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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

CAUSES OF BURNOUT AMONG K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOL  
DANCE TEACHERS: PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES  
TO IMPROVE TEACHER RETENTION IN  
21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY EDUCATION

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Arts

Roland Tremaine Latson

College of Performing and Visual Arts  
School of Theatre and Dance  
Dance Education

December 2021

This Thesis by: Roland Tremaine Latson

Entitled: *Causes of Burnout Among K-12 Public School Dance Teachers: Preventative Strategies to Improve Teacher Retention in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education*

has been approved/not approved as meeting the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in the College of Performing and Visual Arts, School of Theatre Arts and Dance, Program of Dance Education

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## ABSTRACT

Latson, Roland Tremaine. *Causes of Burnout Among K-12 Public School Dance Teachers: Preventative Strategies to Improve Teacher Retention in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education*. Unpublished Master of Arts thesis, University of Northern Colorado, 2021

The purpose of this study was to evaluate and analyze what contributing factors influence stress and burnout in K-12 public school dance teachers and collect information to analyze the ways in which teachers can minimize stress to prevent burnout. The research was conducted by current and former dance educators with a minimum of 3 years teaching experience in rural and urban school districts. Thirty-two dance teachers participated in the survey study. The purpose of this study was to examine the causes of burnout among K-12 public school dance teachers and preventative strategies to improve teacher retention in 21<sup>st</sup> century education. The results of this study can help advocate for dance educators to be supported by district and campus administration when teachers are experiencing stress and burnout from professional responsibilities, instructional factors, classroom management, student factors, parent factors, and personal factors.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Through God's grace and mercy was this journey possible. This thesis would not have been developed and completed without the inspiration, guidance, and support of the following:

With the deepest and overwhelming gratitude of thanks to Christy O'Connell-Black for your mentorship, encouragement, and professional expertise through this program. I will carry this with me, forever! Thank you to Dr. Sandra L. Minton for your mentorship and wisdom throughout this program.

Mom, thank you for "walking" beside me every day of my life. I love and miss you dearly! Special thanks to my family for supporting and encouraging me to follow my heart! Inga, thanks for being an extra pair of eyes! We understand each other.

To each participant, I am thankful for the time that you poured into this thesis. I am honored to have such intelligent, inspirational, and creative colleagues in my life.

Thank you, Brion Humphrey (editor), Matt Curtis (typist), Cindy Malone (editor), Lisa Finley (typist), and Judieth Hillman (typist) for your professional advice and knowledge, you contributed to my thesis. Crossing this finish line was because of you!

Cohort 6, we made it! I am honored to have experienced all of this with you, even, through Covid! It made us stronger individuals and leaders! Thanks for the many laughs, insiders, and memories created! I will miss ZOOM dancing with you all!

A special thanks to Kaylee Morrison, Saranya Taylor, Nicole Numa, and Crystal Brock for your support during this program. Kendra Perry, although there were a few bumps (no pun intended) thrown our way, but there is no one I would rather do this with. I love you deeply.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Goal of Thesis**

The profession of teaching has long been considered one of the more promising and rewarding careers. Teaching affords the chance to help individuals learn the necessary tools to develop critical thinking skills, artistic and creative expression, as well as the opportunity to provide lifelong learning beyond a classroom setting. With the many advantages and rewards gained from a career in education, there are also many concerns and downfalls that are aligned to this profession. Teaching can be considered a stressful profession and is continuing to become even more demanding because of recent changes due to the 2020 Coronavirus pandemic along with the constant upending of state and national level educational policies that govern K-12 public school education.

The rise of stress in the educational field can quickly alter the effectiveness of a dance teacher; factors such as professional responsibilities, instructional duties, lack of resources, work overload, administration support, student engagement, student behavior, parent involvement, and job satisfaction are major contributions to burnout. According to the Graide Network, “from an outside perspective, teaching might seem like a much less stressful job than being a nurse or physician. However, according to a recent poll, 46% of teachers report high daily stress, which ties them with nurses for the most stressful occupation in America today.”

One of the more recent stress inducing events was the 2020 Coronavirus Global Pandemic. At the start of fall 2019, teachers were educating students from classrooms; however, due to this immediate and unplanned interruption, teachers converted their personal home living spaces into classrooms to provide virtual instruction through a variety of technological platforms. Popular technology platforms utilized during remote and virtual teaching included Google Classroom, Canvas, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, EDpuzzle, and Pear Deck, to name a few. Today, though some form of normalcy has resumed regarding teaching in-person, a sufficient number of dance educators are required to provide quality instruction through either a virtual or hybrid format, in addition to in-person instruction. Additionally, teachers are currently under a great deal of pressure with an onslaught of new information, updates of district policies, and changes to campus procedures. These constant demands and shifts in educational instructional practices are more present this school year than in prior years. On a highly technical level to provide quality instruction for students, dance teachers learned to navigate technology. There seems to be an incline of stress to their instructional and professional responsibilities; according to the National Council on Teacher Quality 2013 study,

40% of teachers new to the teaching field, do not feel adequately prepared to handle classroom management or discipline issues, and both new and experienced teachers identified classroom management as 'the top problem' they encounter most often. 33% of teachers noted higher rates of student behavior problems like student disruptions than did their colleagues in the well-adjusted group. 3% percent of teachers were associated with lower performing students in math (Greenberg et al.).

Stress, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, is defined as, "a physical, chemical, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension." Stress is brought on by an event or

thought that makes a person feel frustrated, angry, nervous, or anxious. There are two types of stress known as Acute and Chronic stress. Since the start of the pandemic, the increase of stress and burnout in teachers can be attributed to providing and maintaining effective and on-going instruction using new and novel technology platforms. Teaching has become increasingly difficult because of the many students that may not have access to the Internet or the use of electronic devices for remote instruction. These concerns interrupted the flow of providing effective instruction, differentiated instruction, classroom and behavior management for an optimal learning environment. According to Medline Plus, a U.S. National Library of Medicine,

Acute stress is a short-term stressor or feeling, which does not last for long periods of time. Acute stress is low impact and can be managed. Acute stress can be good and will create a defense mechanism for dangerous situations. Chronic stress can be a long-term stressor or feeling and can last for months. If chronic stress is not handled appropriately, it can be a huge risk factor to one's health. The human body reacts to stress by releasing a hormone that alerts the muscles located in the brain to tense and increase one's pulse.

Over time, stress along with other unhealthy habits can cause, high blood pressure, heart disease, depression, anxiety, and many other health concerns. (Medline Plus)

With the reopening of schools and dance teachers returning to in-person instruction, mental concerns along with potential health risks associated with COVID-19 have been brought to the attention of education agencies and school districts. For schools and educators, a wide variety of questions have surfaced from the potential risk of the COVID-19 virus such as: What procedures are in place from the district and campus to ensure the safety of all students, staff, and families during the pandemic? How can teachers maintain a distance of 6-ft for students? Will districts hire additional faculty to decrease the number of students in classrooms? If a

student is exposed to COVID-19, how will this individual's information be handled and managed? If teachers are exposed to COVID-19 from a student, and a leave of absence is required, will the absence count from contracted personal-sick days or will additional sick days be awarded to teachers? Will teachers still be required to provide instruction to students during their leave of absence? These questions and more are just minor concerns of teachers during the pandemic. These major concerns, along with managing everyday instructional responsibilities, can impact the mental, physical, and emotional health of a dance teacher.

With the rise of mental, physical, and emotional health concerns during the pandemic, signs of stress, fear, isolation, exhaustion, anxiety, depression, and job satisfaction are prominent in the workplace and steadily increasing. One major repercussion of stress is burnout. Once a dance teacher hits a plateau of burnout, their mental, physical, emotional, and financial state of health can be challenged, often leading to a decrease in the passion that they had for teaching. These levels of stress and burnout alter their once positive outlook and joy for their career. Various or multiple stress levels can lead dance teachers to burnout, which is one of the leading causes for dance teachers leaving the field of education as reported in the Malasch Burnout survey. The study by the Malasch Burnout Inventory (MBI) measured basic factors of burnout in schoolteachers regarding their personal accomplishment, emotional exhaustion, and depersonalization. Depersonalization can be divided into two separate entities: student related and job-related factors (Iwanicki and Schwab).

The psychologist Hebert Freudenberger described burnout as symptoms of mental and physical exhaustion caused by one's professional workplace. Teaching can be on one of the most stressful careers due to the responsibilities and challenges in the workplace. Failure to control one's work stress over extended periods of time may cause work burnout. Stress and burnout

prevent teachers from fully realizing their potential or effectively carrying out their duties. When a teacher has multiple responsibilities and duties, a teacher will become overwhelmed to the point of shutting down. Authors, Mark Borg, and Richard Riding, discussed in “*Occupational Stress and Satisfaction in Teaching*”, the theory that stress, and burnout can greatly affect a teacher’s performance in the classroom. Teacher stress and burnout can also affect a school’s climate, morale, prevent the attainment of educational objectives, and increase the probability of teachers leaving their posts. Studies on teacher work stress and burnout have already drawn widespread attention all over the world (Borg and Riding).

The goal of this research was to examine and address what contributing factors influence stress and burnout in K-12 public school dance teachers, and to collect information to analyze the ways in which teachers can minimize stress to prevent burnout. The results of this study can help advocate for dance educators to be supported by district and campus administration when teachers are experiencing stress and burnout from professional responsibilities, instructional factors, classroom management, student factors, parent factors, and personal factors. The following essential questions were addressed in this project:

- Q1 What factors contribute to stress?
- Q2 What factors contribute to burnout?
- Q3 In what ways can teachers identify when stress is affecting their well-being?
- Q4 In what ways can teachers identify when burnout is affecting their well-being?
- Q5 What preventative strategies can help improve retention among teachers in an 21<sup>st</sup> century education environment?

### **Purpose of Study**

Retention of highly qualified dance teachers is vital to the content of performing arts dance programs now more than ever. Education is always ongoing and will forever change in

society, but one thing must remain consistent and that is providing quality instruction to aspiring dancers. Even the most experienced teacher can get overwhelmed from time to time due to the pressures of teaching. Understanding how to prevent and recover from burnout is not only important for a teacher's personal health, but for the well-being of their students, colleagues, and overall job satisfaction.

The primary purpose of this research study was to uncover the major factors contributing to burnout in public school dance teachers in a K-12 setting. Burnout is a complex condition with an assortment of signs and symptoms that vary from teacher to teacher. Burnout often occurs in dance teachers during periods of increased commitments to their careers and whose daily regimens produce an imbalance between mental stability, emotional rest, and physical activity. If stress and burnout can be managed appropriately, this could lead to a decrease in teacher turnover rates each year. This study sought to evaluate the demands of the workplace and the ways in which teacher burnout effects behavioral changes. In one study, Herbert Freudenberger described that mental and physical exhaustion was caused by excessively long hours of work, heavy workload, and excessive work intensity in workers in the public relations sector. In another study, researchers Ayala Pines and Elliot Aronson defined chronic burnout as a long-term emotional state resulting in physical, emotional, and psychological exhaustion (Pines and Aronson 27).

Recognizing the signs and symptoms related to burnout as it affects the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of dance teachers, can also affect the learning atmosphere for students. Being able to recognize the signs and symptoms of burnout can assist dance teachers in understanding how building resiliency can provide a healthy balance intellectually and



physically in their professional careers. Recognizing these signs can help dance teachers cope and manage stress before it turns into mental, emotional, and physical exhaustion.

Preventative strategies can also aid districts and administrators in improved retention among dance teachers in 21<sup>st</sup> century education. There should be environmental factors to effectively deregulate teachers' stress and burnout prevention strategies to improve and maintain highly qualified dance teachers.

### **Significance of Study**

The teaching profession is highly demanding and stressful. In this study, dance teachers in K-12 public schools examined their own relationship with the contributions of stress and burnout to identify the signs and symptoms related to burnout as it affected their mental, emotional, and physical well-being and their working environment. Student discipline, increased workload, and lack of support from administration and district personnel are among a few causes of increased stress in teachers. According to a study by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the annual turnover rate is sixteen percent. Eight percent of teachers are leaving education, while the other eight percent are relocating to other schools. With teacher turnover rates at an all-time high, it is important to find ways to increase the health, well-being, and self-efficacy for teachers in education. Maximizing support for dance teachers in the workplace could help prevent stress and burnout and minimize the turnover rate of teachers in the profession.

This study serves as a platform for analyzing and addressing burnout amongst dance teachers and enhancing opportunities for increasing retention in K-12 public school dance teachers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century environment. The study results may be used by district and campus administration in collaborative efforts with a support specialist in providing social emotional

programs designed to assist in helping dance teachers cope and manage stress before it turns into burnout. Teacher burnout can impact a district in many ways, including academically and financially. Stress and burnout can affect teachers' instructional responsibilities, student performance, teacher attrition, and job satisfaction. This study attempted to understand the contributing factors of burnout and stress, recognize the signs and symptoms of burnout and stress, and identify preventative strategies in the workplace to improve retention among dance teachers in 21<sup>st</sup> century education.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Thirty-two dance teachers participated in the survey study. The purpose of this study was to examine the causes of burnout among K-12 public school dance teachers and preventative strategies to improve teacher retention in 21<sup>st</sup> century education. Additionally, this research design to collect information to analyze the ways in which teachers can minimize stress to prevent burnout and analyze factors that can contribute to teacher burnout and how burnout affects student learning. Contributing factors include student discipline, parent involvement, and administration support. These questions were designed to collect information and explanations of participants directly associated with this field-based study and to gain an unbiased understanding of stress and burnout and its impact on the teacher and learning environment.

This chapter focuses on the contributing factors of burnout by defining and examining different types of stress and their relationship to the academic context. This chapter also examines the variables and contributions of burnout in the workplace for both veteran and new teachers. Additionally, the bulk of teacher burnout will be explored through the parameters of the teaching field, while examining the health factors and benefits to minimizing stress and burnout in the workplace. The purpose of this study was to explore and identify stress, understand teacher burnout by centering on contributing factors, the effects of stress on teacher performance, the impacts on student learning and achievement, and to identify ways to decrease burnout to promote mental and physical health.

## **Defining Stress**

Stress, according to the Mental Health Foundation, is defined as, “the degree to which a person feels overwhelmed or unable to cope as a result of pressures that are unmanageable.” The two most common types of stress are categorized as Acute and Chronic stress. Acute and Chronic stress can also have subcategory descriptions depending on the body’s mental and physical responses to life events. Additionally, the Medical Health Foundation states,

Contributions to stress can vary enormously from person to person and differs according to our social and economic circumstances, the environment we live in and our genetic makeup. When a person encounters stress, the human body is stimulated to produce stress hormones that trigger a ‘fight or flight’ response and activate the immune system. This response helps us to respond quickly to dangerous situations. (Mental Health Foundation)

### *Types of Stress*

#### **Acute Stress**

Acute stress is one of the least detrimental types of stress and is the most common form that people experience multiple times throughout the day. Acute stress, a mild form of stress is not damaging, but it can affect the mental, physical, and emotional well-being of a dance teacher. Depending on the type of situation of the stressor, it is usually a short-term feeling released from the human body quicker than Chronic Stress. According to Medline Plus, a U.S. National Library of Medicine, “Acute stress can be easily managed because it occurs and then it's over.”

Furthermore, according to the Very Well Mind article by Elizabeth Scott,

Acute stress can be easily managed because it occurs briefly and then it is over. Acute stress has minor health concerns compared to major health concerns brought on by chronic stress. It is relatively easy to recover from acute stress—simple relaxation

techniques can work quickly if your stress response doesn't resolve into a relaxation response on its own. (Very Well Mind)

If acute stress is repeated on numerous occasions by a situation or event, then acute stress can become a more serious concern and transition into chronic stress.

### **Chronic Stress**

Chronic stress, unlike Acute stress is far more damaging. Chronic stress is caused by ongoing demanding situations or events. Chronic stress is determined to be a mild stressor, but many factors can trigger a stress response, including dangerous situations and psychological pressures in teaching. According to the "Very Well Mind" article,

Chronic stress occurs when the body experiences stressors with such frequency or intensity that the autonomic nervous system does not have an adequate chance to activate the relaxation response on a regular basis. This means that the body remains in a constant state of physiological arousal. (Very Well Mind)

Chronic stress can vary for each dance teacher. Dance teachers may handle chronic stress differently depending on where the stress initiates. Chronic stress derives from emotional, environmental, relationship, and work stress, which can last for longer periods of time. This form of stress can be managed, but it is vital for teachers to understand what causes it and how it affects their mental, physical, and emotional well-being.

#### *Aspects of Stress*

Stress can be a negative emotional experience accompanied by various physical, cognitive, and behavioral changes. The human body, both consciously and subconsciously reacts to stressors while beliefs and expectations of a situation play a role on the intensity of an

individual's coping method. Failure to respond appropriately to emotional and physical threats can have a long-lasting effect on the individual's mental health.

Dr. James L. Wilson, medical practitioner, and author of "*Adrenal Fatigue: The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Stress Syndrome*", explains how adrenal fatigue can decrease in the ability of the adrenal glands is to carry out their normal function. This happens when the human body is overwhelmed, when stress overextends the capacity of your body to compensate and fully recover. Adrenal fatigue is different from other types of fatigue because it has its own specific energy pattern. Adrenal fatigue comes in various spurts during the day and night and allow individuals to seem restless most of the time. According to Dr. Wilson's psychological and emotional aspects of stress,

Psychological stress in turn affects your emotional and mental state. Typically, an individual's emotions can commonly be associated with the stress of fear and anxiety with acute stress, moodiness, irritability and anxiety with stress overdrive, and depression with adrenal fatigue. Recent research has been exploring the direct effects of chronic stress on the areas of the brain and neurotransmitters central to emotion, cognition, and memory. Your emotional state affects your brain chemistry and activity, which in turn affects your perception of stress. Emotions are created by chemical and neural activity in different parts of your brain in response to your perceptions, thoughts, and memories, and are influenced by your behavior, current emotional state and hormones, including stress hormones. Your emotional state affects your brain chemistry and activity, which in turn affects your perception of stress. (*Adrenal Fatigue: The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Stress Syndrome*)

For dance teachers, or any teacher, stress can be inevitable. Planning, creating, and organizing lesson plans, providing effective instruction, classroom management, monitoring student behavior, and communicating with administration and parents on a consistent basis can

be a daunting task. Dance teachers play a critical role in education each day through a variety of teaching and modeling responsibilities in the classroom to shape and prepare students to be lifelong learners. Today, dance teachers are not only facilitating learning through books, but teachers are also facilitating learning through social and emotional learning development (SEL), using a variety of instructional tools and technologies. According to the article, “Teacher Stress and Health,” published by Pennsylvania State University,

Teaching is one of the most stressful occupations in the United States. High levels of stress are affecting teacher health and well-being, causing teacher burnout, lack of engagement, job dissatisfaction, poor performance, and some of the highest turnover rates ever. Stress not only has negative consequences for teachers, but it also results in lower achievement for students and higher costs for schools. A New York City study showed higher teacher turnover led to lower fourth and fifth grade student achievement in both math and language arts. The cost of teacher turnover is estimated to be over \$7 billion per year. 46% of teachers report high daily stress during the school year. (Teacher Stress and Health)

Stress can significantly impact the health and well-being of teachers, and is often related to job satisfaction, teaching performance, student academic achievement, challenging parental conflicts, and lack of administration support. According to the American Institute of Stress, an analysis study by the National Foundation of Educational Research revealed,

One in five teachers feels tense about their job all or most of the time, compared with one in eight workers in similar professions. Teachers are more likely to suffer job-related stress than other professionals. Reducing teachers’ workload would reduce the numbers of teachers quitting the profession. The number of teachers trained overseas or returning

to the profession has not increased despite government efforts to encourage a move into British schools. (National Foundation for Educational Research)

By reducing the workload of teachers, the turnover rate in education could decrease. A standard, contracted work shift for teachers is approximately eight hours each day; however, teachers tend to spend up to twelve hours a day in their class to prepare for upcoming lessons, hold tutorials, meet with parents, and/or sponsor extracurricular activities. The National Foundation for Education Research study compared the workload and leisure time of teachers to the workload and leisure time of similar professionals, and their analysis showed how the intensive teacher workloads, “lead to a poorer work-life balance and higher stress levels.” Furthermore, “2 out of 5 teachers (41 percent) are dissatisfied with their amount of leisure time, compared to 32 percent of similar professionals” (National Foundation for Educational Research).

### *Signs and Symptoms of Stress*

Acute and Chronic stress affects both the human mind and body. Being able to recognize and identify the signs and symptoms of both Acute and Chronic stress is important so that any onset can be managed and handled appropriately, effectively, and timely. The symptoms of stress can vary in severity from person to person. The human body’s natural defenses tend to wear down and mental indicators can be recognized by nervousness, anxiety, disorganized thoughts, feeling a loss of control, feelings of helplessness exhaustion, and low self-esteem. Physical indicators such as elevated blood pressure, increase or loss in appetite, weight loss or gain, dental grinding, muscle tension, aching body, headaches, fatigue, and lack of adequate sleep are a few common symptoms of stress.



## **Stress: Independence and Connection to Burnout**

Stress, although an independent variable brought on by an event, can play a vital role in the contributing factors to the feeling of burnout. If dance teachers are constantly feeling mentally, physically, and emotionally exhausted, they could in turn be experiencing some form of burnout in conjunction with stress. According to the article, “Stress Management: Burnout Prevention and Treatment,” in the Help Guide, authors Melinda Smith, Jeanne Segal, and Lawrence Robinson stated,

Burnout may be the result of unrelenting stress, but it isn't the same as too much stress. Stress, by and large, involves *too much*: too many pressures that demand too much of you physically and mentally. However, stressed people can still imagine that if they can just get everything under control, they'll feel better. Burnout, on the other hand, is about *not enough*. Being burned out means feeling empty and mentally exhausted, devoid of motivation, and beyond caring. People experiencing burnout often don't see any hope of positive change in their situations. If excessive stress feels like you're drowning in responsibilities, burnout is a sense of being all dried up. And while you're usually aware of being under a lot of stress, you don't always notice burnout when it happens. (Help Guide)

Chronic stress can potentially contribute to anxiety, depression, and emotional strains directly relating to the ways burnout changes how the brain reacts to stimuli by impacting a person's creativity, operational memory, logical thinking, and analytic reasoning.

### **Defining Burnout**

Burnout refers to a collection of distinctive mental, physical, and emotional effects that respond to prolonged stress and overworking. For many years, burnout has been recognized as an

occupational hazard for various people-oriented professions, such as human services, education, and health care field. Additionally, the article, “Stress Management: Burnout Prevention and Treatment,” in the Help Guide, authors Melinda Smith, Jeanne Segal, and Lawrence Robinson emphasizes,

Burnout is a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. It occurs when you feel overwhelmed, emotionally drained, and unable to meet constant demands. As the stress continues, you begin to lose the interest and motivation that led you to take on a certain role in the first place. Burnout reduces productivity and saps your energy, leaving you feeling increasingly helpless, hopeless, cynical, and resentful. Eventually, you may feel like you have nothing more to give. The negative effects of burnout spill over into every area of life—including your home, work, and social life. Burnout can also cause long-term changes to your body that make you vulnerable to illnesses like colds and flu. (Help Guide)

### **Burnout: Its Dimensions and Examination**

Research on the burnout experience for psychiatrists mirrors much of the broader literature, in terms of both sources and outcomes of burnout. According to Cynthia Cordes and Thomas Dougherty, on a study review of burnout by Christina Maslach:

Over the past dozen years, the phenomenon of job burnout has been investigated in a variety of service occupations and settings. The construct has been linked to job stress and is thought to represent a unique response to frequent and intense client-patient interactions. (Cordes and Dougherty)

Burnout occurs when certain valued resources are misplaced or vanished, are incompetent to meet demands, or do not yield anticipated returns. The demands of workplace include a variety

of expectations from role conflict, role insecurity, stressful events, compact workload, and pressure. According to Christina Maslach, “burnout consists of three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization (felt distance from others), and diminished personal accomplishment” (Maslach 11-12). Burnout is classified by three subtypes including: work overload, under-challenged, and neglect dimensions.

### *Subtypes of Burnout*

#### **Work Overload**

The first subtype of burnout is caused by work overload, this is when the demands of a person’s job surpass an individual's ability to handle them. Work overload can be caused by the availability of resources or the time frame to complete a project. It can occur from a result of the number of work hours, the sacrifice or prioritizing of time, and environmental factors which may interfere with tasks during the given time. Extensive work hours can cause an excessive burden, especially if it interferes with other professional and personal responsibilities. Teachers naturally experience high levels of burnout and exhaustion, as work overload is often a large part of a teacher’s career. When the demand of a teaching job is more than a person can handle or is too complex, the amount of work can deplete a teacher’s enthusiasm.

Teacher burnout has been widely reviewed, studied, and is very real. Teacher burnout and work overload is not limited to only veteran teachers. New dance teachers can experience some form of burnout within the first three years in education. Burnout takes a mental and physical toll on dance teachers and the consequence of burnout affects the psychological, academic, and financial areas in teachers and education. The impact of workload on the stress levels of new dance teachers can have a negative effect on their motivation. Work overload is likely to increase

sickness and job absenteeism in teachers. According to the BioMed Central article “A Newer and Broader Definition of Burnout: Validation of “Burnout Clinical Subtype Questionnaire (BCSQ-36),” the survey on the University of Zaragoza employees stated, “roughly fifteen percent of the employees worked harder and ever-more frantically in search of success due to overload burnout.” These employees were willing to risk their health and personal life in pursuits of the ambition and tended to cope with stress by venting to others.

The uncontrolled burnout type of overload will have a teacher working progressively harder, to the extent of emotional exhaustion, in search of personal success and ambition. The uncontrolled burnout subtype of overload is highly enthusiastic and will be associated with active coping strategies.

New teachers can often find it very difficult to say no. When approached to take on tasks, new dance teachers may feel obligated to do so, therefore, adding more responsibility to their plate when they are already getting to know their students, building positive relationships with parents, and learning new campus and district systems. Controlled motivation can project emotional exhaustion and negatively impact student attentiveness, which may mean that for new dance teachers, work overload can be projected from burnout and student attentiveness can decrease. Teachers who exercise ineffective classroom management in the classroom affect students’ motivation negatively whereas if teachers are flexible and comprehensive in their classroom management, they can positively improve it. Negative behavior of students may cause frustrations in teachers. With work overload, burnout can lead dance teachers to experience work-related stress, which is mentally, physically, and emotionally damaging due to the demands of the job.

## **Under-Challenged**

The second subtype of burnout is caused by being under-challenged. Burnout can derive from teachers feeling unappreciated, unsupported, or having a lack of advancement opportunities. Teachers of all contents typically choose a specific field because they have a passion and enjoyment for teaching. When dance teachers find fulfillment and enjoyment in their passion, they draw closer to all areas of the job. Additionally, according to the BioMed Central article, “A Newer and Broader Definition of Burnout: Validation of “Burnout Clinical Subtype Questionnaire,” the survey on the University of Zaragoza employees,

Rated roughly 9% of the employees felt underappreciated and bored and grew frustrated because their jobs lack learning opportunities and room for professional growth. Due to feeling under-challenged people find no passion or enjoyment in their work, they cope by distancing themselves from their job. This indifference leads to cynicism, avoidance of responsibility and overall disengagement with their work. (BioMed Central)

The under-challenged burnout subtype is depicted by an intermediate commitment to work, which means the lack of growth will relate to evading coping strategies. For under-challenged dance teachers, the stresses of the workplace are neither rewarding nor satisfying. Under-challenged dance teachers will continue to do a professional job but may be hesitant initially because they are not looking forward to it. Under-challenged dance teachers need stimulation to achieve daily tasks.

## **Neglect**

The third subtype of burnout is caused by neglect. This is when the dance teacher no longer has the desire to bring anything to the profession, and the dance teacher starts to experience the feelings of being worn out. Dance teachers begin to disregard their

responsibilities and feel a lack of recognition or power that eventually leads to the neglect of their professional duties. Furthermore, according to the BioMed Central article, “A Newer and Broader Definition of Burnout: Validation of “Burnout Clinical Subtype Questionnaire,” the study mentions,

Rated roughly 21% of the employees felt helpless in the workplace. When things at work don't turnout as well as they should, they stop trying. Employees would think of themselves as incompetent or feel unable to keep up with the demands of their job.

(BioMed Central)

Neglect plays a critical role in job satisfaction. Neglect can bring about negative outcomes, such as employee absenteeism, decline in the profession performance, and poor interpersonal relationships with students, parents, and peers. Burnout and neglect will cause dance teachers to have less support for student learning, as well as become less aware of their social and emotional support for students and adults in their lives. Neglect along with stress will negatively impact the dance teachers to communicate and build relational trust with their students and other teachers.

#### *Contributions To Teacher Burnout*

Burnout is a psychological syndrome emerging as a prolonged response to chronic interpersonal stressors in the workplace. There are many contributing factors of teacher burnout such as attrition and depersonalization that derive from the workplace. Depersonalization in teaching is the degree to which a teacher is detached or the degree to which individuals treat others with an impersonal response. According to researchers, Michael P. Leiter and Christina Maslach, “several factors that can contribute to teacher burnout include workload, lack of administration support, classroom management, and high achievement goals that's focus on state testing.”

With the impact of stress on dance teachers, campus administrators have the responsibility to be diligent and cautious of the manner of leadership style being executed each day in the workplace as teacher attrition can occur if teachers do not feel valued, and heard, or are overworked.

### **Attrition & Depersonalization**

Burnout and attrition are not limited to new teachers as veteran teachers also succumb to these detrimental responses. However, the rate of attrition for new teachers is increasing significantly every year (qtd. in Jacobson 2). Indeed, forty to fifty percent of new teachers leave the profession after five years (Amos, 2-4). Teacher burnout and attrition can affect multiple facets in education, such as, the district, the campus, student achievement, retention of teachers, and state funds. Many of these facets are affected academically and financially. Academically, teacher burnout and attrition have a negative impact on student success because of inconsistencies in instruction.

Teachers who experience burnout are inclined to arrive on the job unprepared and more concerned with making it through the day than with the quality of education students are receiving (Vandenberghe and Huberman). Depersonalization is the second characteristic that develops if burnout progresses beyond teacher attrition. Depersonalization within the teaching profession has been linked to increased negative student behavior (Benita et al.). Furthermore, teacher burnout, attrition, and depersonalization are contributing factors in teacher shortages. The increase of teacher shortages is another important area which burdens the academic and financial areas of education. A shortage of teachers affects districts, students, teachers, and the public-school education system altogether.

In her dissertation discussing the contributions of teacher burnout, Donna Ault Jacobson, found the following,

Teacher attrition rates have steadily increased over the past decade and a half (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010). There are many policy factors that contribute to teacher stress and burnout. One legislative factor cited in research by Sunderman, Kim, and Orfield (2005) was the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) along with state-mandated testing. NCLB, Race to the Top in 2010, and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for Career and College (PARCC) testing, 2014-2015, all increased teacher accountability for student achievement scores, without considering other mitigating factors, such as student absenteeism and poverty. Teacher tenure and retention are now based on student performance scores on state-mandated tests that are aligned with the Common Core Standards (Ravitch, 2014). Therefore, this pressure has been cited as a possible catalyst for teacher burnout, which increases teacher stress and lowers morale (Fernet et al., 2012; Kamenetz, 2015). Other factors that can contribute to feelings of burnout are isolation, a lack of respect from superiors, lack of autonomy, increased workload, and student discipline/classroom management problems.

A shortage of teachers in a district will make it extremely difficult to build a solid rapport between teaching, educating, and student engagement. The increase of turnover can also affect the lack of qualified teachers and hinder effective instructional practices to ensure student achievement and academic success. The number of students in a single classroom will overflow, therefore making effective classroom management a struggle and working conditions unbearable for teachers and students. Therefore, these unsatisfactory working conditions are more than likely to add to the contributing factors of teacher stress and burnout.



## **Educational Trends in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education**

According to the Getting Smart website, there are new technologies and trends being infused in school curricula that are transcribing student data and impacting students' learning. The "5 emerging trends in 21<sup>st</sup>-century education" are bridging gaps between curricula and assessments through App Innovation and Gamification, Digital Literacy, Library Media Specialists, Self-Directed Professional Development, and Collaborative Learning.

### *District/Campus Administration – Expectations for Teachers*

Currently, teachers are under a particularly high level of pressure and stress to meet the expectations of their school district, state testing, campus community, students, and parents daily. Teachers are expected to create and foster learning environments where students remain active and engaged in the classroom, among many other professional obligations. Accountability of state testing and policies are a possible consideration for teacher burnout. Teachers across three states identified that state-specific accountability significantly predicted higher rates of test-stress, burnout, and turnover intent. (Ryan, et. Al.). According to Donna Ault Jacobson,

Government mandates have played a role in teacher burnout and attrition (Cody, 2014).

For example, in 1983 the National Commission on Excellence in Education promoted school accountability through standardized testing. Over those next few years, high-stakes testing became the yardstick used to measure students' educational levels. In 2000, the implementation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), along with high stakes testing and the pressure to produce, increased job-related stress for many teachers. (Bonner, 2011)

The culture of professional development, instructional applications and student learning continues to progress each year. There is an increased emphasis on accountability and

effectiveness for teachers to ensure students are not only mastering class content, but the content of state standardized testing. With considerable focus on teacher accountability, state standardized rating systems that are centered around students' test scores have evolved.

There are documented cases in which teachers have chosen to resign because of the stress caused from No Child Left Behind policies and other government mandates (Naison). In addition to the emphasis placed on improving learning for all students, NCLB recommended that all schools must be staffed with highly qualified teachers by 2006. Highly qualified means that teachers must be certified in each subject area that they teach. Unfortunately, there were middle school teachers who were transferred to elementary schools because they were not considered highly qualified.

Teachers were expected to teach the essential skills related to course objectives that are relative to real-world applications, all while creating life-long learning opportunities for student success. To gain the trust and confidence of their students, one of the primary aspects for teaching is building positive relationships with students and parents. For this to take place, teachers examine and analyze what students are expecting from them in the classroom.

To enhance student learning, growth, and achievement on all state testing, an ideal opportunity would be to employ districts with state regulated support staff and mandate an additional section block that focuses primarily on state testing.

### *Student Learning and Achievement*

Effective classroom management can make a world of difference to students. Teachers have the opportunity each day to motivate and keep students engaged not only in the classroom, but also in all facets of the learning environment. Teachers primarily engage with students in their classroom which translates throughout campus and in the community. Engagement allows

teachers to prepare students to be lifelong learners, while learning is enhanced when it stems from a team effort between students, teachers, and parents. Quality learning is most effective when it is collaborative and social among students and teachers. Student learning can have a positive and negative impact on the burnout of teachers. How, when, and what students learn is vital to their academic achievement. Active learning provides concrete and real-life applications to help students navigate tasks. Therefore, students need appropriate and consistent feedback on their performances to assess their knowledge and growth in lessons. Teachers can be faced with various challenges everyday ranging from student learning, student behavior, and academic achievement, with their jobs on the line regarding effective classroom management. According to the School of Education,

Teachers must adapt curricula to a wide range of learning styles, manage shifting education policies, attend to students with special needs, and juggle administrative work. American teachers have markedly less time to prepare lessons, collaborate with colleagues, and assess student work than educators in other countries. (School of Education – Online Programs)

Pending the course work, teachers may have multiple preparation periods to plan for, and they may have to assist with other duties assigned outside of their normal responsibilities. Special Education paperwork can be a daunting task on its own, and teachers are expected to communicate with parents on an ongoing basis regarding student progress, and academic and discipline concerns that may arise. According to the School of Education,

Educators face increasingly difficult situations that can lead to burnout. These challenges range from policies that tie teacher evaluations to standardized exams that don't accurately reflect student learning to transitions to distance learning during the pandemic.

Teachers are bombarded with parent emails while also trying to direct students who can't navigate online learning platforms. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports that more than 270,000 teachers have left the profession each year since 2016 and projects the rate of departure to continue through 2026. (School of Education – Online Programs)

Additionally, data from the School of Education showed how the loss of teachers in school during a year can be aligned with 72 days of no instruction, which is parallel to half the school year. With the absence of teachers this long, this can cause disruptions in the learning process. With this said, high turnover rates affect student success in all facets of the school.

(School of Education – Online Programs)

### *Student Behavior and Discipline*

For students to learn, teachers need to be able to handle discipline issues so they can connect at risk students with learning to help inspire them to achieve. Teachers, who encounter students with multiple discipline issues, can affect their ability to teach, thereby adding to their frustration levels in stress. (Aloe, et al.,)

Student behavior and discipline problems can contribute greatly to teacher burnout. How students behave in the classroom affects how much and how well they learn. In addition, the instructional environment becomes a battlefield because a student's behavior can cause discipline issues and can interrupt all students' learning. It is the teacher's responsibility to manage the classroom in a manner that reinforces learning. Donna Ault Jacobson cites in her dissertation the contributions of teacher burnout, stating, "this can all become more intolerable for a teacher when one takes into consideration the behavior of the students. How to go about managing a students' behavior has also been linked to burnout symptoms."

Effective behavior management strategies are key to keeping a classroom in order. When a teacher does not have this order, the class will not be able to function, and learning will take a backseat to keeping the students controlled and safe. Alongside that, if a teacher does not have control of their classroom, the stress of students' misbehaviors will pile up overtime and affect how they view their teaching. In turn, it is possible that a disruptive class could be viewed as a failure of the teacher's own teaching abilities. If the teacher correlates a personal accomplishment with their classroom management abilities, they may experience a deep satisfaction with teaching and themselves.

Behavioral issues in class can also lead to teacher burnout over time. Teachers with particularly challenging students are more likely to feel they aren't making a difference and become more cynical about their role in the classroom. But what's more, a teacher's judgments about student behavior can also affect their stress levels—educators who have negative perceptions of students with behavioral issues are more likely to suffer from chronic stress.

### *Parental Support*

The stress and burnout from teaching is often blamed on district-campus leaders and students; however, another important factor to consider is the stress and burn out caused from parents. As parents have become more demanding and more insistently present in their children's daily lives, the pressures increase on teachers to keep students maintaining high grades, assist students in getting in the best college or career force, and to maintain consistency with students, even when their behavior becomes intrusive. New research suggests that parents can contribute to burnout of teachers.

According to the New York Times, teachers who experience demands to be perfect, comes from the students' parents in their class. Joachim Stoebers notes how, "teachers should

focus on students' expectations and needs and get support from colleagues if they feel overwhelmed, but not try to make overly demanding parents happy" (Teacher Burnout). Minimal support from parents can cause teachers to display symptoms of high burnout. Data reports that parents who did not support teachers, created a hostile environment for teachers, which led to burnout (Richards et al.).

Parental support is vital to the growth and development of the child and the learning environment. When parents, students, and teachers work together students are more likely to participate more in the class and be more involved in school. Encouraging and enhancing parents support and collaborative efforts was shown to decrease the prevention in symptoms of burnout in teachers, according to a survey study including 782 teachers in the Arkansas school system that focused on characteristics of teacher efficacy and retention. (Hughes 254).

### **Summary**

The signs of teacher burnout include, but are not limited to, illness, impatience, absenteeism, a lack of commitment, and poor job performance (Parker et al.). Understanding and eliminating burnout is important for a variety of reasons, an important one being that more and more often classroom teachers are the only role model for at-risk students. Teachers take on a variety of roles and are often asked to guide students to aspire to better living and ending the cycle of poverty (Payne).

Stress and burnout can have a negative impact on teachers' instructional responsibilities and their interaction with students, parents, administrators and even colleagues. Teacher stress and burnout cannot be credited to one issue and often leads to a variety of negative results that can affect the teachers and students long-term.

### CHAPTER III

#### METHODOLOGY

This chapter characterizes the methods and instruments developed by the researcher throughout the study and provides details of the contributors that participated in the investigation and specifics of the research instruments and the data analysis procedures. This research study took place over the course of 180 days.

The purpose of this study was to examine the causes of burnout among K-12 public school dance teachers and preventative strategies to improve teacher retention in 21<sup>st</sup> century education. Additionally, this research design was chosen to analyze factors that can contribute to teacher burnout and how burnout affects student learning. Contributing factors include student discipline, parent involvement, and administration support. The following essential questions were used as a guide for this study to focus on teachers who have experienced burnout:

- Q1 What factors contribute to stress?
- Q2 What factors contribute to burnout?
- Q3 In what ways can teachers identify when stress is affecting their well-being?
- Q4 In what ways can teachers identify when burnout is affecting their well-being?
- Q5 What preventative strategies can help improve retention among teachers in an 21<sup>st</sup> century education environment?

The following chapter describes the methodology used while conducting this study as well as data collection and analysis procedures. These questions were designed to collect information and explanations of participants directly associated with this field-based study and to

gain an unbiased understanding of stress and burnout and its impact on the teacher and learning environment. The researcher used electronic surveys to gain both quantitative and qualitative data to assess and measure the perceptions of dance teachers and the way stress and burnout impacts teachers and the turnover rate in education.

Prior to conducting the study, the researcher acquired approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). A formal narrative including the purpose, methods, participants, data-collection procedures, data analysis procedures, data handling procedures, and risk, discomforts, and benefits of the study were submitted to the board for approval. The consent form, along with the evaluator survey and interview questions were submitted for review. A copy of the IRB document is provided in appendix A. A copy of the participant recruitment letter for this survey is provided in appendix B.

### **Research Instruments**

The researcher used an electronic survey to collect data pertaining to the study. Participants for the electronic survey were current and former dance teachers with a minimum of three-years of experience in a variety of K-12 public school classroom settings. A copy of the consent form is provided in appendix C.

#### *Dance Teacher Survey and Participants*

Participants involved in the survey were recruited because of their membership in four dance Facebook groups: Dance Educators Association, American Directors Corners, ShowTime VIP Directors Lounge, and The New Dance Teacher Network. The researcher posted the survey in all groups explaining the research and requirements for participating. Thirty-two dance teachers participated in the online survey. The researcher generated the dance teacher survey to gain insight into the effects of stress and burnout on dance teachers' careers. The survey was



distributed through the online data collection software service, Qualtrics. Participants were first directed to an explanation of the study and required to consent before beginning the survey. All participants were over the age of twenty-one with a minimum teaching experience of three years in a K-12 public school. All participants are licensed dance teachers. Participation in the survey was completely voluntary and all responses were anonymous. A copy of the survey questions is provided in appendix D.

Participants involved in this survey came from various ethnic backgrounds, had field experiences ranging from three to thirty-three years in education, and have served in one or multiple campuses/school districts in suburban, urban, and/or rural areas in the United States. Participants in this study are current and former dance educators taught in the United States. Participants in this survey range from serving a particular group of students to a cultural group of diverse student populations.

The figures and data in this section display statistics based on various demographics of the participant(s), such as, if the participant was a current or former teacher, years of service in a public-school setting, and their status of employment (full-time or part-time). Of the thirty dance teachers in the study, twenty-one were current educators and nine were former educators. The participants years of service in K-12 schools ranged from three to thirty-two years. Table 1 shows the breakdown of the dance teachers and their years of service in education.

Of the thirty teachers surveyed, one teacher had the minimum of three years, one teacher had thirty-two years, and there was a total of four teachers with eighteen years in public education. Prior to entering the field of education, over sixty percent of the participants recently completed college, ten percent worked in a college setting, and thirty percent worked in the corporate world and customer service.

**Table 1**

Dance teacher participants' years of service

| <b>Years of Service</b> | <b>Participants</b> |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 3-10 years              | 14                  |
| 11-20 years             | 10                  |
| 20-30 years             | 4                   |
| 30+ years               | 2                   |

To understand preliminary factors of the participants' stress and burnout, it was vital to understand what teachers thought about education prior to entering the field.

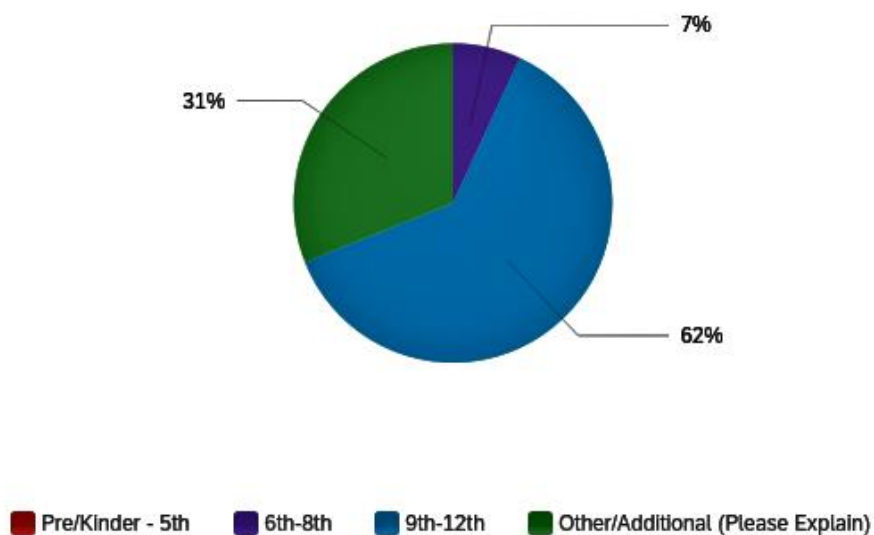
Table 2 shows the most common responses to the question of preconceived ideas of the dance teachers in this survey.

**Table 2**

Preconceived ideas prior to teaching

| <b># Of Participants</b> | <b>Preconceived Idea</b>                  |
|--------------------------|---|
| 2                        | Teaching dance content only               |
| 2                        | Summers off                               |
| 2                        | Reality of how time consuming it is       |
| 3                        | Navigating an unsupportive Administration |
| 1                        | Classroom supplies would be provided      |
| 1                        | No Grading                                |
| 2                        | Parent support of teacher                 |
| 2                        | Student discipline is nonexistent         |

Another important factor in pre-analyzing the contributions of stress and burnout, was to gain information on the respective grade levels taught. Stress and burnout will vary depending on the roles and responsibilities of the job duties from both the teachers and the students. A school campus is like a second home and every teacher wants a place to call “home.” Of the thirty participants, ten teachers have taught in one school district, six teachers taught in two, seven teachers taught in three, four teachers taught in three districts, and three teachers taught in five or more districts over the course of their career. Figure 1 shows the percentage of dance teachers and the grade level they taught.



**Fig. 1.** Grade levels

Sixty-two percent of the teachers taught ninth through twelfth grade and seven percent of the teachers taught 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade. There were thirty-one percent of teachers that taught a variety ranging from kindergarten through sixth, sixth through twelfth, and eighth through twelfth grades. Seven teachers taught dance at the middle and high school level, and two teachers taught

dance at the elementary and high school level during the same time span. Depending on the school district's preference, instructional time may vary from campus to campus. In Texas, the most common length of class is either thirty-five, forty-five, or ninety minutes. Sixty-eight percentage of dance teachers preferred seeing their students every other day for ninety-minute classes over the thirty-two percent who preferred to see their student every day for forty-five-minute classes. The consensus of the preferred length of classes from the dance teachers were ninety-minute classes which allowed for more in-depth training on technique, learning and creating choreography, and teaching history and principles of dance. No one preferred thirty-five-minute classes because they felt it was not enough time to teach students quality lessons.

The state of Texas recognizes dance education from pre-Kinder to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Each grade (or dance level) is supported by the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and Dance Standards. The TEKS determine what the students will learn and what they are expected to accomplish in dance. The dance standards determine what the dance teacher understands and applies to lessons and activities for students in their corresponding grade (or dance level). Students can also gain physical education credit in dance classes as well.

### **Summary**

This chapter clarifies the framework of this study and recognizes the procedures used to collect and analyze data. The questions were both quantitative and qualitative to allow an unbiased outcome and to allow for the participants of this study to respond without hesitation or restriction. The quantitative and qualitative findings are described in the discussion chapter.

## CHAPTER IV

### DISCUSSION

As indicated in the introduction in Chapter I, the objective of this research was aimed at examining and addressing contributing factors of stress and burnout in K-12 public school dance teachers. From the preceding information, there is a significant relationship between teachers and burnout in education. The survey data displayed various stimuli on burnout from years of experience and work engagement. The results from this study varied from participant to participant depending on the roles and responsibilities of the teacher, student discipline and achievements, parent involvement, salary, funding, and job satisfaction. The data revealed in this study was intended to inform and provide preventative strategies that can help improve retention among teachers in an 21<sup>st</sup> century education environment? This chapter attempts to answer the essential questions and examine current factors contributing to teacher burnout. The following question is considered in this discussion chapter: What contributing factors are the cause and effect of stress and burnout for K-12 public school dance teachers in a K-12 setting?

#### **21st Century Education – The Role of the Teacher**

All teachers are responsible for lesson planning and supporting students to help them accomplish instructional content and benchmark assessments. Classroom management is a vital part of teaching responsibilities for the success of all students. The duties and responsibilities of teachers vary from department to department and campus to campus. Professional development,

preparing lessons, enforcing behavior expectations, and adapting instructional methods to align the learning styles of each student are among the most common duties of teachers.

When examining the workload of teacher roles and responsibilities, stress and burnout were among the top reasons teachers left the profession. Teachers have more of a responsibility than just teaching their subject content. K-12 public school dance teachers overpoweringly stated that teaching other content in addition to dance and holding positional duties (i.e., coaching, department lead, administrative role) were among the top contributions to teacher burnout. Of the teachers surveyed in this study, about fifty percent taught a common core subject such as English, History, Economics, Government, or served as a liaison in the Special Education department. Twenty percent of the teachers taught avid, career and technology education (CATE), college and career readiness, student leadership, art, health, or physical education courses. In addition to teaching dance or another subject content area in conjunction with dance, nineteen teachers directed the drill/dance team. Four teacher participants coached the cheerleading team in addition to their main extracurricular activity. Fourteen dance teachers held extra duty positions such as, department chair, teacher lead, fine arts director, or athletic director. Fifty-one percent of the dance teachers' extra duties were managed outside of the traditional school hours, twenty-six percent of the dance teachers' extra duties were managed prior to the start of school, and twenty-three percent of the dance teachers' extra duties were included during school hours.

### **Outcome of Burnout and its Independents**

#### *Other Variables*

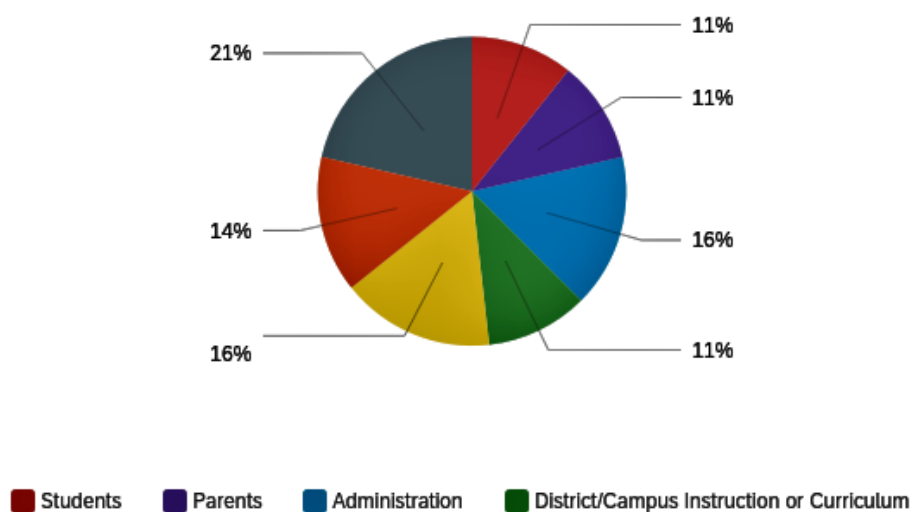
The research survey utilized several open-ended questions, one example asked: What are reasons you are dissatisfied with teaching as it relates to burnout?

Of the twenty-nine survey participants that answered this question, twenty-one percent selected other and explained more in detail that it was due to a combination of all facets in the learning environment. One dance teacher mentioned, “paperwork requirements, state testing, funding, and lack of autonomy” as the reasons that they were dissatisfied with teaching. Four teachers agreed with similar sentiments to the response of being dissatisfied with teaching. One dance teacher mentioned, “the demands on personal life, student accountability, and the multiple roles and responsibilities” as the reasons that they were dissatisfied with teaching. An overall component of inadequate planning time in school was a common factor of instructional burnout. One dance teacher stated,

I feel professional development days at my school are pointless because my district does not put in effort to help the educators in Fine Arts, especially when it comes to curriculum. As a Director, I am working way more in the summertime to prepare for the following school year. Enjoying about 5-6 weeks of the summer versus 2-2.5 months.

Another dance teacher stated, “I feel like burnout is the result of so many factors, students feeling burnt out and directing that discomfort on teachers, too much work to do in a short amount of time, too much to prepare for and not enough time, and societal expectations.”

Figure 2 shows the outcome of dance teacher burnout as it relates to various stimuli.



**Fig. 2.** Dissatisfaction with teaching related to burnout.

### *Financial Obligations*

Salary/stipend was the next highest area of concern when teachers felt the most dissatisfied in their jobs. From increased preparation outside of school hours and teachers' duties, salaries and stipends were considered. The dance teachers that participated in this survey and who coached a dance/drill or cheer team, received stipend amounts between \$1,200 and \$8,500 a year, averaging about \$5,000 per year between all study participants. The data results from the survey that dance stipend amounts, compared to teachers' extra duties and campus activities outside of normal school hours displayed quite undesirable results. To take a step further, the number of extracurricular responsibilities increased in the spring semester compared to the fall semester. Therefore, showing inadequate results of salary/stipend compared to the amount of work.

### *Administration*

The results of teacher burnout from Administration relationships aligned with the results of burnout regarding inadequate salary/stipend amounts. Eighty percent of the dance teachers

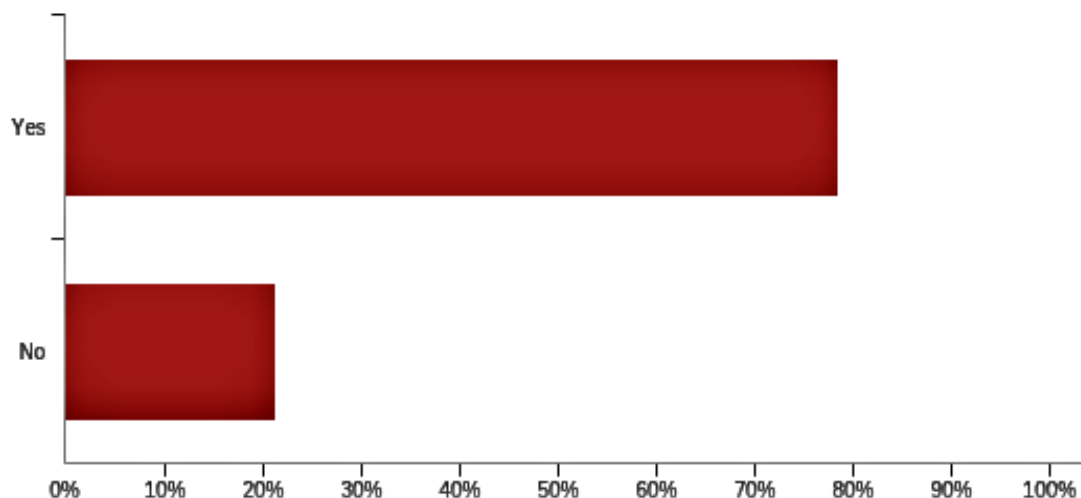


surveyed selected “yes,” while twenty percent responded “no” when responding to whether administration contributed to burnout. When asked to elaborate, one dance teacher stated, “Admin expectations were very high, and the support, respect and appreciation were low in comparison. The students didn’t respect the class and stated openly that admin didn’t care either. The students noticed what I had felt (but not said).” Another dance teacher stated,

The administrators expected each teacher to discipline students in their own rooms and issue consequences on your own. Example: if I chose to issue a detention, I had to hold it myself. At another school discipline was handled by admin but was very loose with students often talking their way out of consequences or doing the required after school detention whenever they chose to do it.

One dance teacher shared a different response about their campus administration and mentioned that, “there was not an appropriate follow through from administration. At times administration were inconsistent in their actions and their accountability. However, administrations expectations of their teachers were held to a higher standard.” This was a common response shared from five other participants in this survey.

Figure 3 shows that Administration was a vital factor in the contribution of burnout when surveyed.



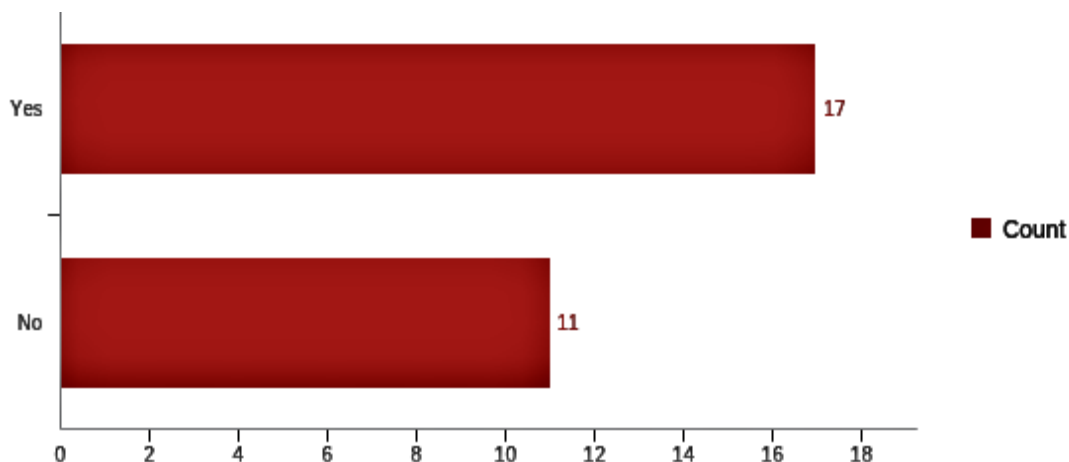
**Fig. 3.** Teacher burnout caused by administration

### *Parents*

Parent involvement also has an important impact on teacher burnout. From too much parent involvement to not enough parent involvement, parents are stakeholders ensuring their child has a rewarding experience in school and collaborating with teachers regarding improving student behavior and achievement. Dance teachers were asked the following question: “Do you feel that contributions of burnout were caused from parents?”

Out of the twenty-eight survey participants that answered this question, one dance teacher mentioned that “parents are a huge factor in causing burnout.” Six teachers shared a similar sentiment of exhibited burnout because of parents. One dance teacher stated, “parent involvement is low at their school.” Another dance teacher stated, “I had a student in my classroom (1st grader) that was misbehaving. He was causing harm to other students and eventually was so out of control he gave himself a bloody nose. Daily I documented these actions for parents. When I wrote a referral after several incidents and positive intervention, the parents said, “I was out to get him.” The teacher further recommended to the administration, “the

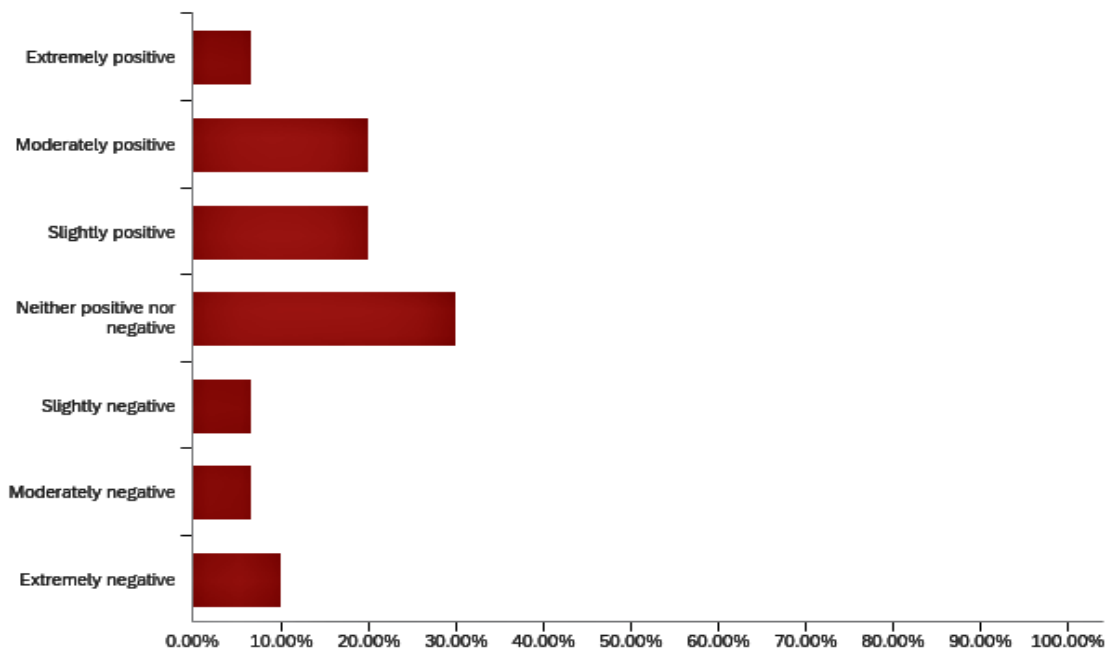
child needed to be held accountable for his actions, evaluated for ADHD and given clear expectations at home.” When surveyed about if support from parents to the teacher was positive or negative, the results were surprisingly equaled. Figure 4 shows that sixty-one percent of teachers surveyed said parents were a vital factor in the contribution of burnout, whereas thirty-nine percent of teachers noted that parents were not.



**Fig. 4.** Teacher burnout caused by parents

When parents are engaged in their children’s school lives, an effective partnership between teachers and parents becomes more essential in meeting the needs of the student. Parent involvement is a primary step to increasing student engagement and participation in the classroom. Teachers have a responsibility along with parents to build a strong foundation of student success and engagement opportunities for life-long learning.

Figure 5 shows that support from parents to teachers were neither positive or negative.



**Fig. 5.** Results of support from parents to teachers

### *Student Behavior & Achievement*

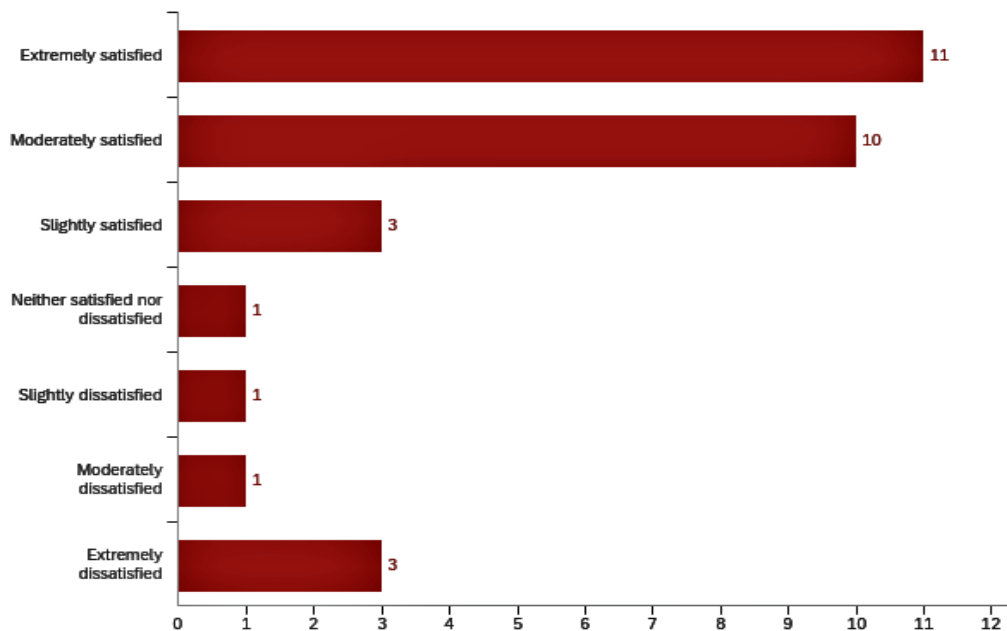
When teachers start to feel fatigue or lose their sense of purpose from stress in teaching, burnout can start to occur and as a result, students can be impacted the most. However, one dance teacher explained, “I was more overwhelmed by ineffective teacher strategies rather than the negative behavior of students.” Three teachers acknowledged a similar feeling to this statement. Students themselves are not contributors of stress, rather their behavior and achievement stimuli are. Another dance teacher stated, “some students will do as you tell them. Most students must be convinced to do as you ask. Some will never do as they are asked. It is the basest version of the profession. Until you convince them there is a reason to do what you are asking, you will constantly struggle.”

### *A Learning Curve*

Although stress can contribute to burnout. Many participants explained how the variables above were also evident in producing positive stimuli and working against the contributions of stress and burnout. One dance teacher stated, “I knew coming into this profession that I was going to have to work hard every single day. I am still amazed at the amount of work and the expectations placed on teachers.

Overall, eleven dance teachers displayed extreme satisfaction over dissatisfaction. One dance teacher stated, “I learned that teaching takes a great deal of effort, and you have to be creative and meet your students where they are and then bring them where you want them to be. I learned the most from my ‘difficult students.’ They taught me about myself and made me stronger as an educator and a better person.” Another dance teacher stated, “the relationship and the support between her dance mentors and teaching colleagues were among the top reasons they had job satisfaction.” Another dance teacher shared the same sentiments about their colleagues regarding job satisfaction. One stated, “my fine arts director, principal, students and their parents all support the program that she created from the ground up.”

Figure 6 shows the results of how teachers are satisfied or dissatisfied with their jobs.



**Fig. 6.** Job Satisfaction

### School Climate

The next portion of this study, intended to take an approach to better understand how dance teachers were impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic and if there were any adverse reactions that affected their campus climate. To analyze how teachers managed behavioral burnout during the pandemic, it was important to evaluate how teachers coped with burnout prior to March 2020. Dance teachers were asked the following: “Prior to the 2019-2020 school year, how many times have you considered resignation as a result from burnout of various stimuli?”

Out of the twenty-six surveyed participants that answered this question, eleven dance teachers considered resigning once, three teachers considered it three times, and five teachers considered it ten times. One dance teacher stated their personal reasons, such as, “family and finding balance for their younger active kids.” Two other dance teachers agreed with similar response to this question. Furthermore, seven teachers stated their reasons were related to, rate of

pay, reduction in stipend, pay in conjunction with duties. One dance teacher expressed that their resignation consideration related to:

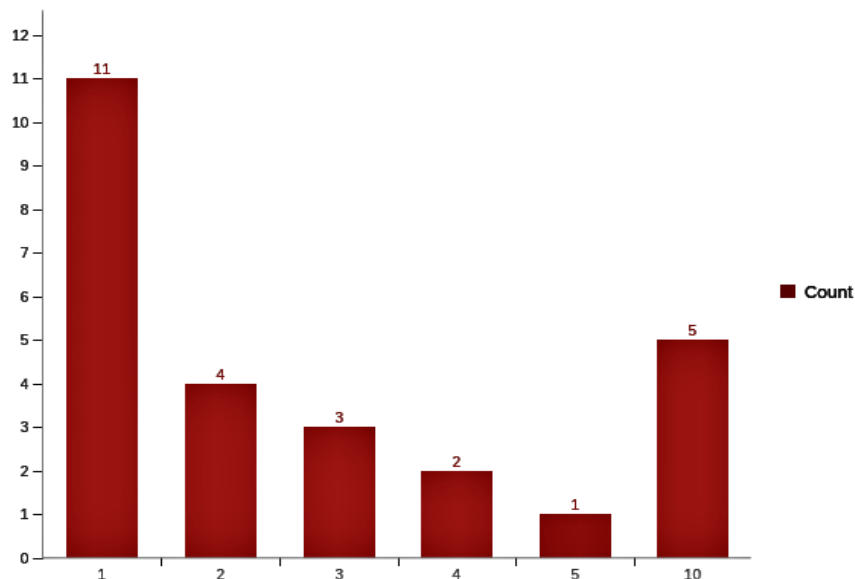
Unfair treatment on the job. Things that were promised for the program, were taken away. The director stipend was cut mid-year without proper notification, despite the work that had been completed first semester. The director position was treated as insignificant though administration acknowledged that the dance classes brought upon good qualities in students who were underperforming.

Another dance teacher stated, “Prior to my arrival, the drill team program lacked structure, discipline and accountability. When I implemented those expectations to the team, I received backlash from the parents. In addition, parents began to create false accusations periodically and I became burned out from feelings of exhaustion.” Yet another dance teacher stated,

As a part-time teacher, I was clocking an average of 30 hours a week and being paid 50% of what a full-time (40hr/week) teacher was making. I also had an hour commute to and from work. The stress of trying to maintain artistic excellence while also dealing with everything required of a public school in a major urban area was overwhelming.

Overall, there were other factors teachers expressed that contributed to their levels of stress and burnout such as, student behavior, a demanding workload, lack of parent support, parents trying to run the dance programs, lack of administration support, not enough resources, a reduction in program funding, and a decrease in personal passion when it came to the job.

Figure 7 shows the number of teachers (vertical axis) who considered resignation, and the number of times (horizontal axis) that these teachers considered resigning prior to the 2019-2020 school year.



**Fig. 7.** Teachers considering resignation prior to 2019-2020 due to burnout.

As stated in the introduction of this study, the COVID-19 pandemic created a hasty global shift that impacted the entire world and altered the lives of many. Education shifted to distance learning delivery methods that were previously more commonly relegated to a collegiate level pedagogy. Teachers navigated traditional in-person instruction to suit online formats. Extra hours went into learning new formats, planning lessons, preparing materials, creating extending procedures to best facilitate learning and instruction for all students while working to communicate effectively with parents. This new shift in responsibilities created potential outcomes which altered the climate of the learning environment differently for students, teachers, and parents.

Dance teachers were asked the following question: “During the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school year, how many times, have you considered resignation as a result from burnout due to stimuli from the COVID-19 pandemic?”



Out of the eighteen survey participants that answered this question, one dance teacher considered resigning three times, two teachers considered resigning ten times, and seven teachers considered resigning one time from teaching due to feelings of burnout during the COVID-19 pandemic. One dance teacher stated,

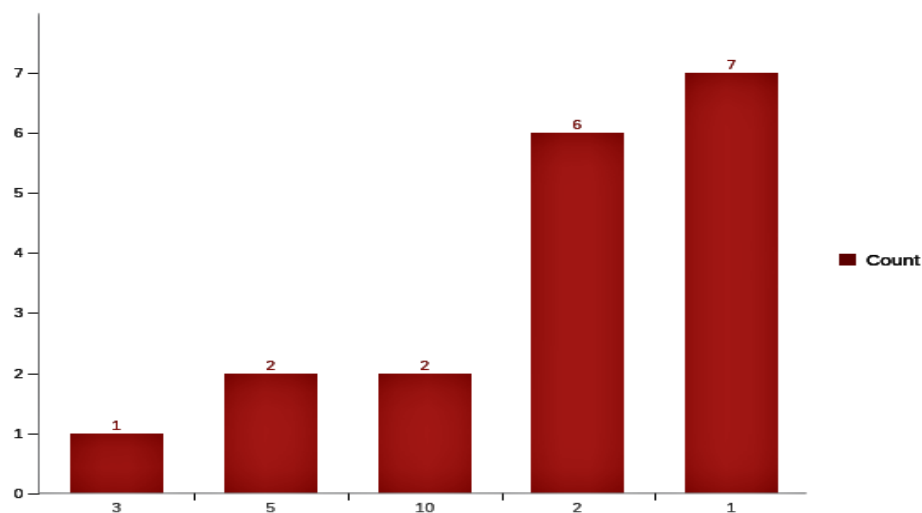
The learning curve was immense! Balancing family, student needs, virtual learning, face-to-face learners, cleaning, and planning was overwhelming. Emotional stress – the community expected so much from teachers. Between learning new programming, planning, and spending time with students that was meaningful, my mental and emotional health suffered.

Another dance teacher stated, “I developed anxiety to the point of panic attacks in Fall 2019 and decided Spring 2020 would be my last semester. I resigned in June 2020.” Another dance teacher stated,

I resigned at the end of the 2019-2020 school year because of the time taken away from my family. We tend to put students first instead of our own kids. For example, I would have never been able to take my own kid to school or pick them up due to my work schedule. Plus, I knew teacher workload would increase with what our nation is going through currently.

One dance teacher shared that their main reason for considering resignation was, “to focus on their personal health and the health of family members.” Four other dance teachers shared similar sentiments on the survey regarding this question. There were additional related stimuli that carried over from the previous years of teaching that echoed current feelings to resigning from teaching such as, unappreciative demeanor towards teachers, disrespectful students, increased workload, demands of virtual learning, insufficient teacher salary, lack of

support from administration, personal safety, and health concerns. Figure 8 shows the number of times teachers considered resigning from teaching during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school year.



**Fig. 8.** Teachers considering resignation during 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school year.

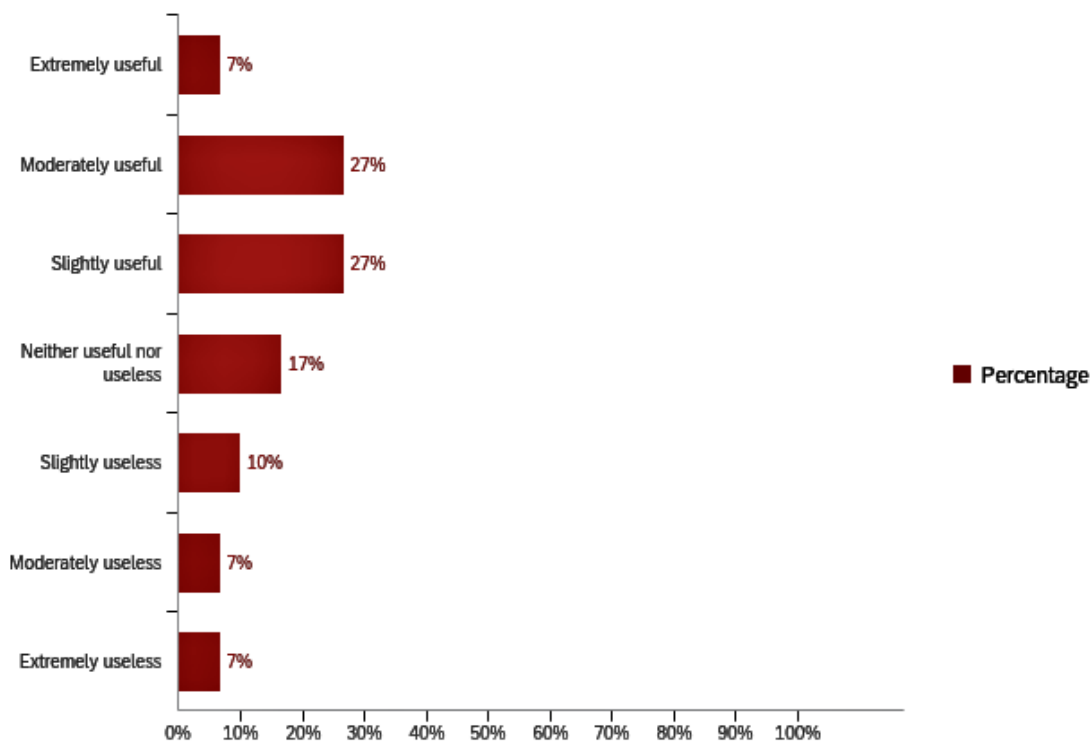
To facilitate student engagement and academic success during the climate of COVID-19, expectations for virtual and in-person instruction needed to be clear and relevant to achieve learning outcomes for all students in the event they become ill, quarantined, or had to switch to a different mode of instruction. Technology and resources had to increase for academic achievement. Either district issued or personal equipment was needed to accommodate all area of content instruction.

Dance teachers were asked the following question: “Regarding instructional and curriculum practices for dance content, how did support look like from the district and campus administrative level during covid in providing high quality instruction for distant learning?” Dance teachers were asked to reflect on the current 2020-2021 school year to observe how

district and campus administration prepared and supported instructional materials for students during staff development trainings for the upcoming school year.

Out of 30 survey participants that answered this question, twenty-seven percent of the instructional materials and curriculum were moderately and slightly useful for dance content while seven percent of the instructional materials and curriculum were moderately and extremely useless. One dance teacher stated, “we had Google Classroom and that is all the support given” Another teacher stated, “administration provided details on asynchronous versus synchronous instruction, but no actual course materials were given to me.” One dance teacher stated, “the district provided resources for the dance teachers, including proper training in virtual and face to face instruction monthly.” Another explained, “teachers were given time to and structure to collaborate across the district and were given access to technology courses on a regular basis with support from their technology department.” Another dance teacher stated, “no support was given from their district or campus.” Four other dance teachers also responded with similar concerns of not having adequate support. Out of these five teachers, one stated, “however, many expectations were given.” Districts provided what expectations were necessary for teachers and students, however, the lack of technology training, instructional aids, and support were not aligned to suit these expectations.

Figure 9 shows the percentage of support through instructional and curriculum practices from the district and campus.



**Fig. 9.** Instructional and Curriculum Resources.

School climate is one of the most vital factors to ensuring positive outcomes for both teachers and students. From relationship building, to teaching and learning the safety of the institutional environment, the school climate should be an effective process for improvement practices. Teachers were surveyed about the most challenging concerns of teaching in a K-12 public school system. This survey question and participant responses can be found in appendix E.

The effects of the coronavirus took a toll, and, as a nation, everyone had to readjust their lives to a “new normal.” Many lives were lost due to the severity of this virus. There were many people who became isolated because of potential health risk. Additionally, people watched unpredictable and challenging situations (many that affected our loved ones), unfortunately, become historic events. However, out of the many unfortunate circumstances that arose, there

were communities of people rebuilding and rebranding their lives and their dreams. One dance teacher explained,

I felt the reason I went into teaching was lost in 2019-2020, when I had several current students (and alumni) set up a virtual conference. I thought this conferenced was focused on instructional goals in a virtual climate only to be insulted by the commentary of 15 students. I was shocked, embarrassed, and angered. These were students I deeply cared about, whom I wrote letters of recommendations, and built a strong relationship with. My commute to work was an hour and a half, which I was fine with because of the work with these campus demographics and low-income students. This was my reason behind teaching. I was ready to give up after I heard these comments. After crying and feeling that my passion was gone, I began to feel burned out. Shortly thereafter, I realized that these comments were from only 15 students out of the hundreds that still needed and depended on me. Also, I realized that we were in a pandemic and “hurt people hurt people.” I was ready to give up and find another career, but after speaking with a good friend, I knew I was where I needed to be. Even my campus principal encouraged me to continue past this situation.

### **Data Analysis**

Stress and burnout in teachers can lead to negative emotions in their jobs which can transition into poor performance in the classroom as well as decreased job satisfaction. Stress and burnout from poor performance and decreased job satisfaction from the individual can also have a negative impact on students and student achievement.

The survey included a total of fifty-four questions that ranged from multiple-choice to short answer responses and included participant demographic information. Open-ended questions allowed participants to answer liberally and elaborate as deemed necessary. The multiple-choice questions allowed for minimal subjected responses with very few or limited elaborations. The multiple-choice and short answer questions consist of areas contributing to stress and burnout, experience with administration, personal inspiration for becoming a teacher, misconceptions prior to entering the field of education, and advice to new teachers.

This study provided a blended method response of quantitative and qualitative data to analyze and support this research. A portion of this study focused on quantitative data because of the potential dimensions of open-ended questions that supported narrative responses to be analyzed by the researcher. The survey collected data based on fixed responses, while the remaining portion of this research focused on qualitative data using open-ended questions. Closed ended questions that reflected multiple choice responses were used in an effort to collect quantitative data. The data collected in this study analyzed the participants' experience with stress and burnout from factors related to students, parents, administration personnel and other environmental factors. Teacher attrition affected about half of the thirty-two participants in this qualitative study displaying how burnout impacted their job performance and the performance of the students in their classroom. Approximately nineteen dance teachers out of thirty-two considered resigning from education during their career.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

As discussed in the previous chapters, this research studied the effects stress and burnout had on dance teachers in K-12 public schools. The final chapter of this thesis gathers results and draws conclusions based on the feedback from the study's participants, their experience in education, and reflective practices for teacher retention.

The study consisted of surveying thirty-two current and former K-12 public school dance teacher participants that worked in one or more schools of rural and urban student populations.

This study sought to examine and answer the following essential questions:

- Q1 What factors contribute to stress?
- Q2 What factors contribute to burnout?
- Q3 In what ways can teachers identify when stress is affecting their well-being?
- Q4 In what ways can teachers identify when burnout is affecting their well-being?
- Q5 What preventative strategies can help improve retention among teachers in an 21<sup>st</sup> century education environment?

While there is no cure for stress and burnout, there are strategies for handling it. When teachers are impacted by stress and burnout, it is important to address these feelings and concerns so that their wellbeing can increase and students in the classroom are unaffected.

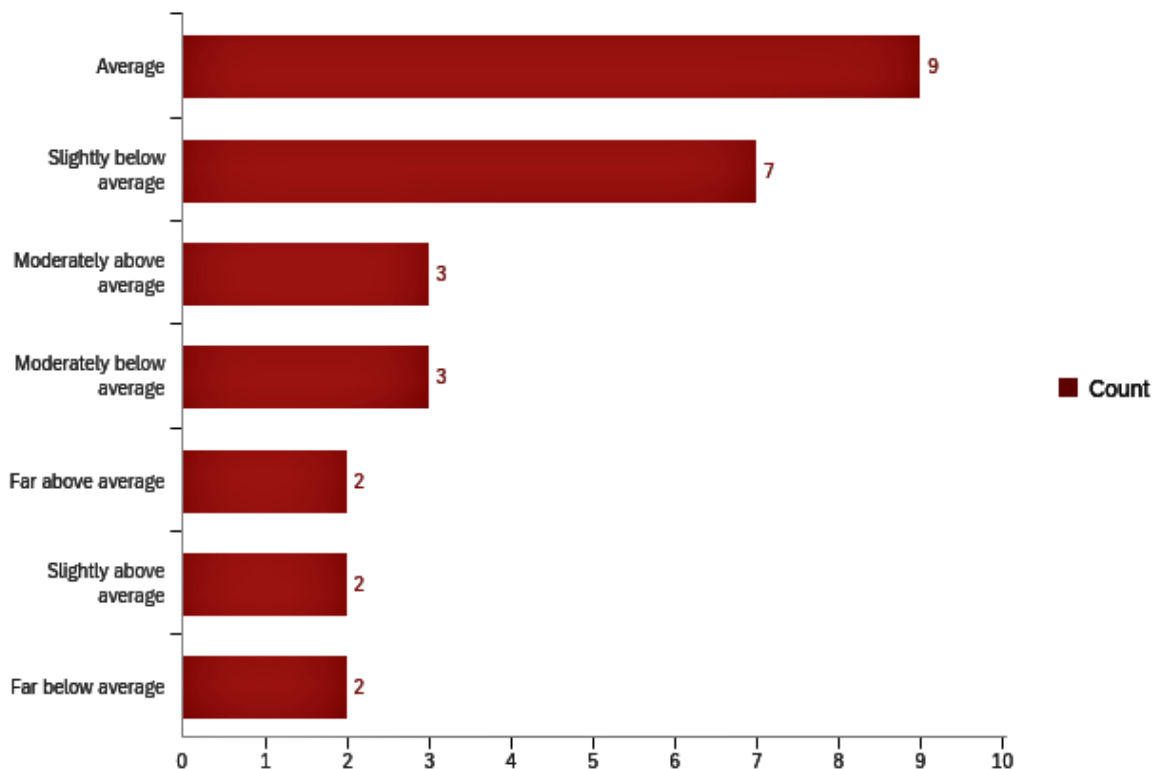
Teachers were asked to perform a self-evaluation, which assisted teachers in recognizing and reflected on how burnout effected their physical and mental health. Dance teachers were asked

the following: “How would you rate your mental, emotional, physical, and social state of health when experiencing burnout?”

Out of 27 survey participants that answered this question, nine dance teachers considered to exhibit feelings of stress and burnout concerns at an average amount. There was an even split between six dance teachers who exhibited feelings of stress and burnout either moderately above or below the average amount of teacher participants. Another six dance teachers exhibited feelings of stress and burnout either far above or far below the average amount of dance teachers that answered this question. Learning how to manage stress and burnout can be a stride in the direction of building resilience personally and professionally. In the process of understanding stress and burnout, it was important to evaluate and analyze the participants’ understanding of their reasoning for doing what they love.

Figure 10 shows the number of dance teachers, who rated their health during periods of burnout.





**Fig. 10.** Rate of health when burnout occurs.

### Increasing Retention and Morale

Stress and burnout can be very pivotal in a teacher’s career, but morale can be an even bigger barrier for retaining quality teachers. There are many factors that can contribute to stress and burnout as mentioned earlier. With the appropriate support, teachers can thrive mentally and physically. This idea spurred asking the following question to the participants: “How can district/campus administration retain highly qualified teachers through morale and retention practices?”

Out of twenty-seven participants that answered this question, one dance teacher offered, “increasing salary and competitive pay as a retention tactic.” Additional, dance teachers expressed the same concerns. Another responded, “fairly fund programs adequately. Dance

educators make mountains out of mole hills. I get to reach students on a level that is social, emotional, and cultural. That should be supported with supplies for students (and teachers), learning opportunities that are pertained to dance pedagogy and enrichment opportunities for students.”

One dance teacher responded, “more department time to collaborate and share lessons.” Another responded, “provide a sustainable teaching environment by equipping dance classrooms with sprung floors. Yet another suggested, “treat us as professionals by understanding all the responsibilities a dance teacher/director does and then support them accordingly. Invest in appropriate dance and other art professional development besides lumping dance with general content development. Equal support as received by athletics.” Three teachers shared a similar response to this.

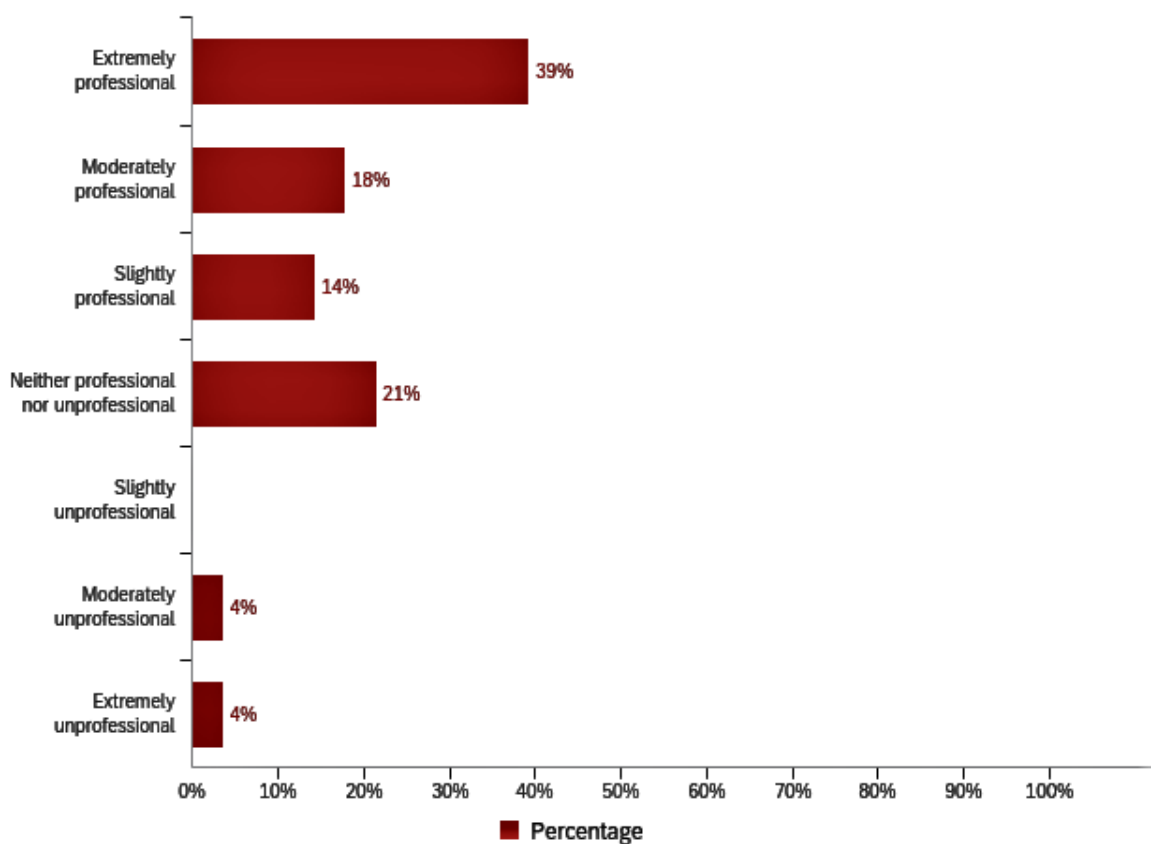
One dance teacher responded, “give opportunities for rewards. Highlight teachers often and create ways to come together as a school community.” Another dance teacher responded, “survey teachers frequently to gauge their concerns and happiness. Conduct listening tours with every teacher to hear their grievances and hear their suggestions to resolving system weaknesses. Encourage self-care and taking personal days.”

### *Grievances and Management*

Grievances of any form can have significant outcomes on an educational environment. Grievances are a formal complaint that can turn into an investigation pending the situations, and they can be submitted by any party of the school system, including students, parents, faculty, staff, and other representatives of the district. A grievance or complaint can be filed for a variety of reasons. Based on this information, dance teachers were asked the following: “How are grievances communicated or handled as it is related to concerns involving parents or students?”

Out of twenty-seven survey participants that answered this question, thirty-nine percent of those grievances involving parents or students were described as being handled extremely professionally, eighteen percent were handled moderately professionally, fourteen percent were handled slightly professionally, fourteen percent were neither professional nor unprofessional, and four percent mentioned that grievances were handled both moderately and extremely unprofessional.

Figure 11 shows the responses from dance teachers regarding how grievances were handled in the district or on campus involving parents or students.



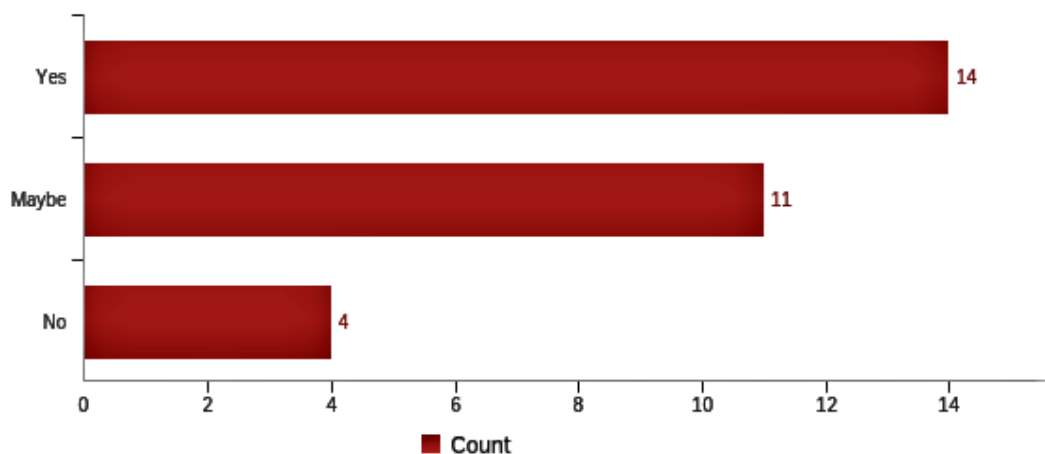
**Fig. 11.** District Grievances

### *Open-door Policy*

An open-door policy is usually an opportunity that allows individuals to observe and discuss important information without the fear or judgment or negative repercussions. The purpose of an open-door policy is to encourage dialogue and view feedback about a specific matter of importance. Districts and campuses who adopt an “open-door” policy to develop dialogue and feedback from parents, students, and teachers allow their institutions and learning environments to enhance and improve. In addition to investigating how grievances are conducted in their districts or campus, dance teachers were asked, “Does your district or campus have an open-door policy regarding how teacher grievances are supported?”

Out of twenty-nine survey participants that answered this question, fourteen dance teachers mentioned their districts’ campuses have a supportive open-door policy regarding teacher grievances. Eleven dance teachers mentioned their districts and campus may or may not have an open-door policy for teacher grievances. Four teachers mentioned that their district or campus does not have a supportive open-door policy for teacher grievances.

Figure 12 shows the responses from dance teachers acknowledge an open-door policy as it pertains to teacher grievances.



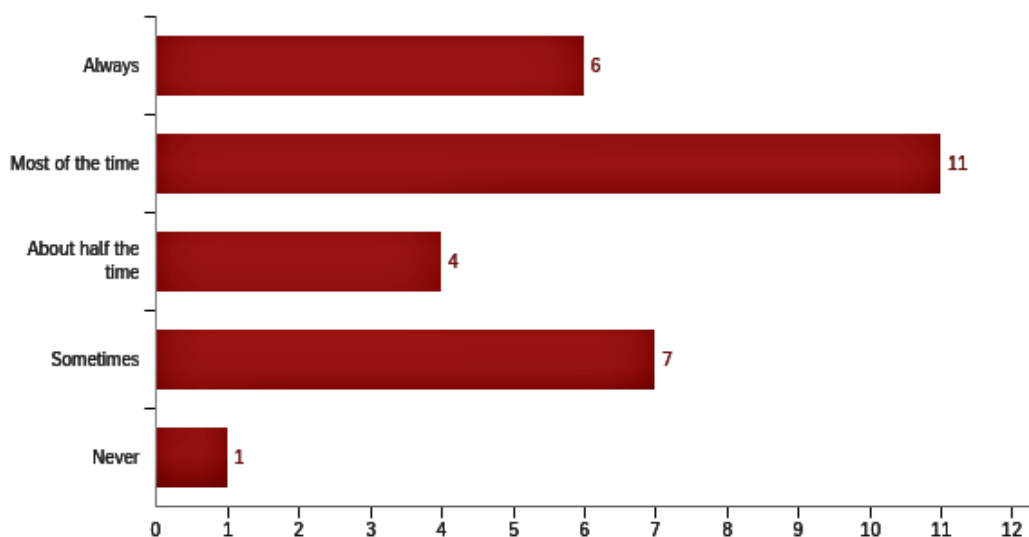
**Fig. 12.** District/Campus Open-door Policy

New teachers may face challenges regarding classroom management and effectively managing student behavior. Veteran teachers may face these challenges as well in addition to improving student achievement and managing student discipline. Student behavior, improving teaching effectiveness, student retention, parent support, teacher retention, and job satisfaction are just a part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom concerns in K-12 public schools. Creating a culturally responsive environment can build rapport in with students and teachers. It potentially prevents negative behavior for students and allows the students to be conscious and responsible about the choices they make. When teachers occur negative experiences of classroom management, student achievement, and discipline, their initial instinct is to turn toward campus leadership for assistance in these complex and difficult challenges. It takes a village to raise a child. Teachers, administration, and parents are the primary source to reinforcing behavior and achievement efforts of students. By creating a positive school climate, principals can support teachers by building culturally responsible leaders. Using culturally responsive pedagogical practices, ensures effective classroom management for new and veteran teachers. This also

allows for minimal disruption and concerns in the learning environment. Dance teachers were asked, “How responsive is the campus principal to the concerns of teachers?”

Out of twenty-nine survey participants that answered this question, most of the dance teachers indicated that their principals are responsive to their concerns always or most of the time. Seven dance teachers selected their campus principal is sometimes responsive to teacher concerns, while one dance teacher selected their campus principal is never responsive to teacher concerns.

Figure 13 shows the data surveyed of how responsive the campus principal is to the concerns of teachers.



**Fig. 13.** Response to Teacher Concerns

### Understanding Your Why

Teaching can be a rewarding career. As an aspiring educator, you gain the importance of a quality education and the role it plays in student’s lives. There are many reasons to become a teacher such as, improving the quality of education, making a difference, and

impacting the lives of students. Teachers can empower young minds to discover future opportunities afforded to them. Teachers and students are lifelong learners by nature. Teachers get to share their passion with their students. Teaching, just like any job has its pros and cons, but most importantly allows teachers to connect students to bright futures. The next part of this study was designed to assist the participants in understanding their reasoning of “why.” Why did they decide to go into teaching? As well as who and what were influences that contributed to this decision? Teachers who have a sense of purpose are often seen as being influential. When teachers know their purpose in life, they are more deeply committed and connected to pursuing their goals. Participants in this study were asked the following: Who or what motivated and inspired you to become a dance teacher? One dance teacher responded that, “going into teaching was their calling and it was an opportunity to inspire their students artistically. Allowing their students to express their creativity, watching their growth in dance, and seeing their students pursue careers in dance.” Three teachers shared a similar response in describing what motivated and inspired them to become educators.

One dance teacher responded that, “financially, going into teaching was the right move. Being able to have a steady pay with benefits, while doing what I love.” One dance teacher mentioned, “I became a teacher because of my high school dance teacher.” Fifteen other dance teachers agreed with similar responses that their drill team directors and fellow dance colleagues were the main inspiration for becoming a teacher. One dance teacher responded that the reason they were inspired to become a teacher, was because of the “local and national professional dance companies and professional choreographers.” Another dance teacher stated, “that becoming a teacher was important due to the lack of dance education in local K-12 institutions.”

Additionally, dance teachers who were experiencing or have experienced stress and burnout in the teaching profession were asked: What was your motivation and inspiration to continue teaching dance? Out of twenty-seven teachers survey participants that answered this question, one dance teacher stated that their motivation and inspiration came from, “students and their love of dance. Seeing my students grow was always a motivating factor. To help students achieve their desire as well as teaching life skills daily. Never giving up on my students, students needing a positive outlet and a way to be involved.” There were twelve similar responses from dance teachers noting similar sentiments. One dance teacher stated, “the passion I found by for creative movement. Also, the personal accomplishments of my students honing on their dance skills throughout my career.” Four teachers expressed that their mentors, the founding members of the Texas Dance Education Association organization and other educational/professional platforms were among the top motivators for teaching.

Having community is important to the field of education. Dance teachers are able to thrive more and continue to be present for their students and themselves each day. Dance teachers were asked the following, “What do you hope to leave as a legacy to the dance education community?” One dance teacher said, “minority teachers can make an impact too.” Another teacher stated, “I want to leave students empowered, creative, determined and ready to take on new challenges.” One dance teacher stated, “being a well-rounded, effective teacher that inspired her students.” One dance teacher stated, “consistency and hard work.” One dance teacher stated, “I aspire to contribute to the legacy of somatic education”. One dance teacher stated, “I hope to become more active as a mentor. I hope to leave a legacy that dance transcends boundaries and that we all have the ability to empower children to believe they can heal the world.” Another dance teacher expressed,



I hope to leave a legacy that encouraged people to learn dances of other cultures. Folk dances and social dances from other countries should be celebrated and shared. In my studio, I offer genres in addition to the traditional ballet, jazz, and modern curriculums that I am required to teach. I also teach salsa, merengue, cumbia, Bhangra, West African and breakin'! If I have time, I would implement more social dances such as the lindy hope and folkloric.

Dance teachers were asked the following: "What positive encouragement or advice can you offer a new and veteran dance teacher experiencing burnout?"

Ten dance teachers expressed similar sentiments, that teachers need to take time for themselves because self-care is very important. One dance teacher stated, "take necessary breaks as needed for rejuvenation and reflect why you decided to become a dance teacher." One dance teacher stated, "do not feel obligated to say yes for extra duties. Give student leaders plenty of opportunities to lead their peers so that you can promote leadership development. Keep learning by taking class and keep falling in love with dance." One dance teacher stated, "let your students inspire you and keep a positive attitude. Gratitude is important to acknowledge often." One dance teacher stated,

Remember all the letters those students that wrote to you that love you. Remember all the smiles that you created and remember all the tears you wiped away from students that needed it. Remember all the hugs you gave your students that truly needed it because there is always better rather than worse.

Another teacher stated,

Get to the root of why you are burned out. Is it your workload, the expectations placed on you? Is it life outside of work? Whatever it is, talk to admin, friends, family members or a

counselor about it. Seek solutions before it negatively impacts your job, health, and mental state. Take a day off for no reason. Keep things and activities in your life that you enjoy. Make time for YOU! You are worth it.

The conclusion of this chapter will discuss the interpretations of findings, limitations, and recommendations of future research.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

The interpretations of this study were compiled from a non-biased survey that examined potential burnout stressors, job performance, and retention practices for teacher advocacy. The results of the study examine K-12 public school dance teachers' experiences with stress and burnout from various stimuli affecting their job performance and the academic performance of their students. Although not a main topic discussed in the study, classroom management can play a vital role in teacher burnout, student achievement, student behavior, and a teacher's job performance. From the study research, critical results demonstrated how effective and on-going professional development practices could be positive interventions for reducing teacher stress and burnout. By implementing these practices, enhancement for teacher retention can reduce teacher shortage, increase job satisfaction, student achievement, and student behavior. Teacher shortages, challenging work environments, and a lack of professional development contribute to high teacher turnover rates. Additionally, providing effective retention strategies will foster school districts in retaining current educators. Through building meaningful partnerships with students, parents, and administration; teachers will thrive in education.

### **Limitations to the Study**

Limitations to the study included the survey being distributed to dance teachers from four dance education groups on Facebook. The Facebook groups consisted of current and former

dance educators that worked in public, private, and/or studio institutions. Although the social media platforms played a vital part in this study, the researcher would have preferred additional avenues to recruit a variety of participants. The researcher would have preferred to include interviews with participants to gain an in-depth understanding of the contributing factors of stress and burnout and how it impacted the mental well-being of dance educators and their students.

Limitations also included the limited availability on literature (books) pertaining to teacher stress and burnout at the beginning of this thesis study. The researcher found that limiting the survey to a total of twenty questions could have increased the participation and quality regarding the outcome of this study. The structure of the questions could have displayed more multiple-choice responses rather than open-ended. Additionally, the researcher found that there were approximately three to five questions that could have been omitted from the survey. Furthermore, the researcher should have considered including questions pertaining to stress in the survey, along with burnout and retention questions.

Lastly, the researcher found that this study had various effects and impacts on each participant. Exhibiting stress and burnout is not a “one-person” island and what the researcher found important was the various underlining connections caused by burnout to teachers. Most importantly the impact regarding self-care, retention, and motivation techniques and support to fellow teachers were important to the participants of this study. Overall, there was an overwhelming response regarding the passion and dedication each teacher had in teaching and providing quality dance education to their students.

## **Recommendations for Future Research**

Studies such as this could be further developed by future researchers by including in-depth and direct research per grade levels (i.e., primary, secondary). There is a demonstrated need for more journal-based research on stress and burnout for primary and secondary school educators. Additional research is needed to verify how teachers can recognize signs of stress and burnout. More research is also needed to determine at what point teachers start to feel stress and burnout as well as how they can use preventative strategies to manage it. Lastly, more specifically, more research is needed to develop a district and campus plan for implementing interventions to increase teacher retention and reduce the number of teachers leaving education due to stress and burnout.

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**APPENDIX A**

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD DOCUMENTS**



Date: 12/02/2020  
Principal Investigator: Roland Latson  
Committee Action: **IRB EXEMPT DETERMINATION – New Protocol**  
Action Date: 12/02/2020  
Protocol Number: [2010012186](#)  
Protocol Title: Causes of Burnout Among K-12 Public School Dance Teachers: Preventative Strategies to Improve Teacher Retention in 21st Century Education  
Expiration Date:

The University of Northern Colorado Institutional Review Board has reviewed your protocol and determined your project to be exempt under 45 CFR 46.104(d)(7)(2) for research involving

Category 2 (2018): EDUCATIONAL TESTS, SURVEYS, INTERVIEWS, OR OBSERVATIONS OF PUBLIC BEHAVIOR. Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met: (i) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; (ii) Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation; or (iii) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by 45 CFR 46.111(a)(7).

You may begin conducting your research as outlined in your protocol. Your study does not require further review from the IRB, unless changes need to be made to your approved protocol.

**As the Principal Investigator (PI), you are still responsible for contacting the UNC IRB office if and when:**





- You wish to deviate from the described protocol and would like to formally submit a modification request. Prior IRB approval must be obtained before any changes can be implemented (except to eliminate an immediate hazard to research participants).
- You make changes to the research personnel working on this study (add or drop research staff on this protocol).
- At the end of the study or before you leave The University of Northern Colorado and are no longer a student or employee, to request your protocol be closed. \*You cannot continue to reference UNC on any documents (including the informed consent form) or conduct the study under the auspices of UNC if you are no longer a student/employee of this university.
- You have received or have been made aware of any complaints, problems, or adverse events that are related or possibly related to participation in the research.

If you have any questions, please contact the Research Compliance Manager, Nicole Morse, at 970-351-1910 or via e-mail at [nicole.morse@unco.edu](mailto:nicole.morse@unco.edu). Additional information concerning the requirements for the protection of human subjects may be found at the Office of Human Research Protection website - <http://hhs.gov/ohrp/> and <https://www.unco.edu/research/research-integrity-and-compliance/institutional-review-board/>.

Sincerely,

Nicole Morse  
Research Compliance Manager

University of Northern Colorado: FWA00000784

**APPENDIX B**

**RECRUITMENT LETTER**



RECRUITMENT LETTER FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

**Project Title:** Causes of Burnout Among K-12 Public School Dance Teachers:  
Preventative Strategies to Improve Teacher Retention in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education

**Researcher:** Roland Latson, Graduate Student at the University of Northern Colorado

**Phone:**

**E-mail:**

Dear Dance Educator(s),

My name is Roland Latson and I am a graduate student from the School of Theatre Arts and Dance from the University of Northern Colorado. I am writing you to participate in my research study about “Causes of Burnout Among K-12 Public School Dance Teachers: Preventative Strategies to Improve Teacher Retention in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education.” Factors such as professional responsibilities, instructional duties, lack of resources, work overload, administration support, student engagement, student behavior, parent involvement, and job satisfaction are major contributions of teacher burnout.

You are eligible to participate in this study because you identify as a dance teacher and have served a minimum of 3 years in a K-12 public school institution. If you decide to participate in this study, you will complete a survey pertaining to burnout in education. The survey will consist of multiple choice and open response questions. Participation in this study is solely voluntary and no compensation will be offered. No signature consent form will be necessary to complete.

I have obtained your contact information from my generated post regarding participation in this study in various dance education platforms via Facebook. Your identification and survey responses will be held confidential. You will have up to 90 days to complete the survey. At the end of the experiment, I will be happy to share your data with you at your request. A code system will be used to identify all participant responses. If at any time you would like to omit your participation, please contact me directly.

Thank you for your consideration and time!

Sincerely,

Roland Latson  
UNCO Graduate Student

**APPENDIX C**  
**CONSENT FORMS**



CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

**Project Title:** Causes of Burnout Among K-12 Public School Dance Teachers: Preventative Strategies to Improve Teacher Retention in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education

**Researcher:** Roland Latson, Graduate Student at the University of Northern Colorado

**Phone:**

**E-mail:**

**Research Advisor:** Christy O’Connell-Black, University of Northern Colorado, [christy.black@unco.edu](mailto:christy.black@unco.edu)

My name is Roland Latson, and I am a graduate student from the School of Theatre Arts and Dance from the University of Northern Colorado. I am writing you to participate in my research study about “Causes of Burnout Among K-12 Public School Dance Teachers: Preventative Strategies to Improve Teacher Retention in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education.” Factors such as professional responsibilities, instructional duties, lack of resources, work overload, administration support, student engagement, student behavior, parent involvement, and job satisfaction are major contributions of teacher burnout. You are being asked to complete a survey in this study presented by Roland Latson, Dallas, TX. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

**Purpose and Description:** The primary purpose of this research study is to analyze and address the following areas: (1) Factors contributing to burnout in public school dance teachers in a K-12 setting? Burnout is a complex condition with an assortment of signs and symptoms that vary from teacher to teacher. Burnout often occurs in dance teachers during periods of increased commitments in their careers and in dance teachers whose daily regimens produce an imbalance between mental stability, physical activity, and rest. (2) Recognizing the signs and symptoms related to burnout as it effects their mental, emotional, and physical well-being. Being able to recognize the signs and symptoms of burnout will help dance teachers understand the importance of building resilience and regaining a healthy balance intellectually and physically in their professional careers. (3) What preventative strategies can help districts and schools improve retention in dance teachers in 21<sup>st</sup> century education. The intent is to explore the various measures to assist dance teachers in remaining not only be highly qualified educators, but to maintain a healthy and thriving career for dance teachers in education. As part of the graduate thesis project the research will assist the researcher and future readers of the final thesis in understanding burnout among k-12 public school dance teachers and providing preventative strategies to improve teacher retention in 21<sup>st</sup> century education.

**Risks:** The risks and discomforts inherent in this study are no greater than those normally encountered through professional and personal reflection.

**Your answers will be confidential:** At the end of the experiment, I will be happy to share your data with you at your request. I will take every precaution to protect your anonymity. Participant records of this study will be kept private, and I will lock the completed forms in a cabinet at home. In any sort of report, I make public, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. A code system will be used to identify all participant responses. No actual names will be used. I will use pseudonyms. The goal of the research is to simply document the contributing factors of burnout with K-12 public school dance teachers.

Page 1 of 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
(Subject's initials here)



**Project Title:** Causes of Burnout Among K-12 Public School Dance Teachers: Preventative Strategies to Improve Teacher Retention in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education

**Researcher:** Roland Latson, Graduate Student at the University of Northern Colorado

**Phone:**

**E-mail:**

**Research Advisor:** Christy O'Connell-Black, University of Northern Colorado, [christy.black@unco.edu](mailto:christy.black@unco.edu)

**Time Commitment:** Your time is valuable and appreciated. The participation survey will be shared in various dance education platforms via Facebook. You will answer various questions pertaining to your career, teaching profession and environmental factors that surround the topic of burnout in education. Please keep it mind that the questionnaire will take ample time to complete. Once the survey is posted on Facebook, it will be available for approximately up to 45 days. The questionnaire is estimated to take a total of 30-minutes to a 1-hour to complete.

**Expectations:** The expectations set are for you to complete the entire survey to the best of your ability and with honesty. Please provide as much concrete information pertaining to your professional and personal experience(s) in education. Your responses should be balanced, thorough, and direct. If you have any questions regarding the questionnaire or thesis, I would be glad to provide any information.

**Voluntary Participation:** Participation in this study is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation, you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Please take all the time you need to read through this document and decide whether you would like to participate in this research study. If you decide to participate, your completion of the research procedures indicates your consent. Please keep this form for your records. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact Nicole Morse, Office of Research, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-1910.

**If you have questions:** The researcher conducting this study is Roland Latson. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact me with the information listed above. Please retain one copy of this letter for your records. Thank you for assisting me in my research.

*Roland Latson*

Page 2 of 2 \_\_\_\_\_

(Subject's initials here)



UNIVERSITY OF  
**NORTHERN COLORADO**

College of Performing and Visual Arts  
*School of Theatre Arts and Dance*

CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

**Thesis Title:** Causes of Burnout Among K-12 Public School Dance Teachers:  
Preventative Strategies to Improve Teacher Retention in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education

**Researcher:** Roland Latson, Graduate Student at the University of Northern Colorado

**Contact Information:** **E-mail:**

**Research Advisor:** Christy O'Connell-Black, University of Northern Colorado,  
[christy.black@unco.edu](mailto:christy.black@unco.edu)

Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation, you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future references. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact Sherry May, IRB Administrator, Office of Sponsored Programs, 25 Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-1910.

**Statement of Consent:** I have read the above information and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Full Name (please print) Date of Birth (month/day/year)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature Date (month/day/year)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's Signature Date (month/day/year)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Researcher Obtaining Consent Date (month/day/year)

*This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least three years beyond the end of the study and was approved by the IRB on (date).*



**APPENDIX D**  
**RESEARCH SURVEY**

## RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

1. Are you a current K-12 public school dance teacher?
2. How many years have you served as a public-school dance teacher?
3. Prior to choosing a career in teaching, what was your profession?
4. What were any preconceived ideas did you have prior to entering the teaching profession?
5. Are/Were you considered a full-time or part-time employee?
6. What grade level(s) do you teach, or have you taught?
7. How many public-school districts have you taught in over the course of your teaching career?
8. What is/was the time length of dance classes?
9. What is your preference regarding length of dance class?
10. Based off your preference, what are the instructional benefits for students in 35-minute, 45-minute or 90-minute classes?
11. Based off each class period, how often do/did you see your dance students?
12. How many dance classes do/did you teach throughout the school year?
13. Do/Did you teach any other subject(s) prior or after teaching dance? If so, what subject(s) and grade level?
14. Do/Did you teach any other subject(s) in addition to dance? If so, what subject(s) and grade level?
15. Are/Were you assigned any other duties (i.e., directing/coaching, sponsor, dept. head, AP, counselor, etc.) in addition to teaching? If so, what are/were your duties?
16. Are/Were your other duties included during the daily bell schedule, before or after school?
17. Based off the preconceived ideas prior to entering the teaching profession, were any of those ideas still apparent or evident throughout your career? Please explain.
18. What motivated and inspired you to become a dance teacher?
19. What was/were the deciding factor(s) that made you choose a career in teaching dance?
20. Overall, how satisfied, or dissatisfied are/were you at your school?
21. What are the reasons you are/were satisfied at your school? (Check all that apply)
22. What are the reasons you are/were dissatisfied at your school? (Check all that apply)
23. What are some reasons you are dissatisfied with teaching as it is related to burnout?
24. Prior to the 2019-2020 school year, how many times have you considered resigning from teaching as a result feeling burned out from various stimuli?
25. Please list the reason(s) why you considered resigning from teaching prior to the 2019-2020 school year?
26. During the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school year, how many times have you considered resigning from teaching as a result feeling burned out from various stimuli?
27. Please list the reason(s) why you considered resigning from teaching during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school year?
28. If you are a former K-12 dance teacher, what were the reasons you resign from education?
29. If you are former K-12 dance teacher, what is your current profession?

30. Regarding instructional and curriculum practices for dance content, how did support look like from the district and campus administrative level during covid in providing high quality instruction for distant learning?
31. What does/did emotional/social support look like to teachers from your campus administration?
32. What does/did support look like to teachers from parents of students in your classes?
33. If you directed/coached a performance team, what does/did support look like to teachers from parents of students on your team?
34. What does/did district/campus level support services look like for teachers?
35. Regarding the questions above regarding support, please provide more information in detail?
36. Reflecting on the current 2020-2021 school year, how has administration prepared (or supported) instructional materials for students during professional/staff development training for virtual instruction due to COVID19?
37. How would you rate your mental, emotional, physical, and social state of health when experiencing burnout?
38. Do you feel that the contributions of burnout were caused from students?
39. Do you feel that the contributions of burnout were caused from parents?
40. Do you feel that the contributions of burnout were caused from teachers?
41. Do you feel that the contributions of burnout were caused from district/campus administration?
42. Regarding the questions above regarding contributions of burnout, please provide more information in detail?
43. How responsive is/was your main campus principal to the concerns of teachers?
44. What has been the most challenging concern(s) while teaching in a K-12 public school setting?
45. How are grievances communicated or handled as it is related to concerns involving parents or students?
46. Does your district or campus have an open-door policy regarding how teacher grievances are supported?
47. What has made your teaching job more enjoyable and manageable?
48. How can district/campus administration retain highly qualified teachers through morale and retention practices?
49. What makes/made your own teaching/directing style effective?
50. What/Who is your motivation and inspiration in the dance world?
51. What is/was your motivation and inspiration to continue teaching dance?
52. What do/did you hope to leave as a legacy to the dance education community?
53. What positive encouragement or advice can you offer a new and veteran dance teacher?
54. What positive encouragement or advice can you offer a new and veteran dance teacher experiencing burnout?

**APPENDIX E**  
**SURVEY QUESTION**

“What has been the most challenging concern(s) while teaching in a K-12 public school setting?”

### Participant Responses

|   |
|---|
| Unrealistic expectations  |
| Not having enough staff for special education services  |
| The advancement of technology has given us so much but also makes for so much more work and many more demands. The idea that you should be available 24/3 can be overwhelming. The idea that you should be grounded breaking and innovative on every platform is stressful.   |
| Student behavior support.   |
| Sate testing.   |
| Space issues.   |
| Safety.   |
| Lack of administration support.   |
| Participations from students online.  |
| Overload of work, no raises and being exposed to Covid.   |
| Not enough money for instruction, small budgets, and inadequate space to teach in.  |
| Not enough emphasis on the importance of dance as a relevant part of the academic school dance. Student behavioral challenge support.   |
| Salary and budgets.   |
| Safety.   |
| Micromanagement from administration.  |
| Keeping students safe (metal detectors at entrances, lockdowns, etc.); managing disparity in socioeconomic classes among the student population; instability of schedule within my department (always exceptions, special events disrupting classes); balancing a campus that requires rigor in academics and arts with all the menial tasks required by the district; the hours I expected to put in (there were days I didn't see my children before or after school. |
| Keeping everyone healthy. If they aren't, what to do.   |
| In general, Covid has made everything hard. Students are less motivated and do not care.  |
| Having a balance between campus related initiatives and offering a great dance experience.  |
| Getting 100% of your students to do their work. Also, teaching dance virtually is very limiting.  |
| Funds for dance. Many of my students could not afford proper attire.  |
| Discipline and students following rules.  |
| Covid   |
| Covid-19, lack of strong elementary teachers that causes learning disabilities later.   |
| Being controlled by districts telling me how to teach, and how I can grade my students.   |
| Almost dying from stress.   |
| Administration giving parents whatever they wanted just to shut them up. This is the most damaging thing in public education today.   |
| Adequate funding. My department receives \$500 a year. I serve 503 students. Homeroom teachers receive classroom supplies, our school does not have a program to share those supplied with Fine Arts teachers.  |