

TEACHER RECRUITMENT, RURAL SCHOOLS AND STUDENT TEACHERS'
PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVE TEACHER RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES IN
NORTH CAROLINA

A Dissertation

by

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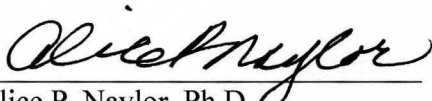
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ABSTRACT

TEACHER RECRUITMENT, RURAL SCHOOLS AND STUDENT TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVE TEACHER RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES IN NORTH CAROLINA. (May, 2008)

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The goal of this research study was to examine North Carolina student teachers' perceptions of effective teacher recruitment strategies related specifically to rural schools. Presently there are not enough qualified teachers available to teach in classrooms in rural school systems in North Carolina. Rural schools are at a disadvantage to competitively recruit teachers. Effective teacher recruitment is a priority for public schools, but there is limited empirical research about the topic (Young, Rinehart, & Heneman, 1993). This study attempted to fill this research void by examining teacher recruitment strategies for rural North Carolina school systems. The perceptions of North Carolina student teachers from 47 institutions of higher education with approved teacher education programs were investigated in the fall semester 2007. Student teachers were surveyed to determine differences in the perceptions of student teachers intending to teach in rural schools versus those intending to teach in urban schools. Survey items included various teacher recruitment strategies in the areas of interpersonal strategies, financial strategies, media strategies, and technological strategies. This study examined the importance of financial

incentives and the intent of student teachers who attended a university in a rural setting or lived in a rural hometown to teach in a rural school.

The results of this study indicated that student teachers living in rural hometowns and those who attended college in rural settings have a greater intention to teach in rural schools than those student teachers who live or attend colleges in urban settings.

Recruitment strategies were grouped into the following categories: financial incentives (salaries, housing, loan forgiveness, scholarships, and relocation assistance); media strategies (brochures, newspapers, billboard, radio, and TV); interpersonal strategies (job fairs, teacher cadet classes, FTA clubs, Teachers of Tomorrow Programs and face to face recruitment), and technology strategies (websites, PowerPoint, video webcasts, blogs, and online job banks). The mean score for financial strategies was higher than the other categories of media, interpersonal, and technology. Within financial strategies, rural school salary supplements, scholarship loans, and assistance in locating housing were statistically significant recruitment strategies.

This study will inform rural teacher recruiters. With limited time and resources, rural school systems will be able to focus on the recruitment strategies perceived as most effective by student teachers in North Carolina's applicant pool.