

Excerpts from:

At Risk Teachers

<http://www.prel.org/products/products/atrisk-teacher.pdf>

Pacific Resources for Education and Learning

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Risk factors abound in the daily lives of teachers.
Three common outcomes of these risk factors are

- stress and burnout
- absenteeism
- attrition

Stress and Burnout

Among the factors identified as leading to stress and burnout are daily hassles such as student misbehavior and teacher characteristics such as anger, anxiety or depression.

Additionally,

“...some research has suggested that burned-out teachers tended to be white, male, teaching at the secondary level and with less than 10 years of teaching experience.

Qualitative research was also mentioned in which teachers who were obsessional, passionate, idealistic and dedicated were more prone to burnout....”

In a different study it was noted that “the some times stressful impact of several components of school restructuring including: School-based management, Accountability, Career ladders, Schools within schools, Curriculum initiatives, Flexible scheduling, Team teaching....

additionally “...other urban school studies that focused on working conditions as a key to retaining good teachers”...found these conditions: Strong, Supportive principal leadership, Good physical working conditions, High levels of staff collegiality, High levels of teacher influence on school decisions, High levels of teacher control over curriculum and instruction....”

Teacher Absenteeism

“...In another study, teacher absenteeism was systematically examined in secondary education. Job satisfaction was the single most important factor affecting attendance motivation. Other employee attitudes that were related to attendance motivation were job involvement, organizational commitment, and loyalty to co-workers.

According to these researchers, teachers' attendance is influenced by both organizational practices and by attendance barriers. These barriers include illness, family responsibilities, and transportation problems...

Teacher Attrition

Risk factors relating to attrition are the more chronic concerns - - low salary, lack of promotional opportunities, poor accommodations, lack of upgrading opportunities, lack of teaching materials and supplies.

How do Risk Factors Generally Relate to Negative Consequences for Teachers?

Identifiable risk factors do not cause negative consequences in a linear, cause and effect relationship. The relationships are cyclical, and what is a cause in one relationship may be an effect in another.

Risk and Outcomes: A Model

Studies that have identified risk factors have also pointed out actors that protect teachers against risk...

“...There are thus many potential interventions and actions which an educational system might make to foster these protective factors. To name just a few:

Offer professional development activities. These might include stress management workshops, relaxation training, and time management. The more holistic approach includes nutrition., exercise and coping skills training.

Improve Working Conditions with teacher groups to identify and address areas of concern from classroom environment to salary issues.

Cultural accommodation. Look for creative ways to overcome some of the unique cultural risk factors affecting the region. If feast days mean teachers will be absent, add feast-make-up days to the school calendar as one very tentative example.”