate training had a significant impact on student achievement. However, teachers with more than one year of experience produced higher achievement in reading at all grade levels and in math at elementary and middle school levels. A master’s degree was associated with higher achievement only for middle school mathematics. The authors also concluded that the more mathematics courses a teacher had taken, the better their students achieved.
Harris and Rutledge (2010) suggested there might be some general link between teacher effectiveness, cognitive ability, and personality traits such as conscientiousness and extroversion. They found that personality is a secondary trait to predicting teacher effectiveness and that cognitive ability as measured by SAT is a primary predictor.

Student-Teacher Relationships

In an Ohio Leadership Advisory Council on-line training module, students were asked about what kind of teaching they would like to see in school. Students responded with “Learning at my school would be very interactive between the student and the teacher,” and “The teachers and the students would have more of a relationship with real experiences and connections with your teacher and with your peers” (Ohio Leadership Advisory Council, 2009).

Bernstien-Yamashiro (2004) said students described teachers as “stand-in dads,” “on-site moms” and “teacher-friends” (p. 56). Additionally, they said that they desire positive relationships with their teachers. In fact, Bernstien-Yamashiro argued that the emotional link between teenagers and their teachers has a considerable impact on their academic efforts. Students complained about the rigid and impersonal behavior of many of their teachers. She stated, “Students are disappointed and hurt when teachers do not fully explain material” (p. 58). The teachers that help students are validating them as people. Students in Bernstien-Yamashiro’s study did not separate how they felt while learning from the person who was teaching them. They used schoolwork and academic behaviors as a way to send messages to teachers. If teachers were disrespectful,
teenagers were less motivated to pay attention in class or do assigned work for that teacher’s class. Bernstien-Yamasahiro also found that “Students use academic behavior on homework, participation, positive behavior, and test performance to communicate their respect and hold up their side of the friendship” (p. 61).

Klem and Connell (2004) linked these relationships to student engagement. They stated, “Students who perceive teachers as creating a caring, well-structured learning environment in which expectations are high, clear, and fair are more likely to report engagement in school” (p. 270). It was also noted that student performance and commitment were negatively affected if students were disengaged. Students from elementary to high school rated their engagement level as somewhat dependent on the level of support they received from the teachers. Murphy (2009) and MacAulay (2009) are two studies when looked at together combine students’ desire to use technology in the classroom with teachers who demonstrated that they had energy, creativity, and passion for their subject. Both studies suggest students looked for teachers who were willing to communicate, construct positive relationships, and who would sacrifice some control of the class to them. When this can all be done with a little humor, the observation of a classroom is stated like this, “The entertainment aspect of this teacher obviously aided with in-class student engagement and establishing student-teacher relationships” (MacAulay 2009, p. 71).
Education Colleges’ Curriculum Focus

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan’s speech on November 9, 2009, at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s Education and Workforce Summit centered around how America’s future in a global economy rests on the quality of teachers and their impact in our classrooms (Duncan, 2009). Teacher preparation programs grew numerically for the third year in a row as of 2005-2006 (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). Most new teachers follow the traditional process of licensure and certification through a college or university education program. As new teachers enter our nation’s classrooms, it is important to understand where the focus should be for training high quality teachers in the colleges.

Rotherham and Mead (2004) stated that the standard core for teacher quality is the bachelor degree requirement of colleges of education. Traditionally, students receive training in pedagogy, teaching subjects, professional education courses, and student teaching. Forty-six states also require passing a standardized test for a teaching license.

Course requirements in colleges around the state of Ohio are all unique, but they follow a similar pattern. They all include foundation courses in history, child development, and educational philosophy as well as courses in students’ chosen teaching subjects. The course work is followed up by pedagogy and field experiences that are dispersed throughout the program of study until the student-teaching experience (see, for example, Bluffton University, 2009; Ohio Northern University, 2009; Ohio University, 2009; University of Toledo, 2009).
Joram (2007) studied beliefs about knowledge and research in education held by education professors, aspiring teachers, and practicing teachers. Participants were interviewed and presented with vignettes. The professors were far more likely than the pre-service teachers to say they would use educational research in considering changing their thinking or practice. The practicing teachers were least likely of all to say they would use research to change their practice. All of the professors and two-thirds of the practicing teachers in the study said the goal of teacher education was to develop “general thinking and literacy skills” (p. 131). None of the three groups considered learning content knowledge as the most important part of teacher training. Pre-service teachers believed they were expected to learn specific teaching skills. Joram suggested that pre-service teachers valued their classroom learning less than the practical teaching skills they learned in field experiences and in student teaching. He gave an example of a professor who discussed the latest educational issues, for the purpose of developing critical thinking skills in his students, but the pre-service teachers found it irrelevant because it was not about “how to” skills for the classroom (p. 132).

Biggs (2009) found that professors in Ohio thought their new teacher graduates were overall a better quality product today than in the past. They saw their new teachers as being prepared for subject matter and discipline. Professors also believed their graduates were ready to handle the varying abilities of children in their first year. Most participants in Biggs’ study thought their teacher preparation programs were well balanced between subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and field and clinical experiences. Her results were very similar to the 2006 MetLife Teacher survey (MetLife, 2006).
Certification and Licensure

Goldhaber and Brewer (2000) suggested that teacher certification has little impact on student achievement. They stated,

Although teacher certification is pervasive, there is little rigorous evidence that it is systematically related to student achievement. Our study does not definitively answer the important policy questions of whether imposing more rigorous standards in teacher licensure will lead to better student achievement. (p. 141)

Taking the opposite position, Darling-Hammond and Youngs (2002) said that scientifically based research does show that a teacher’s impact on student achievement is directly related to that teacher’s education, certification, and knowledge of pedagogy, as well as verbal ability and subject matter knowledge. The opening message in The Secretary’s Fifth Annual Report on Teacher Quality almost stated with pride that 50 states have certification requirements, and ninety-five percent of new teachers are passing their state licensing exams after completing a teacher preparation program (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2006).

Ohio Requirements

In Ohio, the Department of Education’s requirements for a two year entry level teacher license, which is called a provisional license, include the following: (a) subject-area bachelors’ degree, (b) pedagogy courses, (c) practicum/student teaching, (d) minimum grade point average, and (e) assessments requirements as reported to the
federal government (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2010). The assessments are often Praxis tests that students are required to pass involving pre-professional skills, professional knowledge, and subject area knowledge. Some of these requirements are in transition with the Ohio General Assembly passage of House Bill 1 in 2009. The Educator Standards Board demonstrates the changes on the teacher licensure requirements on the Ohio Department of education website (Ohio Department of Education, 2010).

Mentoring has been done mostly by school district choice. However, that changed in 1998 with the transition to a two-year provisional licensure program. This required new teachers to pass a Praxis III observation by a state-trained professional during their first two years of teaching, after which a new teacher could receive a five-year provisional license. Districts were also required by state mandate to have mentors for new teachers. Enacted in 2009, House Bill 1 made changes in mentoring programs for new teachers. The four year resident educator license is set up to require four years of mentoring, much like a doctor’s residency. New teachers are now mentored for four years before they can receive higher licenses as seen in Appendix A (Ohio Department of Education, 2011).

In Ohio, 2005-2006 data show that 8,154 new teachers came along the traditional program route through colleges of education, and 547 were certified through an alternative route. This means 93.7% of new teachers licensed in Ohio during 2005-2006 were from traditional programs. This was much higher than the 85% national average (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2010, pp. 10 & 17). This statistic shows that the pool of potential teachers from which Ohio school districts hire was being developed mainly by colleges of education.
District Hiring Tools and Practices for New Teacher Selection

According to the Alliance for Excellent Education (2005), the high turnover rate of teachers is an expensive problem. Using a U.S. Department of Labor formula, the Alliance calculated that teachers leaving the profession or transferring from one district to another cost the nation around 7.1 billion dollars each year. Ingersoll (2003) described “the departure of teachers from their teaching jobs” as a financial loss districts must deal with whatever the reason (p. 36). Many predictors explain why teachers leave, including the following: (a) age, (b) high-minority schools, (c) high poverty, (d) personal job fit, (e) low effectiveness, (f) lack of job satisfaction, and even (g) the hiring process (Cable & Judge, 1996; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Luekens, Leyter, Fox, & Chandler, 2004; Lui, 2005). Thus, it is important for school districts to find and hire quality teachers who will stay in their jobs longer than just a few years.

Collins (2001) concluded that the skills of a great organization include the ability to get the right people placed in the right jobs for the organization. Making the wrong choices can impact federal funding to meet the No-Child-Left-Behind requirement. Sander and Horn (1998) suggested that the teacher may be “the most important factor in the academic growth of students” (p. 3).

Hiring processes vary greatly from one school district to another. Districts incorporate teacher perceivers, organizational fit, and/or a decentralized interview process. The literature suggests that a commonality among districts is that administrators tend to value the face-to-face interview with candidates, while typically excluding input from parents or students.
Abernathy, Forsyth, and Mitchell (2001) reported that 100 percent of the education college faculties they surveyed believed in the importance of portfolios for new teachers. Teaching portfolios contain items such as a statement of philosophy, personal goals, resumes, lesson plans, and cooperating teacher evaluations. A portfolio demonstrates what an applicant has accomplished and how he or she plans to continue developing as a professional. Administrators tend to value management skills, use of technology, and recommendations from school personnel as more important (p. 117). This was reinforced by Balter and Duncombe (2005) who reported that only 30% of districts required teaching portfolios as part of their hiring process. Lui and Johnson (2006) stated that less than 10% of school districts in their study consulted students or parents in their hiring process for new teachers, with possibly 90% of school districts not even asking their primary stakeholders/customers what caliber of teachers are needed for their community.

Teacher Perceivers

One tool used to find quality teachers is the Teacher Perceiver Instrument (TPI). The most recent and improved web-based version of the tool put out by Gallup is called the TeacherInsight Interview. This is a screening tool used by many large school districts. Gordon (2004) suggested that in 35 minutes their “StrengthsFinder E-learning” perceiver can discover a person’s leadership ability and explore various categories of individual strengths. It measures the 34 most common talents in people. Based on those
talents (called “themes”) the assessment selects the top five personal themes and provides “Ideas for Actions” as to how this person might best operate in a job (Rath, 2007). This allows districts to rate a person’s possibility of being a good fit in their organization. The Human Resources Director of a large school district in Ohio stated he receives over 1,000 new applications a year in his district, and he uses a TPI tool as a screener. The tool places an applicant into one of three categories: highly recommended, recommended, and non-recommended. The TPI allows him to set a very high score as his standard, which is above the TPI standard limit. He predicted that with his higher standard, over 50% of his applicants would be rated as “non-recommended” (Marsh, personal communication, May 28, 2009).

Young and Delli (2002) said around 1,200 schools are using Gallup’s TPI. Metzger and Wu (2007) state that 15% of school districts across the United States use some type of commercially designed teacher perceiver interview tool to assess the beliefs and attitudes of teaching candidates regarding students, teaching, and the school community. The commercial tools are structured, scripted hiring screeners that are criterion scored. Another study by Rutledge et al. (2008) also found TeacherInsight as an interview screener to be a very commonly used tool by principals and administrators in districts that can afford it; but it was third in importance in their hiring process, after interviews and a candidate’s experience. Most used commercially designed teacher perceivers to evaluate aptitude and to screen out potential misfits.
Metzger and Wu (2007) conducted a validity study on TPIs, which they considered “hidden gate keepers” of the teaching profession because some districts use them to eliminate applicants. The TPI has little objective research to back its validity outside of the Gallup Company’s marketing claims. They note Gallup’s shift in 2005 to the new version of TPI called TeacherInsight, but in their study they focused primarily on the older TPI system. The purpose of the TPI is to identify candidates who have the same professional values, beliefs, and dispositions as the “best teachers” (p. 5). Their results found a weak relationship between teacher quality and TPI scores. Teacher quality was defined by low absenteeism, student gain in test scores, and positive ratings from other teachers, administrators, and students. There appears to be a greater relationship between TPI scores and administrator ratings. These ratings are determined by the score given by the teacher’s principal and on the teacher’s attendance record. This might suggest that TPIs could be a better predictor of a teacher’s general work ethic than actual teaching quality. There was no significant relationship between student achievement scores and TPI scores (p. 14). Metzger and Wu concluded, “The TPI does seem to measure something, but we are not convinced that what it measures relates meaningfully to what matters for teacher effectiveness” (p. 15).

Gordon (2004), writing for the Gallup Company which produces the perceivers, believed that teaching is an art that can be identified early in people; that beyond having skill and knowledge, which can be developed, there lies within some people a raw teaching talent that every potentially effective teacher has even before entering higher education or certification programs. The 60 open-ended questions in the TPI allow teachers to express their beliefs about their profession. Answers to the questions are
scored and categorized into twelve themes, which, according to Gallup, give administrators better predictability of job-related behaviors (Metzger & Wu, 2007).

The Haberman Star Teacher Evaluation PreScreener (known as the “Haberman PreScreener”) is another perceiver instrument used commonly in urban school districts as a predictor of teacher effectiveness. A study by Rockoff, Jacob, Kane, and Staiger (2008) did find positive relationships between the Haberman PreScreener and student achievement. The overall conclusions of the study were that more than one tool is needed to recognize effective teachers.

Though teacher perceivers are used by school districts throughout the nation, there is little evidence to suggest that they are an effective way to screen for high quality new teachers. It may even be possible that some ineffective teachers were identified by a TPI as having raw talent for teaching. It may well be questioned whether raw talent can be identified by any existing test.

Interviews

The traditional interview process is another way to find the right teachers. This process has changed somewhat to include newly designed interview procedures. These procedures could include the following: (a) decentralized process, (b) standardized questions, and even (c) a sample of direct teaching. Research suggests that the primary focus of an interview is dependent on who is conducting the interview. If a principal is conducting the interview through a decentralized process (Lui & Johnson, 2006), that
person tends to focus consistently on the personal characteristics of strong
communication skills, enthusiasm, and the ability to work with others (Abernathy,
Forsyth, & Mitchell, 2001; Braun et al., 1987; Broberg, 1987; Ralph et al., 1998; Theel &
Tallerico, 2004). Balter and Duncombe (2005) suggested that superintendents’ interviews
focus more on teaching philosophy, curriculum, discipline, learning styles, and subject
knowledge. The low priority placed on subject knowledge suggests that Ballou (1996)
was correct when he stated that “public schools are not hiring the best” because they
“undervalue cognitive skills and subject matter knowledge” in their process of hiring (p.
130). Quality of performance in the interview has great importance to hiring in America
(Rutledge et al., 2008). Principals are looking for the “chemistry during the interview”
and the “substance of response” (Theel & Tallerico, 2004, p. 29), and are favoring the
young, pliable new teachers who are enthusiastic (Rutledge et al., 2008). Harris,
Rutledge, Ingle, and Thompson (2010) also noted this in their study of a need for teachers
to be different from their fellow teachers but similar enough to be the right organizational
fit. The principals in this study strove to match candidates’ personal chemistry and work
ethic to their organizational needs while often giving little consideration to specific
teaching philosophies.

If administrators truly value a candidate’s fit with the school district and their
teaching position, it might not be evident in hiring practices. As suggested in Lui and
Johnson’s (2006) study of four states from every major region of the country, the average
number of interviews per candidate before hiring is only 1.49. New teachers hired in
these states indicated they only had a moderate accuracy of understanding about the
district and the position for which they were hired. Most surprising is that they reported
very little or no interaction with parents and students or other teachers during the hiring process. Part of Lui and Johnson’s explanation as to why this happens is the decentralized interview process at the building principal level and the time crunch that often occurs as principals are rushed to fill positions before the beginning of a school year. This situation is also mentioned in (Rutledge et al., 2008). They identify time, the cost of perceivers such as TeacherInsight, the cost of paying teachers to participate in team interviewing, and the summertime hiring rush as hindrances to the effective screening of applicants.

The process of principal or superintendent interviewing is highly flawed according to Nicholson and McInerney (1988) because administrators create their own list of teacher effectiveness characteristics. The tendency is to over-emphasize some characteristics and de-emphasize others resulting in a subjective interview that does not use a standardized process. So the right teacher is likely not hired, with the ultimate result that student achievement is adversely impacted. However, the hiring process, no matter how flawed, is always conducted with the goal of finding the right “fit” (Cable & Judge, 1996; Liu, 2005). By studying how districts hire teachers we can find important information regarding what school districts believe they need and what they are looking for in new teachers coming out of college.

Criteria Used by School Administrators in Hiring Teachers

Studies of criteria used by school administrators in hiring teachers indicated that personal characteristics of applicants are as important, if not more important, than knowledge of subject matter, knowledge of teaching, and intelligence. For example,
Place and Drake (1994) surveyed 314 principals in Ohio and Illinois, asking them what was most important out of nine criteria in hiring new teachers. Responses to the survey showed enthusiasm for teaching to be most important, followed by communication skills as well as interviewers’ evaluations of the candidate. These criteria did not vary by the school’s grade level. Similarly, in Cain-Caston’s (1999) survey of administrators in North Carolina the most frequent responses to the open ended question about additional criteria were (a) answers to interview questions, (b) enthusiasm for teaching, and (c) creative/energetic.

Broberg (1987) found administrators gave more focus to the “personal” characteristics of enthusiasm and communications skills over the “professional” characteristics of teaching strategy, knowledge, and classroom management skills. Similarly, Trimble (2001), studying five high-performing middle schools in southeast Georgia, saw administrators attributing their schools’ success to the high-quality teachers they find by focusing on communication skills, people skills, and a strong work ethic.

Dunton (2001) solicited high school principals’ criteria for hiring new teachers in Virginia. The overall results from the 146 principals surveyed were that they ranked enthusiasm, communication skills, student-centered philosophy, classroom management beliefs, and variety of teaching strategies as their top five in that order. He also found that regardless of school or community size, and even if principals were looking for career technical staff, enthusiasm rated number one as the most important characteristic.
Garman and Alkire (1993) surveyed 214 Ohio school districts having less than 2,500 students. The top-ranked characteristics in new teachers were enthusiasm and vitality. Other highly-ranked categories were “warm toward students, emotional adjustment, interest in teaching, and knowledge of subject” (p. 17). Unlike Dunton (2001), Garman and Alkire observed that different sized districts differed in what administrators most wanted. Larger enrollment districts wanted control of students; medium-sized districts wanted personal integrity; but small rural districts wanted vitality, enthusiasm, and dual certification.

A research study on what Canadian school administrators look for in new teachers found that they most desired the candidate to be confident in human relations and in technical professional skills. These essential skills involve good communication, presentation ability through clear explanation, poise, concise oral questioning ability, and accessibility to students. These administrators gained most of this information through the evaluation process of the internships/student teaching, cooperating schools’ principals’ evaluations, and the candidates’ effectiveness during job interviews (Ralph et al., 1998). A North Carolina survey of school administrators looking at first-year teachers had a similar result to the Canadian study, with the evaluation of student-teaching performance being the most important criteria, followed by other characteristics such as communication skills and personal appearance. Grade point average was ranked fourth (Cain-Caston, 1999).
Abernathy et al. (2001) found that principals, education college faculties, and teacher education students all rated the candidate’s previous experience and the cooperating teacher evaluations as the most important factors in the hiring decision. Principals were more likely to value samples of teaching/management skills as an important factor; faculty and students were more likely to rate recommendations from college faculty as important.

Harris and Sass (2009) interviewed principals in Florida, asking about twelve characteristics that the literature suggests teachers should possess to be successful. They looked at subjective teacher attributes, such as personality traits and teaching skills. They developed four themes: (a) subject knowledge and teaching skills; (b) interpersonal skills; (c) motivation/enthusiasm; and (d) ability to work with others. They found a positive and significant relationship between principals’ perceptions of teachers’ characteristics and the value-added scores of students. Principals valued most knowledge, teaching skills and intelligence when rating teachers. After that an important principal-rated characteristic was the ability to work well with others.

In further study of Florida principals, Harris et al. (2010) found that most principals considered both personal and professional characteristics of the applicants to be important. Principals thought of personal and professional characteristics as an “individual mix” possessed by an applicant, but they also thought about how the “organizational mix” of a group of teachers would meet their organizational needs (p. 228). Personal characteristics involved caring, communication skills, and creativity. Professional characteristics were experience, subject knowledge, and teaching skills. The thirty principals in Florida were looking for caring teachers who understood their subject
well and could work well with others. They searched for the “positive” person who had the “right attitude for teaching” and was enthusiastic (p. 235).

Summary

The literature points to a complex process at work in placing highly qualified teachers in the classroom. This review surveyed the characteristics of effective teachers, the curriculum focus of college preparation programs, and procedures of state licensure. Districts select from among new teachers in the candidate pool using tools such as perceivers and interviews to get the right organizational fit for each classroom. That right fit directly impacts student-teacher relationships in the classroom and overall student achievement in an increasingly technological world. The literature seems to indicate that administrators value enthusiasm, positive personality traits, and communication skills. For professional characteristics, they look for subject knowledge, classroom management skills, and student-centered teachers who work well with others. School administrators probably consider both personal and professional characteristics when making the selection, but they may give more weight to personal characteristics. Most of the research on teacher effectiveness, however, has confirmed the link between professional characteristics and student results.

Most of the research on teacher hiring takes the point of view of a building principal. In Ohio it is the superintendents who make hiring recommendations to boards of education (Carey, 2009). Although principals or other administrators conduct the hiring procedures in larger districts, in rural Ohio districts with few administrators, it is
likely the superintendent who conducts the hiring process. The intent of this study was to use a quantitative approach to conduct a descriptive research project investigating what rural superintendents believe are the needs of their classrooms and the processes by which they search for first year teachers. The goal of this effort was to provide more insight regarding what is needed from first-year teachers, in order to better impact twenty-first century learning and to provoke conversations about what changes might need to be made for improvement, especially in rural Ohio.

The research questions are the following:

**Research Question 1**: What applicant characteristics do rural superintendents in Ohio value when they are hiring new first year teachers coming out of college preparation programs?

**Research Question 2**: Do rural superintendents value personal characteristics more highly than professional characteristics when considering applicants for first year teaching positions?

**Research Question 3**: Do any of these preferred characteristics vary by superintendent years of experience, gender, district type, student achievement, or district resources?

**Research Question 4**: Is there any relationship between characteristics valued by superintendents and their hiring procedures?

Chapter III will present the methodology used to answer the research questions in this study.
CHAPTER III

Introduction

Teaching conditions in rural schools are unique (Monk, 2007). Teachers must deal with geographic isolation, student poverty, fewer college-bound students, and extra district costs that pull resources from the classroom. Teachers must also do more with less in contrast to urban/suburban schools, often teaching multiple subjects with or without the appropriate certification. This is compounded by the attributes of a rural community such as small size, distance from shopping, medical services, and family or friends, making it more difficult to attract and retain good teachers (Barley, 2009; Monk, 2007). Yet, there is pressure from the Ohio Department of Education and federal Race to the Top requirements to transform the Ohio educational system into a twenty-first century model (D. Delisle, personal communication, October 2010). New college graduates in education could be essential to this transformation, according to The National Center for Educational Statistics (2009), which estimated a 26% increase in public school hiring of new teachers from 2006 through 2018. Gibbs (2000) stated that rural schools have a greater struggle in attracting graduates from top-ranked colleges and universities than do urban/suburban schools. Thus, the philosophy by which teachers are hired in rural local districts in Ohio was the focus of this study.

The purpose of this study was to have a better understanding of what rural superintendents are looking for in new first-year teachers, and to provide that information to future teaching candidates and colleges of education that are preparing teachers for the
21st Century classroom. This research was to determine rural superintendents’ views of what makes great teachers. Is it professional skills, personality traits, or a perfect blend of both? This research was to describe the philosophies and methods of rural superintendents in Ohio that govern the hiring of first year teachers who are recent college graduates. This chapter explains the design of the research study, the research questions and hypotheses, the description of the survey instrument development, and the recruitment of participants. Also described are the data collection and analysis.

Research Methodology

The methodology of this study was, for the most part, quantitative research through survey design and descriptive statistics (Creswell, 2008). A positivist approach was taken to determine what rural superintendents’ value when hiring. Positivists look for knowledge through logical inference, measurement, and direct observation. The survey method in this study leads to this approach of using statistical methods to observe useful relationships and patterns in the data (Rudestam & Newton, 2001).

This study used both quantitative and qualitative data to describe superintendents’ values and procedures for hiring first year teachers. A self-reported survey was chosen as the means of data collection for this study because of feasibility, low cost, and ease of response through email, improving the efficiency of data collection (Dillman et al., 2009).
Research Questions and Related Hypotheses

Four research questions posed in this study were generated to review teacher characteristics that rural superintendents believe are most valuable and the processes they use when looking for them in potential first year teachers. The research questions and hypotheses were as follows:

Research Question 1: What applicant characteristics do rural superintendents in Ohio value when they are hiring new first year teachers coming out of college preparation programs?

Research Question 2: Do rural superintendents value personal skills more highly than professional skills when considering applicants for first year teaching positions?

$1H_0$: Rural superintendents in Ohio do not value applicants’ personal characteristics more highly than professional characteristics.

Research Question 3: Do any of these preferred characteristics vary by superintendent years of experience, gender, district type, student achievement, or starting salary?

$2H_0$: The values placed on characteristics of teacher applicants by rural superintendents in Ohio are not associated with years of experience as a superintendent.
3H₀: The values placed on characteristics of teacher applicants by rural superintendents in Ohio are not associated with gender of superintendent.

4H₀: The values placed on characteristics of teacher applicants by rural superintendents in Ohio are not associated with district rural type.

5H₀: The values placed on characteristics of teacher applicants by rural superintendents in Ohio are not associated with the district’s student achievement.

6H₀: The values placed on characteristics of teacher applicants by rural superintendents in Ohio are not associated with level of district resources as measured by starting teacher salary.

Research Question 4: Is there any relationship between characteristics valued by superintendents and their hiring procedures?

7H₀: The values placed on characteristics of teacher applicants by rural superintendents in Ohio are not associated with the procedures used in the hiring process.

Research Approval

Research information, questions, and procedures for informed consent were presented to and approved by the Ashland University Human Subject Review Board (Appendix B).
Research Context and Research Participants

During the month of August 2011, this research was conducted via surveys emailed to superintendents who serve in rural school districts all over Ohio. Superintendents were selected because, by Ohio law, they are the ones who submit hiring recommendations to their local boards of education (Carey, 2009). All participants represented one of three types of rural school district as defined by the Ohio Department of Education.

The Ohio Department of Education (2007) defined eight types of districts, three of which are rural types: (a) Rural/Agricultural--high poverty, low median income; (b) Rural/Agricultural-- small student population, low poverty, low to moderate median income; (c) Rural/Small Town-- moderate to high median income. As of 2007, the typological designation by the Ohio Department of Education had 339 districts listed in these rural types (Ohio Department of Education, 2007). Surveys were emailed to this entire population of superintendents.

Instrumentation

Survey Monkey was used to create the web-based survey. The first five questions were demographic (Dillman et al., 2009), addressing the district size, student achievement as measured by performance index score, superintendent’s years of experience, superintendent’s gender, and starting salary for new teachers at a bachelor’s degree and step zero. The next two questions contained lists of applicant characteristics
and hiring practices to be rated on a Likert scale of 0-5. The list of applicant characteristics was formulated by Harris et al. (2010) from their interviews of principals. Two additional characteristics, “lives in our community” and “technology skills” were added.

The list of hiring procedures was gleaned from several sources in the literature (e.g., Abernathy et al., 2001; Balter & Duncombe, 2005; Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002). Two questions dealt with rural superintendent hiring issues (see Gibbs, 2000; Strauss, 1998) and contained multiple choices. The last question was qualitative, asking for a superintendent’s recommendations for improving the quality of new teacher college graduates. A copy of the survey is in Appendix C. Elements from Dillman et al. (2009) were used in the survey, such as color contrast, moral plea, and financial token to incentivize response. They suggested for best response to employ social exchange in the survey design. So the survey starts with a moral plea asking superintendents for help to add to a colleague’s knowledge on a short survey. Another suggestion to increase participation was financial incentive. All respondents completing the survey were entered into a $100 drawing. The use of inviting colors for background, ease of responses and ensuring confidentiality also helped draw them into the survey (Dillman et al., 2009). All of these suggestions were followed, along with a follow-up reminder email one week later requesting participation.
Data Collection

An electronic survey was used with nine quantitative questions and one qualitative question. The online survey took 10-12 minutes to complete the ten questions and was sent to all rural superintendents in Ohio via email.

Survey Monkey was used as a web-based method due to feasibility and low cost. I had access to the superintendents’ school email addresses and sent the survey to them with the assumption they had access to the Internet for taking the survey. The Survey Monkey allowed the participant to answer questions only once through the link that was provided (Survey Monkey, 2011). The questions were also field-tested with experienced college professors and the researcher’s dissertation committee to assure they were easy to comprehend.

Participants were informed by email of the nature of this survey and provided a link to the online survey at Survey Monkey. Participants were allowed to withdraw at any time. They responded to questions by typing short answers, clicking on choices, and selecting a Likert number through a pull-down menu. At the end of the survey, participants were allowed to submit their names and email addresses for a gift card drawing. They were assured that their names and email addresses would be used only for the drawing as an incentive to respond (Dillman et al., 2009).
Validity

Content validity was assured by asking experts to evaluate the survey tool and procedures. Content reliability and validity were established by expert researchers in the field of education who reviewed the instrument. These researchers were faculty members of the Ashland University Graduate School. The instrument was then field tested with some principals to make sure the survey was clear and easy to use and understand.

Data Analysis

Survey Monkey provided a download of responses to an Excel spreadsheet that could be imported into PASW Statistic 18. The quantitative data were then presented using descriptive statistics such as frequency, range, percentage, and mean (Creswell, 2008).

The Likert scale of zero to five was used both for questions about applicant characteristics and about hiring procedures. Building on the work of Harris et al. (2010) the following applicant characteristics were grouped into the personal characteristics category: (a) caring, (b) communication skills, (c) cooperative, (d) creative, (e) enthusiastic, (f) motivated, (g) organized, (h) thoughtful/reflective, and (i) works well with others. The following applicant characteristics were grouped in the professional characteristics category: (a) certification, (b) education, (c) experience, (d) knows subject, (e) intelligent, and (f) strong teaching skills.
Each superintendent’s responses were summed and then divided by the number of characteristics listed for personal or professional. The result was a mean score for personal and a mean score for professional characteristics. These scores were used in ANOVA testing.

The hypotheses were tested as follows:

1. A paired sample t-test of the difference in the mean personal characteristics score and the mean professional characteristics score tested hypothesis 1H₀: Rural superintendents in Ohio do not value applicants’ personal skills more highly than their professional skills.

2. For hypotheses 2H₀ through 6H₀, Pearson correlations indicated bivariate relationships. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), Chi-square, Brown-Forsythe, Welch, and Tukey HSD were used to determine the relative impact of superintendent gender and experience, starting teacher salary, and student achievement on the weights given to characteristics of applicants.

3. For hypothesis 7H₀, Chi-square was used to find patterns of association between valued applicant characteristics and preferred hiring procedures. ANOVA was used to test relationships between hiring procedures and preference for personal characteristics and between hiring procedures and preference for professional characteristics.

4. Effect size was measured with Cramer’s V. With a 3 by 3 table, a Cramer’s V of .07 is small, .21 is medium and .35 is large (Pallant, 2010, p.220).
The qualitative data from survey question eight were analyzed with a coding procedure on a spreadsheet to help build “clusters of meanings” of what superintendents recommended to improve the quality of new teacher-college graduates (Creswell, 1998, p.55). The number of times each category was mentioned led to coding tallies and ranking themes (Creswell, 1998). The final tabulations were both descriptive and interpretive in bringing forth the broad themes and results of this study.

Summary

To summarize, this chapter explained the research methodology, which included a survey consisting of eight quantitative questions and one qualitative question. The survey was designed to ascertain the philosophies and methods of rural superintendents in Ohio who govern the hiring of recent college graduate, first-year teachers. The chapter covered the design, research procedure, participant selection, and data analysis. Chapter IV will examine the results of this study.
CHAPTER IV

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the survey through participants’ responses and analysis of the data. The data analyzed fall into descriptive statistics of the participants and their school districts, and answers to the research questions. The quantitative data in the research questions were explored using descriptive statistics such as frequency, range, percentage, and mean (Creswell, 2008). A list of variables is in Appendix D. Several hypotheses were tested using t-test, ANOVA, and Chi-square techniques. The qualitative data were evaluated by the themes that arose through the responses of the participants.

Response to the Survey

Three hundred forty emails were sent out to rural superintendents in Ohio as identified by the Ohio Department of Education’s typographic report. Email addresses were obtained from state associations having them on file. All the school districts were called for verification of the information. When the 340 surveys were sent, only four came back as undeliverable, leaving the conclusion that 336, or 99%, were received.

Two hundred three superintendents responded to the survey. After exclusion of 11 incomplete responses, the number of completed surveys stood at 192 participants. A survey was excluded if not at least 30% completed (Creswell, 2008). Participants were allowed to exit the survey at any time. The eleven that were excluded had answered no more than two demographic questions and had exited the survey answering none of the
research questions. This set the completed survey sample return at 192, or 56%, of the 340 originally requested.

Descriptive Statistics

As demonstrated in Table 1, out of the 192 participants, 152 were male and thirty-eight female with two missing in this category. The Ohio Department of Education (2007) defined eight types of districts, three of which are rural types: (a) Rural/Agricultural--high poverty, low median income; (b) Rural/Agricultural--small student population, low poverty, low to moderate median income; (c) Rural/Small Town--moderate to high median income. The most responses (78.6%) came from districts defined above as (a) and (b). Responses from districts defined above as (c) made up 21.4% of the total.

Most of the superintendents (78%) had 0-9 years of experience in the job, and 79% were male. The school district average salary for a teacher with a bachelor’s degree and no experience was $31,101. The average district performance index score was 98.3 (out of a possible 120) on the state report card.
Table 1

*Gender and Experience of Participating Superintendents (n=192)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Years of Experience**

(Range 0-31 years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20+</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2

*Characteristics of School Districts of Participants (n=192)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>District Types</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Rural/Agricultural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high poverty, low median income;</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Rural/Agricultural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>small student population, low poverty, low to moderate median income;</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Rural/Small Town</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moderate to high median income</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Missing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Starting Salary</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Range $23,884 to $39,672)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below $27,999</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28,000 to 31,999</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32,000 to 35,999</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above $36,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Performance Index – Student Achievement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Range 24-109)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 90</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90.1-95.9</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96-100.9</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101-105</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106+</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Questions

Research Question One

The first research question was: What applicant characteristics do rural superintendents in Ohio value when they are hiring new first year teachers coming out of college preparation programs? Fifteen teacher characteristics were listed, and superintendents were asked to rate the importance of each. This question was worded as follows on the survey (see Appendix C):

Please rate EACH of the following characteristics from 0 to 5, for what you value when hiring a teacher for his/her first teaching position. Zero meaning no value and 5 having highest value.

Table 3 shows the mean score, standard deviation, and modal score for each of the characteristics. The characteristics are presented in order from highest rated to lowest rated by mean score. The top five characteristics rated by rural Ohio superintendents were: (a) Self Motivated; (b) Certification; (c) Communication Skills; (d) Works Well with Others; and a three-way tie for (e) Strong Teaching Skills, Cooperative, and Enthusiastic.
Table 3

*Characteristics of Teacher Candidates Ranked by Rural Ohio Superintendents*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Self Motivated</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Certification</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Communication Skills</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Works Well with Others</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Strong Teaching Skill</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Cooperative</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Enthusiastic</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.638</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know Subject</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoughtful/Reflective</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligent</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organized</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology Skills</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Teaching</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living in our Community</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.340</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Numbers in parentheses indicate rank order by mean score.

Table 4 shows the percentage of respondents who rated a given characteristic either a 4 or a 5 in importance, with Certification receiving a smaller percentage of 4s and 5s than the other top five characteristics. A little spread among the characteristics tied for fifth mean ranking is in evidence.
Table 4
Percent of Respondents Who Rated Each Characteristic a 4 or 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Percent of Respondents</th>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Percent of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Self Motivated</td>
<td>97.9</td>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>89.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Communication Skills</td>
<td>96.9</td>
<td>Intelligent</td>
<td>81.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Works Well with Others</td>
<td>94.3</td>
<td>Thoughtful/Reflective</td>
<td>80.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Strong Teaching Skill</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>Organized</td>
<td>79.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Cooperative</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>Technology Skills</td>
<td>71.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Enthusiastic</td>
<td>92.7</td>
<td>Creative</td>
<td>70.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knows Subject</td>
<td>91.2</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>70.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Certification</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>Student Teaching Experience</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Living in our Community</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Numbers with parentheses indicate the rank order of the characteristics by their mean scores.

Research Question Two

Research question two was: Do rural superintendents value personal skills more highly than professional skills when considering applicants for first year teaching positions? Building on the work of Harris et al. (2010), the following applicant characteristics were grouped into the personal characteristics category: (a) Caring, (b) Communication Skills, (c) Cooperative, (d) Creative, (e) Enthusiastic, (f) Motivated, (g) Organized, (h) Thoughtful/Reflective, and (i) Works Well with Others. The following applicant characteristics were grouped in the professional characteristics category: (a) Certification, (b) Education, (c) Experience, (d) Knows Subject, (e) Intelligent, and (f) Strong Teaching Skills. Each superintendent’s responses for the personal characteristics
were summed and then divided by nine, the number of personal characteristics. Each superintendent’s responses for the professional characteristics were summed and then divided by six, the number of professional characteristics. These calculations produced a preference score on personal characteristics and a preference score on professional characteristics for each respondent.

**1H₀**: Rural superintendents in Ohio do not value applicants’ personal skills more highly than their professional skills.

A paired sample t-test (Pallant, 2010, pp. 243-247) was run to compare the mean personal characteristic score with the mean professional characteristic score. The personal scores (M = 4.396, SD = .37948) were statistically significantly higher than the professional scores (M = 4.1129, SD = .50877), t (182) = 8.243, p < .001 (two-tailed). The null hypothesis was rejected.

Research Question Three

Research question three was: Did the values that superintendents placed on new teacher characteristics vary by superintendent’s years of experience, gender, district type, district student achievement, or district resources?

**2H₀**: The values placed on characteristics of teacher applicants by rural superintendents in Ohio are not associated with years of experience as a superintendent.
Because the ratings of teacher characteristics exhibited skewed distributions, they were recoded. Each of the teacher characteristics was coded as follows: ratings of 0-3 were recoded as 1; a rating of 4 was recoded as 2; a rating of 5 was recoded as 3.

The relationships between superintendents’ years of experience and ratings of recoded teacher applicant characteristics were tested with one-way analysis of variance. There was a significantly significant difference at the p < .05 level in superintendents’ years of experience for the three levels of values placed on Communication Skills (Brown-Forsythe (2, 16.5) = 3.643, p = .049). However, post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated no significant differences among the means of the three groups. Similarly, there was a statistically significant difference at the p < .05 level for the relationship between the values placed on organizational skills and the superintendents’ years of experience (Brown-Forsythe (2,148) = 3.842, p = .024; Welch (2,100) = 5.644, p = .005). However, post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated no significant differences among the means of the three groups.

The relationship between superintendent's years of experience and ratings of Personal characteristics was investigated using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. There was a slight positive, but statistically insignificant, correlation between the two variables, r = .110, n = 182, p = .139.

The relationship between superintendent's years of experience and ratings of Professional characteristics was investigated using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. There was a slight positive, but statistically insignificant, correlation between the two variables, r = .134, n = 182, p = .07.
Superintendents’ ratings of teacher characteristics did not vary by the superintendent’s years of experience. The null hypothesis was retained.

3H₀: The values placed on characteristics of teacher applicants by rural superintendents in Ohio are not associated with gender of superintendent.

A chi-square test of independence was conducted for each of the recoded teacher characteristics by gender of superintendent. None of the characteristic ratings was significantly different by superintendent gender.

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was attempted to explore the relationship between superintendents’ gender and their rating on teachers’ personal characteristics. A second one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the relationship between superintendents’ gender and their rating on teachers’ professional characteristics. Even the Brown-Forsythe and the Welch robust tests could not be performed, because of inadequate counts in some cells.

There was no difference by gender of superintendents’ ratings of teaching characteristics. The null hypothesis was retained.

4H₀: The values placed on characteristics of teacher applicants by rural superintendents in Ohio are not associated with type of school district.

A chi-square test of independence was conducted for each of the recoded teacher characteristics by school district type. Type 1 was rural/agricultural, high poverty, low median income; type 2 was rural/agricultural small student population, low poverty; and
low to moderate median income; and type 3 was rural/small town, moderate to high median income (see Table 2). None of the ratings for the characteristics Certification, Enthusiastic, Education, Creative, Student Teaching Experience, Intelligence, Knowledge of Subject, Organization, Thoughtful and Reflective, or Strong Teaching Skills was significantly different by district type. Tests could not be run on the other characteristics because of inadequate cell counts.

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was run to explore the relationship between district type and superintendents’ ratings on teachers’ personal characteristics. Another one-way between-groups analysis of variance was run to explore the relationship between district type and superintendents’ rating on teachers’ professional characteristics. There was no statistically significant difference in ratings for either personal or professional characteristics among the district types.

**5H₀:** The values placed on characteristics of teacher applicants by rural superintendents in Ohio are not associated with student achievement in the district as measured by the performance indicator.

The relationships between district performance indicators and the recoded teacher applicant characteristics were tested with one-way between groups analysis of variance. Only one statistically significant relationship was found. The Welch and Brown-Forsythe robust tests for equality of means (Pallant, 2010, pp. 253-255) found a statistically significant difference in the mean performance indicator by levels of importance of the teacher characteristic Knows Subject Matter at the p < .05 level: Welch (2, 50) = 3.827, p = .028; Brown-Forsythe (2, 140) = 3.135, p = .047. Post-hoc comparisons using the
Tukey HSD test indicated that mean performance indicator score for group 1, low value on Knows Subject, (M = 92.440, SD = 19.318), was significantly different from the mean performance indicator score for group 3, high value on Knows Subject, (M = 98.686, SD = 3.914). The mean performance indicator score for group 2, medium value on Knows Subject, (M = 99.084, SD = 3.882), was not significantly different from either group 1 or 3. Interpretation of this finding should also be tempered by the fact that so many tests were done that an alpha level of .05 was probably set too high.

The relationship between district student achievement as measured by the Performance Index and ratings of Personal characteristics was investigated using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. There was no correlation between the two variables, r = .065, n = 185, p = .379.

The relationship between district student achievement as measured by the Performance Index and ratings of Professional characteristics was investigated using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. There was a small, statistically significant, positive correlation between the two variables, r = .15, n = 185, p < .05.

Except perhaps for the values placed on Professional characteristics and specifically on Knows Subject, superintendents’ ratings of teacher characteristics did not vary by the district’s student achievement as measured by the performance indicator.

6H₀: The values placed on characteristics of teacher applicants by rural superintendents in Ohio are not associated with school district resources as measured by starting teacher salary.
The relationships between district starting teacher salary and the recoded teacher applicant characteristics were tested with one-way between-groups analysis of variance. No statistically significant effects of starting salary on preference for teacher applicant characteristics were found at the p < .05 level.

The relationship between district resources as measured by starting teacher salary and ratings of Personal characteristics was investigated using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. There was no correlation between the two variables, r = -.002, n = 185, p = .977.

The relationship between district resources as measured by starting teacher salary and ratings of Professional characteristics was investigated using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. There was no correlation between the two variables, r = .075, n = 185, p = .313.

I found no significant differences in superintendents’ ratings of teacher characteristics by district resources. The null hypothesis was retained.

Research Question Four

Research question four was: Is there any relationship between characteristics valued by superintendents and their hiring procedures? Superintendents were asked on the survey to indicate the importance of each of a series of hiring procedures. This question was worded as follows on the survey (See Appendix C):
Please rate EACH of the following hiring procedures or tools from 0 to 5, as to their importance in the teacher hiring process. Zero means no value and 5 having highest value. Mark N/A if your district does not use this procedure.

Table 5 shows the hiring procedures in the order of the values that rural superintendents gave them. These results are confirmed in other studies finding that Involvement of the Principal and Interview are most valued in the hiring process (Garman & Alkire, 1993; Kersten, 2008; Place & Drake, 1994). This study also reconfirmed (as shown in Table 7) how low the value is for items like applicant’s portfolio by rural superintendents in their hiring process. This was similar to the finding of principals cited in the study by Theel and Tallerico (2004).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hiring Procedures</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>N/A Do not use this procedure</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involvement of Principal</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation of Cooperating Teacher</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent Involvement</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant’s Resume</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant’s Demonstration of Teaching</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant’s Demonstration of Technology Skills</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant’s Grade Transcript</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant’s Sample Lesson Plans</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant’s Portfolio</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation of University Professor</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant’s Praxis Scores</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Perceivers</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement of Students</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement of Community</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Fair</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.299</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7H₀: The values placed on characteristics of teacher applicants by rural superintendents in Ohio are not associated with the procedures used in the hiring process.

Because the ratings of hiring procedures exhibited skewed distributions, they were recoded as follows: ratings of 0-3 were recoded as 1; a rating of 4 was recoded as 2; a rating of 5 was recoded as 3. Recoded teacher characteristics were also used in this analysis. Chi-square tests for independence were run to determine whether or not the values that superintendents placed on the various teacher characteristics were associated with the importance placed on the various hiring tools. Only a few of the many possible relationships were found to be statistically significant. Cramer’s V was used to indicate effect size. With 3 by 3 tables, a Cramer’s V of .07 is small, .21 is medium, and .35 is large (Pallent, 2010, p. 220). Table 6 shows the teacher characteristics and the hiring procedures with statistically significant relationships at the level of at least p < .01. Only the relationship between the value placed on technology skills as an applicant characteristic and the value placed on demonstration of technology skills as a hiring procedure showed a large effect size.
A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was run to explore the relationship between hiring procedures and superintendents’ ratings on teachers’ personal characteristics. Another one-way between-groups analysis of variance was run to explore the relationship between hiring procedures and superintendents’ ratings on teachers’ professional characteristics. Results are shown in Table 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valued Teacher Characteristic</th>
<th>Hiring Procedure</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
<th>p value</th>
<th>Effect Size Cramer V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>Recommendation of the cooperating teacher</td>
<td>14.055</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Teaching Experience</td>
<td>Recommendation of cooperating teacher</td>
<td>20.511</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knows Subject</td>
<td>Applicant Demonstration of technology skills</td>
<td>13.928</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organized</td>
<td>Applicant Demonstration of technology skills</td>
<td>16.076</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong Teaching Skills</td>
<td>Applicant Demonstration of technology skills</td>
<td>17.583</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology Skills</td>
<td>Applicant Demonstration of technology skills</td>
<td>76.196</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.467</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7

Relationship between Values Placed on Hiring Procedures and Ratings for Personal and Professional Characteristics of Teacher Applicants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hiring Procedure</th>
<th>Value Placed on Hiring Procedure</th>
<th>Mean personal characteristics score</th>
<th>Mean professional characteristics score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent Involvement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.3081*</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.3923</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.5115*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All categories</td>
<td>4.3956</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Transcript</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.3161*</td>
<td>3.9435*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.5453*</td>
<td>4.4101*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.4815</td>
<td>4.3056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All categories</td>
<td>4.4011</td>
<td>4.1123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Involvement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.3362*</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.6752*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.7222</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All categories</td>
<td>4.3810</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant Portfolio</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Not Significant</td>
<td>4.0213*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.3488*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.4524*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All categories</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.1148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstration of Teaching</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Not Significant</td>
<td>4.0213*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.3488*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.4524*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All categories</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.1148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Plans</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Not Significant</td>
<td>4.0206*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.2083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.444*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All categories</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.0987</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Means that were found to be significantly different using the Tukey HSC post-hoc test
Table 7, continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hiring Procedure</th>
<th>Value Placed on Hiring Procedure</th>
<th>Mean personal characteristics score</th>
<th>Mean professional characteristics score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Praxis Scores</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Not Significant</td>
<td>4.0264*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.3675*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.3571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All categories</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.1108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.2806*</td>
<td>3.9304*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstration of Technology Skills</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.4820*</td>
<td>4.1982*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.6061*</td>
<td>4.3571*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All categories</td>
<td>4.4074</td>
<td>4.0958</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Means that were found to be significantly different using the Tukey HSC post-hoc test

There was a statistically significant difference at the p < .01 level in personal characteristics ratings for the three values of Superintendent Involvement in Hiring: $F (2, 179)= 4.897, p = .009$. There was a statistically significant difference at the p < .01 level in personal characteristics ratings for the three values of Grade Transcript: $F (2, 184) = 8.413, p = .000$. There was also a statistically significant difference at the p < .01 level in professional characteristics ratings for the three values of Grade Transcript: $F (2, 184) = 22.151, p = .000$. There was a statistically significant difference at the p < .01 level in personal characteristics ratings for the three values of Community Involvement: Welch (2,8) = 14.772, p = .002; Brown-Forsythe (2, 13) = 17.978, p = .000.

There was a statistically significant difference at the p < .01 level in professional characteristics ratings for the three values of Applicant Portfolio: $F (2,180) = 9.918, p = .000$. There was a statistically significant difference at the p < .01 level in professional characteristics ratings for the three values of Demonstration of Teaching Skills: $F (2, 154) = 8.075, p = .000$. There was a statistically significant difference at the p < .01 level in
professional characteristics ratings for the three values of Applicant Lesson Plans:
Brown-Forsythe (2, 39) = 6.528, p = .004. There was a statistically significant difference at the p < .01 level in professional characteristics ratings for the three values of Applicant Praxis Scores: F (2, 182) = 8.393, p = .000.

There was a statistically significant difference at the p < .01 level in personal characteristics ratings for the three values of Applicant Demonstration of Technology Skills: F (2, 171) = 10.110, p = .000. There was also a statistically significant difference at the p < .01 level in professional characteristics ratings for the three values of Applicant Demonstration of Technology Skills: F (2, 171) = 9.086, p = .000.

Qualitative Results

Superintendents were asked in the survey, “What suggestions would you offer to improve the quality of new teacher college graduates?” They were to give two suggestions they believed would improve the quality of new teacher college graduates. Three hundred twenty suggestions were received. Five of them said, “None. I am pleased with the job the colleges in our area are doing.” Table 8 lists the themes and qualities that emerged throughout the comments.
### Table 8

**Qualitative Data Theme**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes &amp; Sub Categories</th>
<th>Percentage out of 320 Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Teaching Experiences and Skills (N=100)</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Student Teaching Specific (13 out of 100)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Classroom Management Skills (7 out of 100)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Communication Skills (6 out of 100)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Increase Standards and Knowledge (N=77)</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Common Core Instruction (11 out of 77)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Assessments Knowledge (11 out of 77)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Data Usage (10 out of 77)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Miscellaneous Statements (N=66)</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Favoring Statements about College of Education (6 out of 66)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Non-Favoring Statements about College of Education (10 out of 66)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Weed Out &amp; Teacher Personality (N=23)</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Increase Technology Training (N=22)</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Interview &amp; Job Ready (N=21)</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Partnership between Schools and University (N=6)</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Increase Knowledge Special Education and School Law (N=5)</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most common theme at 31% was Teaching Experiences and Skills development. There were many comments about the need for increased teaching experience in real school settings. Here is a sample of the comments:

- “More real teaching experience with the best mentors - not just those willing.”
- “Universities need to develop a full year of internship that is successfully completed before entering the profession.”
- “More field experience. University schools were a good idea! All methods classes should be taught in the field.”
• “Get more time in the classroom earlier in the process and get more time practicing their teaching skills.”

Inside this theme were three sub-categories: (a) student teaching specific, (b) classroom management skills, and (c) communication skills. A few examples are provided for each sub-category as follows:

a) “Start internship/student teaching sooner than the senior year.”

a) “A quality student teaching experience is very important.”

b) “Focus on classroom management skills.”

b) “Course in class management taught by a teacher, not by a university professor.”

c) “Stronger links to communication skills.”

d) “Additional work on communicating with parents.”

College instruction (Increase Standard and Knowledge) was the second most common theme. Superintendents suggested increased instruction in colleges on such things as common core standards, data analysis, assessments, and classroom management. Many suggested that college courses need to be changed, modified, or increased. Of the comments 24% fell in the category of college instruction. Here are some of the examples:

• “More on different learning and teaching styles.”
• “Know what the State requires: value-added, formative assessments, progress-based assessments, know the standards, and differentiated instruction.”

• “Offer a class/seminar on analyzing student data (AYP, value-added).”

• Better prepare applicants with the newest research-based strategies/models.

• “More twenty-first century skills.”

Out of the 77 comments that fell into the Increase Standards and Knowledge theme there were three strong sub-categories that made up 42% of the comments inside this theme. They were: (a) common core instruction, (b) assessment knowledge, and (c) data usage. Examples are provided for each sub-category as follows:

a) “A better understanding of the Common Core Academic Content Standards.”

a) “More experience utilizing common core standards in preparation.”

b) “Provide practical experiences using formative evaluations and using these results to drive differentiated instruction and documentation of interventions.”

b) “Conveyance for the importance of formative assessments to ‘inform instruction’.”

c) “Being able to use data to drive instruction and intervention at all levels.”

c) “Understanding data sources and how to interpret data.”

Miscellaneous Statements was the third highest category with 21% of the comments. Inside this theme were comments by those who favor the work colleges of education are doing and those who were critical of higher education’s new teacher
preparation programs. However, most comments were random and did have enough consistency to make a new category. Comments in this category included:

- “Licensure type and endorsements currently restrictive”
- “Society’s value on the teaching profession improves.”
- “Move away from Praxis - waste of time.”
- “Discuss the importance of being a team player and not get involved in all the politics of unions and other distractions from our mission.”
- “I believe our teachers coming out of college now are well prepared in data, instruction, and assessment techniques.”
- “I believe college grads are very well prepared.”
- “I have found the quality of applicants to be very good. To further improve the quality of teacher college graduates, I would add teaching workplace skills such as: be to work on time, or better yet, arrive early and stay late, offer to pitch in whenever helped is needed; avoid Facebook and any social networks that might get them into mischief, teach them that they are no longer college kids but that they are adults and need to connect with students on a teacher to student level.”
- “Many college faculty members are way out of touch with what we are looking for in candidates.”
• “They must know PLC concepts and what works in schools. They must read and know by heart Reeves, Marzano, Stiggins, Schmoker, etc. What makes up a great lesson? How do they use assessment to improve instruction? The lack of exposure [to] and implementation of these strategies is staggering. I am not even sure the college profs know the research. They are too busy doing their own.”

• “Universities need to ask what we are looking for. I use the teacher perceiver and the one question deals with the confidence level of teachers. Every new teacher candidate I interview says that they will change their lesson if I criticize them. I want to hire reflective, independent thinkers, not robots”

The fourth theme to develop was Weed Out and Teacher Personality that is, developing a teacher personality that would best fit the profession. The following were suggestions in this theme:

• “Considering the quantity of candidates, a more thorough screening procedure earlier in their college experience would be helpful.”

• “Some sort of aptitude test to weed out people who should not be in the profession.”

• “Colleges actually eliminate those teachers not suited for education.”

• “Emotional maturity measurements.”

Improving technology skills and knowledge (Increase Technology Training) was a fifth theme, making up 7% of the comments from rural superintendents, such as:
• “Technology skills and how to incorporate them in the classroom to motivate students and improve teaching.”

• “Better utilization of technology in instructional activities.”

• “More technology and blended learning.”

• “Demonstrate the application of technology tools with learning activities that meet the content standards.”

The final three categories were approximately 9% of the comments. These themes included interview preparation, partnerships between public schools and universities, and increased knowledge of school law. One example from each theme is provided:

• “Be prepared for the interview. Do your homework on the district, the personnel interviewing you, and the position for which you are interviewing. Learn about the community and the school. First impressions are important.”

• “More administrative collaboration between the universities and the local district discussing current needs. Those needs would then be addressed in the university curriculum.”

• “School law and special needs concerns.”
Analysis of Qualitative Data

Comments and suggestions from superintendents cover a wide spectrum of issues. Even within themes there is little uniformity on what superintendents really desire to improve teacher candidates. There is no common voice as to what is expected of new teachers coming out of college. There seems to be a disconnect between what is actually done in regard to characteristics and the hiring process and what the qualitative data suggest is valued by administrators, based on their comments. For example, communication was number three in the quantitative data from the survey as something highly valued by superintendents, but had only six comments as a very small sub-category of teaching experience and skills. Technology and Student Teaching Experiences are in the bottom four of valued teacher characteristics, and Technology Demonstration is in the middle of the pack of hiring procedures, yet they are major themes in the qualitative data based on the rural superintendents’ comments that colleges need to do a better job in these areas. But why would the colleges cater to the superintendents’ stated wishes when the superintendents themselves place so little value on Technology and Student Teaching as teacher characteristics in hiring? These issues will be discussed in more detail in Chapter V.

Summary

This chapter laid out the results of surveys sent out to and returned by rural Ohio superintendents. Demographics were summarized in Table 1. Descriptive statistics were used for Research Question One. Research Questions Two, Three, Four, and all
hypotheses were analyzed using one or more of the following: Pearson correlations, ANOVA, chi-square testing, and paired sample t-test. From survey participants’ responses, themes were developed to represent the analysis of the qualitative data. Chapter V will explain what some of the data might be suggesting and will give recommendations of the research.
CHAPTER V

Introduction

This study identified what hiring characteristics and hiring procedures are most valued by 192 superintendents in rural school districts across Ohio. Chapter V of this dissertation will include the discussion and summary of this research. It will review the research problem and the methodology and will summarize the results. The discussion of the results will include interpretations of the findings and limitations of the research, along with recommendations for educators and suggestions for additional research.

The purpose of this study was to understand what qualities superintendents look for in new teacher candidates and how their hiring procedures might impact how they search for the qualities they value in candidates. Superintendents’ opinions were included in this study in the hope of providing a greater understanding that might impact conversations between educators and improve partnerships between rural school districts and colleges of education in the quest for excellence in today’s classrooms.

Review of Methodology

The methodology of this study was, for the most part, quantitative research through survey design and descriptive statistics (Creswell, 2008). This study used both quantitative and qualitative survey data to describe rural superintendents’ values and procedures for hiring first-year teachers. The survey method used in this study facilitated
the use of statistical methods to observe useful relationships and patterns in the data (Rudestam & Newton, 2001). The following research questions were analyzed:

*Research Question 1:* What applicant characteristics do rural superintendents in Ohio value when they are hiring new first-year teachers coming out of college preparation programs?

*Research Question 2:* Do rural superintendents value personal characteristics more highly than professional characteristics when considering applicants for first-year teaching positions?

*Research Question 3:* Do any of these preferred characteristics vary by superintendent’s years of experience, gender, district type, student achievement, or district resources?

*Research Question 4:* Is there any relationship between characteristics valued by superintendents and their hiring procedures?

Three hundred forty rural superintendents in Ohio were sent an electronic survey. A web-based survey was used to collect data (Dillman et al., 2009). A copy of the survey is in Appendix C. Participants were informed of the nature of the survey through a series of emails. The Ashland University Human Subject Review Board gave the approval for the survey.
A professional-looking survey was developed in Survey Monkey. This allowed me to collect responses and analyze the data by downloading it to the SPSS program. The response rate was 58 percent with 192 usable surveys returned out of the 340 requested. Hypotheses were tested using one-way ANOVA, Chi Square, paired sample t-test or Pearson Correlation.

Summary of the Results

Demographics

The majority of the participants were male superintendents (78 percent), and female superintendents comprised 19 percent of the sample pool. Seventy-eight percent of all participants had zero to nine years of experience in the position. Superintendents of Rural/Agricultural-type districts comprised 78.6 percent of participants. District resources data show that 92 percent of teachers had a starting salary between $28,000 and $35,999. Student achievement, as determined by the State of Ohio Performance Index Score, ranked from effective to excellent in most schools, with 49 percent having a PI score from 96 to 100.9.

Quantitative Findings

Rural superintendents ranked these characteristics of new teacher applicants as most important in this order: self-motivated, certification, communication skills, works
well with others, and a tie among strong teaching skills, cooperative, and enthusiastic. When teacher applicant skills were grouped into personal skills and professional skills, rural superintendents gave statistically significantly higher ratings to the personal skills.

The ratings on individual teacher applicant characteristics were not affected by the gender of the superintendent, nor the district type. The more years of experience a superintendent had, the more importance they placed on organizational skills and communication skills of the teacher applicant. None of the other individual teacher applicant characteristics were associated with the superintendent’s years of experience.

The level of resources of the school district, as measured by starting teacher salary, was not associated with the ratings rural superintendents gave to individual teacher applicant characteristics. Superintendents in districts with higher performance indicators (a measure of student achievement) tended to place more importance on teacher applicants’ professional knowledge, specifically knowledge of subject matter. No other ratings of individual teacher characteristics were significantly associated with performance index.

The hiring procedures most highly valued by the rural superintendents were involvement of the principal and interview. Chi square tests revealed statistically significant associations between values placed on teacher applicant characteristics and values placed on hiring procedures as follows: (a) caring and the recommendation of the cooperating teacher, (b) student teaching experience and the recommendation of the cooperating teacher, (c) applicant knowledge of subject matter and applicant demonstration of technology skills, (d) organizational skills and applicant demonstration
of technology skills, (e) strong teaching skills and applicant demonstration of technology skills, and (f) technology skills and applicant demonstration of technology skills.

The values placed on personal skills were positively associated with higher values placed on superintendent involvement in hiring, grade transcripts of applicants, community involvement in hiring, and applicant demonstration of technology skills. The values placed on professional skills were positively associated with higher values placed on grade transcripts of applicants, applicant portfolios, applicant demonstration of teaching skills, applicant sample lesson plans, applicant Praxis exam scores, and applicant demonstration of technology skills.

Qualitative Findings

The greatest number of answers to open-ended questions about how to improve the quality of new teacher college graduates referred to increasing teaching experiences and improving skills. That included additional classroom experience, specifically student teaching, and classroom management and communication skills. The second theme with the greatest number of comments was increasing the applicant’s knowledge of new Common Core curriculum standards, assessment techniques, and how to use data to improve instruction. Other comments included more technology training, greater selectivity into the profession using personality characteristics, better preparation for job application and interview, working partnerships between schools and universities, and increased knowledge of school law.
Discussion of Research

Questions One and Two

For nearly twenty years the characteristics most valued by administrators, whether superintendents or principals, have not changed (Broberg, 1987; Garman & Alkire, 1993; Harris et al., 2010; Kersten, 2008). In light of all the changes that have taken place in education over the past twenty years, it is apparent that the perceived profile of a quality new teacher has not changed. Today’s students, according to Rideout, Foehr, and Roberts (2010) are spending far more time on television, music, computers, and video games. They report a sharp increase, even in the last five years, of time spent on these media diversions by eight-to-eighteen-year-olds, resulting in a negative impact on grades. They stated that an explosion is taking place in young people’s use of cell phones and the Internet. Marzano (2007) says that the art of teaching today requires high energy, enthusiasm, and intensity to engage today’s students. Cradler, McNabb, Freeman, and Burchett (2002) discuss the need for preparing teachers to use technology. They identify three primary goals of technology in education: “a) achievement in content-area learning, b) higher-order thinking and problem-solving skill development, and c) workforce preparation” (p. 47). Cradler, Freeman, Cradler, and McNabb (2002) stated only 20% of teachers feel well prepared in technology, though most United States classrooms have computers and are connected to the internet. All the above researchers have pointed to changes that are impacting today’s classroom. Would it not be logical to conclude these changes might impact what type of teacher is needed in today’s classroom? In Tables 2 and 3 in Chapter IV, characteristics like Technology Skills and Creative are ranked in the
bottom five. Yet these and other low-ranked characteristics need to be present in high-energy teachers who can use technology in engaging and creative ways for today’s students. Table 9 shows studies over almost 20 years and none of them listed Technology Skills as a top characteristic needed for today’s classroom.

Table 9

*Comparison of Rank Orders of Valued Characteristics of New Teacher, Various Studies,*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self Motivated</td>
<td>Strong Teaching Skills</td>
<td>Self Motivated</td>
<td>Vitality and Enthusiasm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certification</td>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>Enthusiastic</td>
<td>Warmth toward students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Skills</td>
<td>Knows subject</td>
<td>Know latest trends, research and best practice</td>
<td>Knowledge of subject matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works Well with Others</td>
<td>Works Well with Others</td>
<td>Caring &amp; Tactful</td>
<td>Professional behaviors &amp; Personal integrity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is even more ironic is that, although technology seems to have little value in the hiring process, it was the fifth most-stated suggestion from superintendents for improving the quality of new teaching graduates. Why do educational leaders say they need technology skill in their new staffs, yet do not value it as a teacher characteristic? How, in twenty years, has it not moved into the top five considerations of hiring
procedure? Applicants demonstrating technology skill were sixth in the hiring processes valued by superintendents. In fact in Chapter IV, Table 8, four teaching characteristics of Know Subject, Organized, Strong Teaching Skills, and Technology Skills all had significant relationship at a level of $p<.01$ with Applicant Demonstration of Technology Skills. Interestingly, those superintendents that did value technology skill as a characteristic also required demonstration of it in the hiring process because it had the highest relationship value in the chi-squared test (79.196) and the largest effect size of the study at a Cramer V of .467 (Chapter IV, Table 6). However, as a large group it was not ranked in the top ten of characteristics valued by most rural superintendents. Could there be a logical reasoning for this? Could it be that rural districts in Ohio lack funding and resources needed for using technology? So technology skills are not a primary characteristic because they don’t currently have the needed technology to use in the classroom? This is only speculation by the researcher and was not addressed by this study survey. Maybe it should be further researched to determine what rural districts can provide in the way of technology to advance the 21st century classroom.

Table 9 shows a comparison between my study and three other studies of characteristics valued by administrators who hire new teachers, including Harris et al. (2010), Kersten (2008), and Garman and Alkire (1993). The findings are similar, Harris et al. interviewed principals in Florida. As in this study, Garman and Alkire used a survey of rural school districts in Ohio. They found that different personal traits were more or less favored according to the sizes of the districts. However, I found no correlation between types of rural districts and the favoring of certain personal characteristics in teachers.
Whether it is Place and Drake’s (1994) finding of “enthusiasm for teaching” and “communication skills” being rated as most important by principals in Ohio and Illinois or Garmen and Alkire’s (1993) report of “Warmth toward students” and “Knowledge of subject matter,” the data analysis of this researcher’s study shows in Table 3 and 4 of Chapter IV or Table 11 below that there has not been much change in almost 20 years regarding what hiring administrators value when selecting new teachers. Whether one is a superintendent or principal, the same top seven or eight key personal characteristics are being valued in new teacher selection. The rankings will differ slightly from study to study based on sample sizes and research methods.

This finding about administrators was reported twenty-five years ago in Broberg (1987), namely that administrators valued the “personal” characteristics of Enthusiastic and Communications Skills over the “professional” characteristics of Teaching Strategy, Knowledge, and Classroom Management Skills. This study found, based on the opinions of rural superintendents that they favored personal skills over professional skills. This was also evident in comments made by them, such as:

- “Development and internalization of appropriate dispositions about being a teacher.”

- “Some sort of aptitude test to weed out people who should not be in the profession.”

- “Considering the quantity of candidates, a more thorough screening procedure earlier in their college experience would be helpful.”
This would seem to suggest that more communication is needed between school districts and colleges of education about what the educators “in the trenches” really look for in new candidates. Currently, there are obstacles to fostering such communication. This researcher, in talks with the Buckeye Association of School Administrators (the leading organization of superintendents in Ohio) found that it has no subcommittee that works with universities and colleges around the state on educational issues. This is also true of the Ohio Association of Local School Superintendents, an organization for rural superintendents in Ohio. In addition, there is no forum for communicating with the Ohio Board of Regents and advocates of P-16. I did hear recently at Superintendent Exchange training with the Ohio Leadership Academy Council (OLAC) that a summit between 22 colleges of education, Ohio Department of Education and OLAC recently had conversations about new teacher quality. This is because a new accountability model is going to be implemented to start grading the colleges of education in a similar fashion to the way Ohio Public Schools are graded by a yearly report card (P. VanHorn, personal communication, February 2012).

Second, in studying the superintendents’ comments in the survey about improving teacher quality, I found little consistency in what rural superintendents really value. Their comments, even within a general theme, varied greatly. A recommendation regarding this appears below in this chapter.

Third, the valuation of personal skills over professional skills has little support in research showing how personal skills improve student achievement. Even in the present study there were no data showing that personal skills had any significant impact on district-wide student achievement ranking by performance index scores. In fact, a small
positive relationship $r = .15$ was found between districts with high PI scores, an indicator of student achievement, and the superintendents’ high value for Professional characteristics, especially that of Know Subject. This is consistent with other research of professional characteristics that has linked high levels of teacher content knowledge, verbal acuity, ACT/SAT scores, and certification with higher student achievement scores (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Ferguson & Ladd, 1996; Goldhaber, 2004; Hawk et al., 1985). Therefore, if a high value is to be placed on personal characteristics, more research is needed to determine how such characteristics might directly impact student achievement.

Questions Three and Four

There seems to be no evidence that rural superintendents have any differences in what they value based on their genders, or how academically successful their district might be, or the type of district they oversee, or what the starting salary is to attract a certain type of new teacher. It was surprising that younger superintendents (zero to nine years of experience, 78 percent of the survey respondents), seemed not to value Technology Skills, Enthusiasm, and Creativity more highly in the twenty-first century. All relationship pairings between valued teacher characteristics and hiring procedures in Table 6 of Chapter IV were determined statistically significant pairings at $p < .01$. Superintendents who value technological skills believe it is important for new candidates to demonstrate that skill. With many years of experience in total quality management focusing on the needs of my educational community, I was surprised that involving students and the community in the hiring procedure was in the bottom three. I believe that
today’s educational leaders should look at more studies such as McCoy (2009), which discussed combining students’ desires to use technology in the classroom with teachers who demonstrate energy, creativity, and passion for their subject. Students looked for teachers who were willing to communicate, construct positive relationships, and sacrifice some control of the class to them. Educators know that positive relationships with students are important to student performance in the classroom (Bernstien-Yamashiro, 2004; Klem & Connell, 2004). Rural superintendents, being a group with special cultural needs, should learn how to involve students in selecting the type of teachers they think would best help them grow as learners.

Recommendation for Education

Darling-Hammond (2010) said, “If teachers, principals, superintendents and other professionals do not share up-to-date knowledge about effective practices, the field [of education will] run around in circles” (p. 196). One of the things this study found in the qualitative data was that rural superintendents (of whom I am one) cannot truly define what improvements are needed in new teachers today. In Ohio the administrators’ organizations should be asked to define “the quality teacher” and conduct research studies using data that would indicate with data which teachers are most successful in the classroom. Then, summits should be held with deans of education from colleges and universities, and partnerships should be created. It was clear in my data that rural superintendents desired more teaching experience and greater use of technology. All changes and services should not come exclusively from colleges and universities; many
could be provided directly by school districts. Apprenticeships, similar to long-term internships or physician residency programs, with the best teachers in the state are critical for learning to teach effectively (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Educators must not wait any longer to open the closed doors of education but rather begin working more closely together as K-12 systems and colleges of education to produce higher-quality teachers for the twenty-first century.

My fellow administrators, we must also look closely at our hiring procedures. This study shows we do not highly value the involvement of students and our communities in our hiring decisions, yet these are the consumers of the product we recommend to our Boards of Education. We have all seen students line up to register for classes taught by the best teachers in our buildings, and students will usually give an honest answer about who their favorite teachers are. Over the last few years in my district I have required new teacher applicants to teach a lesson to our students as part of the interview process. The feedback our students have provided has made an impact in our hiring selection. I see the need for the involvement of students in the hiring process, a demonstration of quality teaching skills and the ability to integrate technology into lesson plans by teaching applicants as being essential to the new 21st century classroom. To accomplish this, our hiring procedures will have to progress in the coming years.

In this study characteristics like Enthusiasm, Creativity, and Technology Skills did not score as high as others, but I believe it is time to start using new terms in educational research that incorporate not only the above-referenced characteristics, but also innovation, engagement, and educational fun. We cannot discount the increasing use of media by today’s pre-college students (Rideout et al., 2010). The term is
“edutainment,” defined as “the act of learning through a medium that both educates and entertains” (American Heritage Dictionary, 2000). I consider the term “medium” to include people, not just television, computers, video games, and smart phones. The children’s television programs “Romper Room” and “Sesame Street” were based not only on an educational setting, but also on the characters who were presenting educational facts.

Today there are many forms of edutainment found throughout television, such as do-it-yourself shows and channels like the Discovery Channel and the History Channel. The series “Survivor Man” on the Discovery Channel engages the viewer as Les Stroud applies his survival skills for days at a time in the wild. What makes the series a success is how well he engages the viewer as he teaches about wilderness survival. Modern classrooms will soon catch up with public media as they become equipped with Smart Boards, software, digital textbooks, etc. Teachers will be required to understand how to use these tools. As professionals, they must thoroughly understand edutainment, or educating while making it interesting and enjoyable.

I have often heard a colleague talk about an exciting teacher saying, “That teacher just has ‘it’,” referring to whatever it was that made that teacher engaging, fun, and helped them make learning exciting. I had hoped my research would identify the characteristics that make up this “it” factor. However, even lacking such data, it is essential, with increasing media technology in the classrooms, that educators begin discussing how edutainment shall be implemented as the standard teaching model to reach students and increase student achievement. As classrooms expand their use of iPads, Smart Boards, on-line curricula, distance learning, and computerized lessons like
Sal Khan Academy it will be crucially important for new teachers to understand how to blend media technology and new kinds of pedagogy (Khan, 2011).

Suggestions for Additional Research

Goldhaber and Hannaway (2009) defined teacher quality as “the set of teacher skills, knowledge, personal attributes and pedagogical abilities that yield desired student outcomes” (p. 30). Can educators truly isolate and define a special set of pedagogical abilities and how they are changing with the integration of technology in our most successful classrooms? The superintendents in this study in a two-tailed pair-sample t-test at p>.001 clearly favor personal characteristics above professional characteristics, yet there is little information in the literature review that values personal characteristics as making a positive impact on student achievement with the exception of the literature put out by companies making teacher perceiver tools. Additional research would be helpful in analyzing the elements of this definition of pedagogical abilities into characteristics that could build a quality-teacher profile. What are the skills of the most successful teachers based on the data of student achievement? We need case studies of teachers in the classroom and of the personal attributes that tend to engage students and increase learning. In Ohio, with “value added” and many other accountability tools, we have the ability to examine individual teacher and student achievement growth data. Partnerships between college researchers and the best teachers in Ohio could lead case studies that could help develop profiles of successful personality types in the classroom. This is not to suggest you can fit teaching into a square box, but all data brought to the discussion
could help us have the best teachers in front of the classroom for future generations. This type of research could help us prepare a teacher-quality profile or rubric that could assess a college student’s potential as a teacher before entering a college of education and provide a universal tool for professors, cooperating teachers, and new candidates. In Ohio a new accountability model of College of Education will be coming out soon and this conversation about what disposition and essential skills of successful classroom teachers in Ohio will become a more powerful conversation (P. VanHorn, personal communication, February 2012). It could lead to what Darling-Hammond (2010) said is needed to develop competent teachers: “Ultimately, a well-designed state and national infrastructure that ensures that schools have access to well-prepared teachers and knowledge about best practices is absolutely essential” (p. 197). For me it starts with how we can better define what the quality teacher looks like and make informed predictions of what is needed for tomorrow.

Limitations of the Study

Since this study is limited to rural superintendents in Ohio, it cannot be generalized to other states or to urban settings. However, the results about what characteristics are still valued over the past twenty years and about hiring procedures involving principals and interviews, are very similar to results of past studies (Garman & Alkire, 1993; Harris et al., 2010; Kersten, 2008; Place & Drake, 1994).
The respondents to my survey gave high importance to almost all of the teacher characteristics and the hiring procedures. If I were to repeat the study I would change the survey by asking participants to rank their most valued characteristics from 1 to 5, with 1 representing what is *most* important and 5 being *least* important. This might have given a better spread among characteristics valued by superintendents. The Likert scale left less than .17 between the means of the top nine characteristics, limiting any real separation of what is truly valued by rural superintendents.

Conclusion

This chapter contains the Summary of the Results from this dissertation and the discussion of each Research Question. It also includes a Review of the Methodology, and Limitation of the Study. This researcher hopes the interpretation of his findings will lead to better discussion and partnerships for new teacher development and research among school districts and colleges of education as proposed in the Recommendation for Education and Suggestions for Additional Research.
References


Web Site: http://ierc.siue.edu


APPENDIX A

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

FOUR-TEIR TEACHER LICENSURE STRUCTURE

JANUARY 2011
### Four-Tier Teacher Licensure Structure—January 2011

**Resident Educator License/ Alternative Resident Educator License** - 4 yr. nonrenewable (may be extended on a case by case basis)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resident Educator License Requirements</th>
<th>Alternative Resident Educator License Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Bachelor's degree</td>
<td>• Bachelor's degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• An approved program of teacher preparation</td>
<td>• Major in the subject to be taught or extensive work experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Examinations prescribed by State Board of Education (licensure exams)</td>
<td>• Completion of an Intensive Pedagogical Training Institute (IPTI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 12 semester hours of reading for early childhood, middle childhood, intervention specialist and early childhood intervention specialist licenses</td>
<td>• Content area examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• This license will also be issued for career-technical workforce development areas utilizing existing processes for licensing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Professional Educator License - 5 yr renewable

**Requirements**

- Bachelor's degree (except career-technical workforce development)
- Successfully completed the Ohio Resident Educator Program
- Alternative License holders successfully complete additional requirements to obtain Professional license

### Senior Professional Educator License - 5 yr renewable

**A+B+C**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Degree Requirement</th>
<th>B Experience</th>
<th>C Demonstration of Practice at the Accomplished/Distinguished Level:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master's degree or higher from an institution of higher education accredited by a regional accrediting organization</td>
<td>Nine years under a standard teaching license with 120 days of service as defined by ORC, of which At least five years are under a professional/permanent license/certificate</td>
<td>Successful completion of the Master Teacher Portfolio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Lead Professional Educator License - 5 yr renewable

**A+B+C**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Degree Requirement</th>
<th>B Experience</th>
<th>C Demonstration of Practice at the Distinguished Level:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master's degree or higher from an institution of higher education accredited by a regional accrediting organization</td>
<td>Nine years under a standard teaching license with 120 days of service as defined by ORC, of which At least five years are under a professional/permanent license/certificate or a Senior Professional Educator License</td>
<td>Earn the Teacher Leader Endorsement AND successful completion of the Master Teacher Portfolio OR: Hold active NBC (National Board Certification) (NBPTS)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Published 1/18/2011 - This chart was re-typed on 3/12/12 for readability for this dissertation.
APPENDIX B

ASHLAND UNIVERSITY

HUMAN SUBJECT REVIEW BOARD

RESEARCH APPROVAL
TO: Richard D. Smith Jr.

FROM: Randy Gearhart, Chair

DATE: September 15, 2011

RE: Human Subjects Review Board Approval

The Human Subjects Review Board has approved the research proposal you submitted. You may proceed with the project.

The primary function of the HSRB is to ensure protection of human research subjects. As a result of this mandate, we ask that you pay close attention to the fundamental ethical principles of autonomy, justice, and beneficence when establishing your research proposal. These ethical principles pertain specifically to the issues of informed consent, fair selection of subjects, and risk/benefit considerations.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Randy Gearhart
Phone: 419-207-6198
Fax: 419-289-5460
E-mail: rgearhar@ashland.edu
APPENDIX C

SURVEY QUESTIONS
Survey questions by Rick Smith as they will be seen in SurveyMonkey.

You will be asked to take a short survey you may exit out of this opportunity at anytime.

Hello, my name is Rick Smith, Superintendent of North Union Local Schools in Union County. I would like to request your assistance with my doctoral dissertation by filling out a very short survey. The purpose is to have a better understanding of what rural Superintendents are looking for in new first year teachers and to provide that information to future teaching candidates and colleges of education. Here is what it could mean to you:
1. You will be contributing growth in educational knowledge that could benefit our profession in the future.
2. If you provide your email address I will be happy to share the results of the survey with you.
3. Providing your email address will place you in a drawing for a $100 Visa Card. The odds are great; 1-339. That’s much better than the lottery!
4. Your identity will be protected and not used or associated with any of your responses.

Thank you for volunteering in advance to help a colleague and for contributing to research that could benefit our profession. The survey should take 10-12 minutes. If you feel uncomfortable at anytime please feel free to exit the survey and your responses will not be counted in the results.

The survey is 11 questions.

If you have any questions about this research, please contact me at rsmith@nu-district.org or 740-816-6637. You may also contact my dissertation chair Dr. Carla Edlefson at cedlesfo@ashland.edu, 614-794-0803 or Randy Gerhart, Chair, Ashland University Human Subjects Review Board, (419) 207-6198 or rgearhar@ashland.edu

1. What type is your district, based on Ohio Department of Education description?
   a. Rural 1 – Rural/Agricultural, high poverty, low to median income
b. Rural 2- Rural/Agricultural, small student population, low poverty, low to moderate median income

c. Rural 2 – Rural/Small Town, moderate to high median income.

2. Including this year what is your number of years in the Superintendency?

3. What is your gender? Male or Female

4. Please state your school district’s Performance Index score as determined by the 2010-2011 School Year Report Card:

5. What is your district’s 2011-2012 starting salary for a teacher with a bachelor’s degree and no experience?

6. Please rate EACH of the following characteristics from 0 to 5, for what you value when hiring a teacher for his/her first teaching position. Zero means no value and 5 having highest value.

   a. Caring 0 1 2 3 4 5

   b. Certification 0 1 2 3 4 5

   c. Education 0 1 2 3 4 5

   d. Communication skills 0 1 2 3 4 5

   e. Cooperative 0 1 2 3 4 5

   f. Creative 0 1 2 3 4 5

   g. Student teaching experience 0 1 2 3 4 5

   h. Enthusiastic 0 1 2 3 4 5

   i. Intelligent 0 1 2 3 4 5

   j. Self-motivated 0 1 2 3 4 5

   k. Knows subject 0 1 2 3 4 5
I. Organized  

m. Thoughtful/reflective  
n. Strong teaching skills  
o. Works well with others  
p. Lives in our community  
q. Technology skills  

7. Please rate EACH of the following hiring procedures or tools from 0 to 5, as to their importance in the teacher hiring process. Zero means no value and 5 having highest value. Mark N/A if your district does not use this procedure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involvement of the superintendent</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant resume</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant grade transcript</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement of the principal</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement of community members</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement of students</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job fairs</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher perceiver instrument</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant portfolio</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant demonstration of teaching</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant sample lesson plans</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant Praxis score</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
n. Applicant demonstration of technology skills
   0  1  2  3  4  5  N/A

o. Recommendation of cooperating teacher
   0  1  2  3  4  5  N/A

p. Recommendation of university professor
   0  1  2  3  4  5  N/A

8. Do you feel pressure/obligated to hire a local candidate over a candidate who’s better, but not a resident of the community?

   Never  Sometimes  Often  Always

9. How often are you successful in hiring your first choice candidate?

   Never  Sometimes  Often  Always

10. What suggestions would you offer to improve the quality of new teacher college graduates?

    Comment Box
    
    Suggestion 1
    
    Suggestion 2

11. This information will only be used for a drawing for a $100 Visa card and to return results.

    a. Name ________________________________
    b. Email ________________________________
APPENDIX D

VARIABLES
Variables

Superintendent and District Characteristics (See Tables 1 & 2)

- District Type
- Gender
- Performance Index – Student Achievement
- Teacher Starting Salary – District Resources
- Superintendent’s Years of Experience

Teacher Applicant Characteristics (See Tables 3 & 4)

These characteristics in the survey were done on a Likert scale for 0 to 5. The eighteen teacher characteristics variables were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Characteristics</th>
<th>Professional Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>Certification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative</td>
<td>Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative</td>
<td>Knows Subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiastic</td>
<td>Intelligent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Motivated</td>
<td>Strong Teaching Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organized</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoughtful/Reflective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works Well with Others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not Categorized as Personal or Professional

- Living in our Community
- Student Teaching Experience
- Technology Skills

Personal and Professional Teacher Applicant Characteristics (See Table 7)
The variable for Personal characteristics was calculated as follows: Each superintendent’s responses for personal characteristics were summed and then divided by nine, the number of personal characteristics.

The variable for Professional characteristics was calculated as follows: Each superintendent’s responses for professional characteristics were summed and then divided by six, the number of professional characteristics.

Recoded Teacher Applicant Characteristics

Because the frequencies were very small at the low end of the Likert scale, teacher applicant characteristics were recoded for the purpose of testing. Each of the teaching characteristic variables was recoded as follows: ratings of 0-3 were recoded as 1; a rating of 4 was recoded as 2; and a rating of 5 was recoded as 3.

Superintendent Hiring Procedures

- Applicant’s Demonstration of Teaching
- Applicant’s Demonstration of Technology Skills
- Applicant’s Grade Transcripts
- Applicant’s Portfolio
- Applicant’s Praxis Scores
- Applicant’s Resume
- Applicant’s Sample Lesson Plans
- Interview

- Involvement of Community
- Involvement of Principal
- Involvement of Students
- Job Fair
- Recommendation of Cooperating Teacher
- Recommendation of University Professor
- Teacher Perceiver
- Superintendent Involvement

Recoding of Superintendent Hiring Procedures

Because the frequencies were very small at the low end of the Likert scale, superintendent hiring procedures were recoded for the purpose of testing. Each of the teaching characteristic variables was recoded as follows: ratings of 0-3 were recoded as 1; a rating of 4 was recoded as 2; and a rating of 5 was recoded as 3.