Lowcountry Teacher Survey
Summary Report

In Collaboration with the Lowcountry Graduate Center’s Advisory Board in
K4-12 Teacher Education and Administrative Leadership

June 19, 2017
www.lowcountrygradcenter.org
Executive Summary

An online survey of teachers was undertaken by the Lowcountry Graduate Center (LGC) among public and private schools primarily in the heart of the state’s Lowcountry region. The purpose of the survey, disseminated during first quarter 2017 by schools and districts to their teachers, was to identify teacher interests in graduate level education, fields of interest, factors influencing their choices and decisions to enroll, and impediments to pursuing such educational and career goals within the foreseeable future (defined in the survey as five years). There was a total of 27 questions, including eight requesting demographic data. Based on the profile represented by the respondents, the sample was considered to reasonably represent the demographics of the total target population, with the exception of a disproportionately high representation of teachers residing in Dorchester County who completed the survey.

Of the total of 876 respondents participated, nearly half, or 45.6%, indicate they are considering a graduate level course of study – degree or non-degree – in education within the next five years. An additional 19.8% said they are not sure. Although one-third (31.6%) of survey respondents cite the opportunity to earn more money as their chief motivating factor for such an educational goal, many expressed non-monetary motivations. Except for those residing in Dorchester County expressing a strong preference for Charleston Southern University (CSU), the College of Charleston and the University of South Carolina (USC) were preferred as the institution for a graduate degree or certificate in education by the highest percentage of respondents. One of the three institutions in the tri-county area currently offering one or more graduate certificates and degrees in education is preferred by just under half of all respondents (47.4%) in the aggregate.

Those teachers in middle school, elementary school, and early childhood are disproportionately less likely to be interested in a graduate degree in their current field of work than those in other fields. On the other hand, teachers are disproportionately aiming for graduate studies in Literacy Education, Gifted & Talented, and Computer Science/Information Technology. Nearly one-fourth (22.7%) of respondents express career goals of leaving K4 – 12 for higher education, while over one-tenth (11.2%) wish to pursue graduate studies with career goals of becoming a K4 – 12 school principal or superintendent.

Affordability (52.3%) and securing the funds to allow graduate studies (51.8%) are the biggest hurdles (i.e., rated 4 or 5 on a 5-point Likert scale) for prospective graduate students currently working full time. Still, despite the pressure felt by respondents regarding funding requirements, one-third (31.4%) have no plan whatsoever as to how to pay for graduate education even though they aspire to enter a program within the next five years. More than half (54.1%) indicate that their administration offers little or no information, guidance, or encouragement with respect to career plans or professional development.

Although carving out the time for class and studies while balancing all other responsibilities is rated 4 or 5 by a lower percentage of total respondents (44.2%) compared to affordability and securing funds, it emerges as the single largest obstacle by the highest percentage (rated 5 by 28.1%) of all respondents. Time surfaces again as a consideration when witnessing the fact that nearly two-thirds (61.7%) of respondents are willing to drive only 30 minutes or less in each direction for any face-to-face instruction. Respondents tend to underestimate the time required for each graduate-level course.
The preferred format of instruction most desired by respondents (52.6%) is hybrid. Nearly one-third (30.9%) prefer self-paced online instruction, although differences among demographic strata surface on this question. Responses show a six-fold preference for a “field practitioner” over a “career academician” as a graduate course instructor.

The many facets of how teachers expect to search for and eventually select a program of study offer ample opportunities for institutions of higher education to engage in targeted marketing of their programs. This report is produced under the sponsorship of the Advisory Board in K4-12 Teacher Education & Administrative Leadership of the Lowcountry Graduate Center (LGC) and is not intended as a statement of policy of the three oversight member institutions (namely: the College of Charleston, The Citadel, and the Medical University of South Carolina) governing the LGC.

Background and Situation Analysis

In 2016, the Lowcountry Graduate Center (LGC) created a new Employer Advisory Board in K4-12 Teacher Education & Administrative Leadership because of the importance of school quality to firms wishing to locate or expand in any area of the U.S. The board purposely represents both public and private schooling and the SC Virtual Charter Schools. Senior management at the district office level of all public schools in Beaufort, Berkeley, Charleston, Colleton, and Dorchester counties serve on the board. In addition, Ashley Hall, Northwood Academy, and the Catholic Diocese of South Carolina each has a member on the board. Because of the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce’s strategic focus on education, its voice is represented, too. Deans of education of all colleges and universities who are member or affiliate institutions of the LGC and who offer graduate degrees in education are invited as guests – either in person or by teleconference – to the advisory board meetings.

At its first meeting at the LGC in September 2016, the group discussed the most pressing challenges of teacher recruitment, retention, and on-going professional development, concluding that survey research was needed to better understand the professional goals, and obstacles to their attainment, of today’s teachers in at least this region of the state. This is the first time such comprehensive, targeted, and quantitative research has been conducted in this region and possibly anywhere in South Carolina.

The Advisory Board’s concerns are fueled, in part, by a growing shortage of teachers nationwide. Between 2009 – 2014, the number enrolling in teacher education decreased by one-third, or 34.7%, according to the Learning Policy Institute.1 Currently, the lowest percentage of teens at age 14 aspire to be teachers than any time since the State Department of Education began tracking career aspirations among the youth, according to a March 2017 presentation at the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education.2 In SC, the number of graduates completing a SC teacher education program has fallen by 14.5% in the last two years alone, according to the Commission on Higher Education.3 A recent report on educator recruitment and retention revealed that an average of 5,200 public school teachers are leaving South Carolina’s classrooms annually, and only 2,200 students are graduating from the state’s teacher education programs each year, illustrating the need to recruit, prepare, and retain quality teachers for K4 –
12 schools, as the gap is growing. This research was undertaken with a primary focus on quality teacher retention rather than issues of recruitment and preparation.

Objective

The purpose of the survey was to identify Lowcountry teacher interests in graduate level education, factors influencing their choices and decisions to enroll, and impediments to pursuing such educational and career goals within the foreseeable future (defined in the survey as five years).

Methodology

Five volunteer teachers from schools in the five-county area – comprised of Charleston, Dorchester, Berkeley, Colleton, and Beaufort - were recruited by the Director of School District Staff Development in Berkeley County, the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction in Colleton County, and from Ashley Hall School in Downtown Charleston for informal telephone interviews jointly conducted by LGC Director Nancy Muller, PhD, and professional market researcher, Paul Nisbet, PhD. These interviews were conducted during late December 2016 and early January 2017, for the purpose of framing questions in constructing an initial draft of the survey. A full draft of the survey was provided to the LGC Advisory Board several days prior to its scheduled meeting on January 17, 2017 at the LGC to discuss the questions and agree on edits. Input was also solicited by email at the same time from all deans of accredited public and private colleges and universities statewide with graduate degree programs for teachers and administrative leadership. Suggestions provided by education deans at Clemson, Lander, USC, Winthrop, Converse, and The Citadel were integrated. At the January 26th meeting of LGC program directors, the survey was discussed and also shared with any program directors interested in seeing the draft for purposes of providing input to its design.

When the revised draft had been finalized with all input, Survey Monkey® was selected for online dissemination and software tabulation. Both Muller and Nisbet separately pre-tested the instrument to insure intended functionality. On February 20, 2017, the link was provided to all members of the LGC’s K4-12 Advisory Board, to in turn send it to their teachers by email communication. Respondents were given the opportunity to submit their names and contact telephone number for a random drawing for the giveaway of an iPad mini. This spreadsheet of names was not linked to survey responses to assure anonymity to survey participants. Questions collecting demographic data about respondents did not require a response to complete other questions in the survey. There was a total of 27 questions, including eight requesting demographic data. While it was estimated in advance as the survey questions were being formulated that the average respondent would spend 10-12 minutes completing the survey, the actual time spent by respondents was not tabulated individually or in the aggregate. Completed surveys diminished in number in late March, and the survey was closed March 31, 2017, with a total of 876 responses.
Results

Sample Population

It is estimated that in the five counties represented by advisory board members, there are 9,384 teachers working in public schools, based on the respective websites of the public school districts across the five counties, and an additional 925 teachers in private schools represented by advisory board members, indicating a total target population of 10,309. Having received 876 total respondents, the demographics of the sample can be inferred on the total population at the industry standard 95% confidence with a margin of error of +/-3.2%.

The survey ended at Q9 for those not considering any graduate level course of study. Those only interested in non-degree coursework such as to maintain their license, unsure, or having no plans were taken to the end of the survey with Q10, resulting in 392 who completed the balance of the survey questions. These 392 respondents expressed intent to pursue a doctoral or master’s degree or at least a graduate certificate in education. For this smaller sample of 392 at a 95% confidence level, the margin of error range widened slightly to +/-4.9%, still within the industry standard of 5.0% considered acceptable.

The profile of total respondents is best described as the following and considered by the LGC’s K4-12 Advisory Board to reasonably represent the demographics of the total target population, with the exception of a disproportionately high representation of teachers residing in Dorchester County who completed the survey:

Residence:
- 74.6% live in the tri-county area (Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester counties)
- 92.8% live in the five-county area comprised of Beaufort, Berkeley, Charleston, Colleton, and Dorchester counties)
- 39.4% live in Dorchester County alone, more than any of the other counties represented

Gender: 87.5% female

Racial/Ethnicity: 82.8% identify as primarily Caucasian/Middle Eastern/ European ancestry

Weighted Average Age: 43 years old

Marital Status: 74.1% are married or live with a partner, with 79.5% of those residing in Dorchester County married compared to only 69.4% of those living elsewhere

Children: 51.7% have children 18 years or younger living at home

Education: 60.5% already have a master’s degree (and an additional 1.6% also have a doctorate)

County of Employment: 71.4% work in the tri-county area

Area of Employment in Education:
- Highest representation is the category of elementary school teachers (33.9%)
• All functional areas and specialties were represented, including administration and management

*Graduate Education Intent and Career Goals*

Nearly half, or 45.6%, of all respondents indicate they are considering a graduate level course of study – degree or non-degree – in education within the next five years. An additional 19.8% said they are not sure. Only one-third (34.6%) said they are not considering such study.

• Teachers in Berkeley County are significantly more likely to respond Yes than No to this question. African American teachers are more likely to respond Yes than No, whereas Caucasian teachers are more likely to say No. Because as a group, teachers residing in Dorchester County are slightly more highly educated than all others, with 66.4% versus 59.5% having a master’s and/or doctorate degree, they also are more likely to respond No to this question, as they did with a response rate of 38.2% versus 32.5% by those living elsewhere.

• Teachers 50 and over are more likely to say No. In fact, the vast majority of teachers who are not interested in pursuing further graduate studies are not only more likely to be older (e.g., 64.0% are ages 45 and older compared to just 29.3% of those who responded affirmatively to Q9), they are also more likely to already have a master’s degree (74.7%).

• Of those responding either affirmatively or not sure, one-fourth (24.4%) indicate the goal of pursuing a PhD or other doctoral degree as their next educational pursuit. An additional 44.3% indicate they are most interested in pursuing a master’s degree or graduate certificate in the stated time horizon.

Although one-third (31.6%) of survey respondents cite the opportunity to earn more money as their chief motivating factor for such an educational goal, others express the desire to move into a more senior rank (17.1%) or the desire to move into higher education (15.8%) and still others attributed their goal to a more intrinsic motivator, such as a long held or childhood dream (12.8%) or even to undertake research in education (8.9%). When forced to rank such factors, the motivation of “earning more money” (ranked 1st or 2nd by 57.7%) outdistanced “job advancement” (ranked 1st or 2nd by 44.6%) or “intrinsic factors or self-esteem” (ranked 1st or 2nd by 45.9%).

• Nearly one-third (30.6%) ranked as 1st or 2nd place the “desire to change fields.”

• When analyzing the cross tabulations of responses for this question, the youngest of teachers surveyed (ages 21-26) are significantly more likely to cite the motivation of earning more money than the goal of moving out of the classroom into a senior rank in administration, whereas once teachers were slightly older (ages 33-38), the opposite is true.

• Only for early childhood and elementary teachers does a statistical difference surface in terms of these separate motivating factors, in that 19.4% of early childhood teachers and 37.9% of elementary teachers cite the prospects of earning more money, compared to only 3.0% and 22.4%, respectively, who cite the goal of moving into administration.

• Those motivated by an increase in earnings are significantly more likely to be self-reliant in their strategies for paying for further education, with 21.8% citing plans to borrow
from FASFA and then ask for loan forgiveness as their strategy for funding costs compared to just 13.8% of those with other motivations. They are also more likely to first pay off existing loans, a strategy of 17.7% motivated by higher earnings, compared to just 11.6% among those with other motivating factors.

- On the other hand, those chiefly motivated by a move into a senior rank in administration are more likely to depend on the school or school district to cover at least half of the tuition. Those concerned about carving out the time for class and studies, while balancing other responsibilities, are significantly more likely to be those also chiefly motivated by a move into administration than by the prospects of simply earning more money.
- Only 19.4% of those motivated by higher earnings have the career goal of moving into higher education, unlike 24.2% of those motivated by other factors.

When asked institutional brand preference for their desired graduate certificate or degree – regardless of whether the program is currently offered – the College of Charleston emerges the favorite, by 22.4% of all respondents. However, within the margin of error of +/- 4.9%, the University of South Carolina, at 19.9%, could be considered equally preferred.

- One of the three institutions in the tri-county area currently offering one or more graduate certificates and degrees in education is preferred by just under half of all respondents in the aggregate (47.4%).
- Those motivated by the opportunity to earn more money show a stronger preference (17.7%) for Charleston Southern University (CSU) compared to a lower preference (12.7%) for CSU by those citing other motivating factors.
- Those respondents residing in Dorchester County also express a strong preference for CSU (22.4%), compared to a significantly lower preference (9.4%) among those living elsewhere. This preference may be explained in part by the fact that teachers with Dorchester County residences are not commuters since 88.3% of those living in Dorchester also work there, whereas only 25.0% of those living elsewhere commute into Dorchester to work in K4-12 education.
- This preference for CSU by teachers living in Dorchester County is expressed at the expense of College of Charleston in that only 15.4% prefer the College of Charleston versus 26.8% of those living elsewhere. No significant difference based on county of residence was seen impacting The Citadel, the other downtown college offering graduate education programs, as 11.9% of teachers living in Dorchester County prefer The Citadel compared to 9.8% of those residing in other counties.

The direction of movement reflected by educational goals of respondents is worth noting. Those areas with the greatest negative shifts, in descending order, are seen among middle school teachers, elementary teachers, and early childhood teachers, respectively. In other words, teachers in these fields are disproportionately less likely to be interested in a graduate degree in the field in which they currently work. For example, while 23.9% of all survey participants currently teach in middle school, a graduate degree in middle school education is desired by only 14.5% of respondents indicating intent to pursue graduate studies in education in the near term. Similarly, while 33.9% of all survey participants currently teach in elementary grades, only
23.5% indicate a goal of graduate studies in the same field. A similar pattern is true for early childhood teachers. Two subgroups emerge from cross tabulations, however, where this did not entirely hold true:

- Among those motivated to earn more money, 19.4% are interested in studying Early Childhood Education, compared to just 10.8% of those citing other motivating factors.
- Among those living in Dorchester County, 45.5% express plans to pursue graduate studies in Early Childhood Education or Elementary Education, compared to just 31.3% of those residing elsewhere. A slightly higher proportion of teachers living in Dorchester County do work currently in these fields, at 55.4% compared to 50.3% of those living elsewhere, thus influencing the absolute percentages interested in graduate studies.

Only 6.6% of all survey respondents are currently teaching in Gifted & Talented, but 13.3% of those planning to pursue graduate studies wish to do so in this field. Similarly, only 2.2% of all respondents are currently teaching in Computer Science/Information Technology, yet 7.4% of those planning to pursue graduate studies intend to do so in this field. The largest positive movement emerges in the specialty field of Literacy Education, with one-fifth (19.6%) of those intending graduate studies revealing Literacy as an area of focus, although only 4.1% of all respondents currently work in this specialty.

Special Education and Science & Math areas of focus in future graduate studies do not witness the positive shifts seen in Gifted & Talented and Computer Science/Information Technology fields. Therefore, if schools and districts currently have shortages in Special Education and/or Natural Science & Math, the survey results would suggest that additional incentives may be needed to encourage current teachers (and others) without these specialties to pursue graduate studies.

One in ten, or 11.2%, aspire to become a school principal or superintendent, while an additional 22.7% express goals of moving into higher education as a rationale for graduate education.

Factors Impacting Decision and Choices

Affordability (52.3%) and securing the funds to allow graduate studies (51.8%) are the biggest hurdles (i.e., rated 4 or 5 on a 5-point Likert scale) for prospective graduate students working full time. Still, despite the pressure felt by respondents regarding funding requirements, one-third (31.4%) have no plan whatsoever as to how to pay for graduate education even though they aspire to enter a program within the next five years.

Carving out the time for class and studies, while balancing work, home, and community responsibilities is the next largest obstacle, rated 4 or 5 by 43.9% of all respondents. Noteworthy is the fact that time is the single biggest obstacle for the highest percentage of respondents, as 28.1% rated it a 5.

The preferred (52.6%) format of instruction expressed by respondents is hybrid, while nearly one-third (30.9%) prefer self-paced online instruction. Only one in six, or 16.6%, prefer traditional, face-to-face, in class instruction and discussion.

Additional findings from cross tabulation analysis of responses to this question include:
Those survey respondents living in Dorchester County have an even stronger preference for hybrid instructional formats, at 58.7% compared to 49.2% of those living elsewhere.

Only 12.6% of Dorchester County residents prefer F2F in class instruction, compared to 19.1% of those teachers living elsewhere.

Teachers residing in Charleston County are significantly more likely to prefer in class F2F instruction (36.9%) over asynchronous self-paced (16.0%), perhaps because of the ease of accessing such traditional class formats in the City of Charleston, whereas the opposite is true for teachers living in more distant, rural counties such as Colleton, where teachers are significantly more likely to prefer online self-paced instruction (21.0%) compared to traditional F2F (7.7%).

Differences among demographic strata also surface, in that those preferring F2F are disproportionately likely to be African-American (23.1%), whereas those preferring asynchronous, self-paced studies are disproportionately Caucasian (89.2%). Those preferring F2F are also more likely to be older teachers, 39 years or older, perhaps they had less experience as undergraduates with such instructional formats.

There is some variation among responses to other survey questions on this topic of instructional format, as a slightly different question (Q21) regarding preference for schedule of classes reveals as many as one-fourth (25.5%) claim that online is their only option. This suggests that online can represent different things to different individuals and has elasticity in how it is defined.

Cross tabulation analysis reveals that teachers living in more remote areas, such as Colleton, are more likely to prefer weekly Saturday classes to weekday evening classes. This is also true for teachers who are Hispanic/Latino. Those interested in pursuing further study in foreign languages or computer science are also disproportionately likely to prefer Saturday classes. Those targeting upper management administration as career goals, on the other hand, are significantly more likely to prefer an “executive” monthly format over Saturday or weekday evening classes. Based on the data, these are also more likely to be older teachers who have more complicated weekday responsibilities, as responses to Q15 earlier indicated.

Nearly two-thirds (61.7%) are willing to drive only 30 minutes or less in each direction for any program with a face-to-face instructional format. Only 11.6% of teachers residing in Dorchester County who completed the survey express a preference for a Downtown Charleston or North Charleston location, compared to 26.2% of respondents living elsewhere.

A related question that may influence one’s preference for a program regards interaction with peer students – whether in an online forum, in a classroom, or by videoconference connection - as 43.4% indicate that being part of a cohort is considered “very” or “extremely” important. Those motivated by the opportunity to earn more money and expressing greater self-reliance than others in finding the means to fund graduate studies find it less important to be part of a cohort, expressed by only 38.7% compared to 45.5% of those motivated by other factors.

Results reveal a six-fold preference (65.3% versus 11.7%) expressed by respondents for a “field practitioner” as a course instructor, with a depth of work experience relevant to the graduate program being taught, over a “career academician” offering extensive published research in the subject.
K4-12 teachers are highly dependent on colleagues for advice on careers in education and related graduate education, according to the survey. To a question allowing a limited number of multiple responses, half (50.8%) report they would seek out word-of-mouth advice and suggestions from peers. Teachers chiefly motivated by the opportunity to earn more money are even more reliant (57.3%) on word-of-mouth advice than those motivated by other factors (47.8%). They are also more likely (12.1%) to tap into social media than those motivated by other factors (5.2%). In the case of online searches, it is searches of specific sites of institutions with reputations for graduate education in their targeted field (51.8%), referred to by digital analytics as “direct traffic,” rather than keyword searches on the internet by use of a search engine (19.6%), referred to as “organic searches.”

Teachers motivated by the prospects of higher earnings are significantly more likely (49.2%) to follow up on school, district, or department of education resources and recommendations than those motivated by other factors (35.8%). Overall, 40.1% of respondents cite reliance on district or school administration for graduate program recommendations.

However, more than half (54.1%) indicate that their administration offers little or no information, guidance, or encouragement with respect to career plans or professional development. Only 7.7% of all respondents indicate that at least some tuition is covered by their employer. Nearly half (49.2%) do not know whether their employer provides any tuition assistance for graduate education. Nearly one third (31.4%) admit they have no plan for how to fund their graduate education.

Some teachers may be estimating the demands of graduate education based on their undergraduate experiences, as 42.9% expect to spend fewer than five hours each week, including class time, on each graduate course they undertake. This highlights the possible need for framing expectations in providing guidance to teachers considering graduate studies.

**Discussion and Concluding Remarks**

As with any survey, there is always the risk of survey error, in that those who elected not to participate may differ in their opinions and interests from those who self-select to respond. Such a survey should be replicated and repeated periodically throughout the state, in combination with qualitative research, for a complete and accurate picture of the challenges faced by schools and thus the state’s K4-12 educators.

Despite possible impediments to graduate education expressed by respondents, it is remarkable that nearly half (45.6%) of all teachers in K4-12 public and private education have plans to engage in graduate level study in education – whether for a degree or non-degree – in the coming five years, according to survey results.

Given the challenges teachers recognize in terms of affordability, funding, and scheduling time commitments, the state and its institutions of higher education – public and private – need to step up their response in terms of funding tuition subsidies and providing greater flexibility in instruction for improved access. For the private schools, this suggests a realm for fund development appeals among their loyal donor base, as well as grant requests of private foundations. The institutions of higher education might more aggressively package and promote
information about financial aid options for prospective graduate students and include a representative from the financial aid office of the institution in meetings by deans and program directors with districts and schools or in live webinars. This includes creating internal website links from graduate program pages to a landing page for financial aid information from the institution for website visitors. Especially for those teachers planning on relying heavily on FAFSA loans, an institution could develop a series of messages aimed at dispelling common misconceptions, breaking down steps of applying and offering hyperlinks to relevant resources to save prospective students time and frustration to help lower this impediment to applying and enrolling.

In light of the strong desire among today’s teachers to pursue graduate education, steps by institutions of higher education should be considered to facilitate accessibility, paying particular attention to the majority of prospective applicants who seek a hybrid instructional format. Clarity in marketing by higher education institutions on its description of “hybrid” is important. It also means that institutions can differentiate themselves from each other even by how their hybrid offerings, for example, are structured and described. A related point of differentiation can lie in how cohort-based programs are promoted, as some leaders in higher education note that graduate students do not often recognize the value of being part of a cohort until they are immersed in a program. This being the case, those programs that are cohort-based should emphasize in marketing content – through student testimonial videos – the value of the experience.

The strong interest in practical, demonstrated, and relevant knowledge is obvious from survey results, even among seasoned teachers aspiring to graduate studies. This is considered a national trend acknowledged by educators on the Advisory Board who reviewed the survey results. This has hiring implications for higher education but also content for its marketers, as the applied experience of college and university professors - and especially adjuncts - could be emphasized in messaging to prospective graduate students being courted.

Responses to the question about the means by which teachers search for details about graduate programs in education suggest the benefit of video testimonials in geo-targeted online ads to teachers in this state’s region. Re-targeting Facebook ads to individuals who have visited an institution’s website could be another tactic. Specific social media tools such as Pinterest should be considered because of its disproportionally high percentage of female users similar to the gender mix of survey respondents. In terms of absolute number of users and degree of engagement, Facebook ads should be utilized. Teachers are online shoppers especially during summer months, suggesting that concentrated, seasonal spending on Facebook and Pinterest advertisements could prove especially cost effective in lieu of year-round spending. Additionally, sponsoring the cost of teacher workdays in exchange for the privilege of distributing digital literature and other promotional materials about a university’s graduate education programs that might be forwarded to teachers by administration is another tactic to consider. Even having simply the opportunity to be an event sponsor in such settings for exposing the brand of an institution’s school of education could help reinforce top-of-mind awareness that it is known for its graduate education programs for teachers and administrators and thus a website to be searched for detailed information.
Research such as this teacher survey can provide justification for targeted efforts to retain classroom teachers or encourage teachers into fields where personnel gaps are expected to widen. For example, the K4-12 Advisory Board suggests there may be specific factors dissuading current and even future teachers from specializing in Special Education, including verbally abusive and demanding parents, poor working conditions, limited resources, oppressive paperwork and reporting demands, and a high burnout rate. School administrators need to examine how they can verify the seriousness of such factors to mitigate them, such as by lightening reporting workload, adding assistance and technology resources, and engaging the broader community of parents and citizens to be more supportive and respectful.

Of those pursuing graduate studies, 11.2% express career goals of becoming a school principal or superintendent. What anticipated openings in upper management are expected to occur? Are these goals realistic or will these employees be lost to other regions or even other states as they search for such positions upon graduation? These are questions for school administrators to address.

Over one-fifth, or 22.7%, of survey respondents express career goals of leaving K4 – 12 for higher education. New job prospects in higher education may be problematic in the coming decade, given the demographic decline nationwide in the pool of 18-22 year olds pursuing education degrees and the drain of public funding from higher education. To upper management in these districts and schools, the fact that more than one in five survey respondents want to leave K4-12 teaching or administration altogether should sound alarming, especially in light of concerns with recruiting and retention. Certainly, those eager to move into higher education should be counseled realistically, to consider riding the wave of growth in such new areas as distance education, older adult learners, digital resources and teaching technologies, and value-based outcomes research and assessment. This should be explored further through follow-up research and 1:1 discussions such as in the annual teacher performance review process so that goals are data driven, realistic, and achievable, especially since over half (54.1%) of all respondents reveal the belief that school administration offers little or no guidance or encouragement in career planning.

Since nearly one third (31.4%) admit they have no plan for how to fund their graduate education, there is risk that many teachers who have goals of enrolling in a graduate program within the next five years will be disappointed when the goalpost has to be moved further out. This too could negatively impact retention if not addressed.

Such possible lack of preparedness by teachers surfaces again in responses to Q27, as 42.9% expect to spend less than five hours each week, including class time, on each graduate course they undertake. This highlights another need for framing expectations and providing guidance. (The typical rule of thumb is that 6-8 hours per 3-credit hour graduate course should be spent weekly on reading, research, and assignments, excluding in class/online discussion board time.) A large disconnect between such expectations and reality once enrolled could lead to a high dropout rate, discouragement, and even abandonment of the profession.

During the winter of 2017, U.S. News & World Report’s inaugural ranking of “Best States,” published in January 2017, received national, state, and local publicity, as South Carolina ranked
The state’s educational ranking in the report was based on 11 metrics, including college and high school graduation rates and standardized test scores. In preK – 12 education, SC ranks 48th for such measures as meeting the “college readiness” benchmarks on the English ACT subject exam. The state’s score also suffers due to low reading and math scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) exams, high tuition and fees at public colleges, low pre-school enrollment figures, and low two-year college graduation rates. In higher education, the state is ranked 44th in the nation. In the aggregate, SC is placed 50th among all other states in education as a single category. Although there may be different means of drawing comparisons among the states, such negative publicity is not helpful to the challenge of teacher retention in South Carolina.

In more recent months, $9.2 billion, or 13.5%, has been cut from the proposed budget of the U.S. Department of Education by the current Administration’s “skinny budget,” $2.35 billion of which had been earmarked for teacher training, including mentoring and induction. Since the large majority of such costs at the state’s department of education are currently funded by federal grants, this proposed cut could, if not replaced with other sources of funding, translate into a decimation of near-term opportunities for teachers in SC for salary gains, career advancement, and professional enrichment from graduate education. Some might argue there are advantages of decoupling teacher training from federal funding, but new revenue sources would need to be found.

Nationally, most teachers who have a master's degree will see about a $7,000 increase yearly, with a doctorate degree earning another increase of that amount or more, although this salary structure and dollar amount vary from state to state. (South Carolina still provides an increase to its public school teachers for a graduate degree, although North Carolina has recently eliminated such an automatic bump in earnings, for example.) There are other steps that may be taken to improve retention, such as mentoring young teachers in their early years or reducing paperwork. However, to retain teachers already in the field, there is no substitute for furthering their education with graduate studies, improving their earnings potential, augmenting their skill sets, and enabling their realizations of personal and career goals.

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References


Q1 In which South Carolina county do you currently live?

Answered: 872  Skipped: 4

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<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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<tr>
<td>Charleston</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jasper</td>
<td>0.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampton</td>
<td>0.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>6.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>872</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q2 What is your gender?

Answered: 870  Skipped: 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>12.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>87.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q3 With which ethnicity do you most closely identify? (choose only one)

Answered: 870   Skipped: 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian, Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian, or Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0.34% 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian/Middle Eastern/European</td>
<td>82.76% 720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>1.72% 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>11.95% 104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1.49% 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.72% 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>870</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q4 What is your current age?

Answered: 871  Skipped: 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21-26</td>
<td>8.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-32</td>
<td>12.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33-38</td>
<td>17.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39-44</td>
<td>15.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-50</td>
<td>14.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 50 years</td>
<td>30.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Q5** What is your marital and household status?

Answered: 864  Skipped: 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married or with a live-in partner, no children living at home</td>
<td>29.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married or with a live-in partner, with one or more children living at home</td>
<td>44.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced, Single, or Widowed, no children living at home</td>
<td>18.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced, Single, or Widowed, with one or more children living at home</td>
<td>7.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q6 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Answered: 868  Skipped: 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's Degree</td>
<td>18.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some graduate courses and/or certifications</td>
<td>17.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Certificate (no degree but academic credits towards a degree)</td>
<td>1.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's Degree</td>
<td>60.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate Degree</td>
<td>1.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q7 In what area of education are you currently working? (check all that apply)

Answered: 876   Skipped: 0
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early childhood</td>
<td>18.49% 162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>33.90% 297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle level</td>
<td>23.86% 209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>23.97% 210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music and the Arts (Applied or Performing)</td>
<td>5.59% 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical education/sports training</td>
<td>2.63% 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign language</td>
<td>3.42% 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special education</td>
<td>13.13% 115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifted and talented</td>
<td>6.62% 58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>4.11% 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Sciences or Math</td>
<td>6.16% 54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Science/Information Technology</td>
<td>2.17% 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Arts/Journalism</td>
<td>4.34% 38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration (curriculum development, professional recruiting and development, counseling, assessment, etc.)</td>
<td>6.74% 59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management (e.g., school principal or superintendent)</td>
<td>0.91% 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education (teaching and/or administration)</td>
<td>0.80% 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>6.85% 60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Respondents: 876**
Q8 In which South Carolina county do you currently work?

Answered: 876  Skipped: 0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charleston</td>
<td>12.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berkeley</td>
<td>8.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorchester</td>
<td>49.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleton</td>
<td>20.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaufort</td>
<td>1.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jasper</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampton</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orangeburg</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>5.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q9 Are you considering a graduate level of course study - degree or non-degree - in education - in the next five years?

Answered: 876   Skipped: 0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>45.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>34.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>19.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q10 In which level of graduate program are you most interested in pursuing at this time? (choose only one)

Answered: 569   Skipped: 307

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PhD or other doctoral degree (e.g., EdD)</td>
<td>24.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's degree</td>
<td>37.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate certificate</td>
<td>6.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-degree coursework for a special skill set or certification (other than teaching license renewal)</td>
<td>12.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know/Uncertain</td>
<td>12.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have no plans for additional coursework beyond what is minimally required for re-certification</td>
<td>6.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>569</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q11 Which one of the following best describes your chief motivating factor in pursuing further education? (choose only one)

Answered: 392  Skipped: 484

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A childhood or longtime dream</td>
<td>12.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To move into higher education and teach at the college/university level</td>
<td>15.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To move into a senior rank in administration at the school or district or state level</td>
<td>17.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To do research in education</td>
<td>8.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To earn more money</td>
<td>31.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>13.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>392</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q12 From which institution listed below would you most prefer to receive your graduate degree or certificate, regardless of whether your program of interest is currently available from that institution? (Select only one)

Answered: 392  Skipped: 484
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anderson University</td>
<td>0.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charleston Southern University</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clemson University</td>
<td>8.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coastal Carolina University</td>
<td>1.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coker College</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Charleston</td>
<td>22.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francis Marion University</td>
<td>1.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furman University</td>
<td>1.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lander University</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Greenville University</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina State University</td>
<td>4.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Citadel</td>
<td>10.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of South Carolina</td>
<td>19.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winthrop University</td>
<td>1.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>14.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q13 In terms of your career track and goals, which of the following area(s) do you most want to pursue? (check all that apply)

Answered: 392  Skipped: 484
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Middle level</td>
<td>14.54%</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>20.66%</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music and the Arts (Applied or Performing)</td>
<td>5.10%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical education/sports training</td>
<td>3.32%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign language</td>
<td>4.34%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special education</td>
<td>13.52%</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifted and talented</td>
<td>13.27%</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>19.64%</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Sciences or Math</td>
<td>6.63%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Science/Information Technology</td>
<td>7.40%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Arts/Journalism</td>
<td>4.08%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration (curriculum development, professional recruiting and development, counseling, assessment, etc.)</td>
<td>36.22%</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management (e.g., school principal or superintendent)</td>
<td>11.22%</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education (teaching and/or administration)</td>
<td>22.70%</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>8.93%</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Respondents: 392**
Q14 On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the most important, rank the following reasons for pursuing an advanced degree or other graduate level of study.

Answered: 392  Skipped: 484

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job advancement</td>
<td>20.92%</td>
<td>23.72%</td>
<td>30.36%</td>
<td>17.60%</td>
<td>7.40%</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career change (field or function) e.g., elementary to literacy, secondary to management, etc.</td>
<td>11.73%</td>
<td>18.88%</td>
<td>19.64%</td>
<td>32.40%</td>
<td>17.35%</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher earnings capability</td>
<td>28.32%</td>
<td>29.34%</td>
<td>19.90%</td>
<td>16.07%</td>
<td>6.38%</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>3.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic motivation or enriched self-esteem</td>
<td>27.04%</td>
<td>18.88%</td>
<td>21.17%</td>
<td>20.15%</td>
<td>12.76%</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>3.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change geographic location of work or to have greater opportunity to change locations</td>
<td>11.99%</td>
<td>9.18%</td>
<td>8.93%</td>
<td>13.78%</td>
<td>56.12%</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>2.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q15 Below is a list of items that may have an influence on the timing of when a person decides to pursue graduate studies. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing "not at all an obstacle" and 5 representing "an extremely big hurdle," please rate each item for you personally in terms of its influence on the timing of your decision to pursue graduate studies:

Answered: 392  Skipped: 484

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carving out the time for class and studies, while balancing work,</td>
<td>19.64%</td>
<td>13.27%</td>
<td>23.21%</td>
<td>15.82%</td>
<td>28.06%</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>2.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>home, and community responsibilities</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>110</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding the right program that fits my interests, requirements,</td>
<td>34.44%</td>
<td>22.19%</td>
<td>19.64%</td>
<td>13.01%</td>
<td>10.71%</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>3.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and career goals</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Securing the funds to allow graduate studies, from savings, loans,</td>
<td>11.48%</td>
<td>16.84%</td>
<td>19.90%</td>
<td>26.79%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subsidies from the school or school district, scholarship/fellowships,</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>98</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or lifestyle changes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding the right location and schedule for classes that meets my</td>
<td>18.88%</td>
<td>31.38%</td>
<td>21.43%</td>
<td>18.62%</td>
<td>9.69%</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>3.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>priorities and needs</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordability (i.e., total out of pocket costs), with a &quot;payback&quot;</td>
<td>15.56%</td>
<td>16.33%</td>
<td>15.82%</td>
<td>25.77%</td>
<td>26.53%</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>2.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from expected higher earnings in a foreseeable time horizon</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>104</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q16 Which of the following do you envision to be your most likely strategy to overcome the hurdle of securing funds to allow graduate studies? (check only one)

Answered: 392  Skipped: 484

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choice</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Borrow as much as I can in personal loans from relatives, the government, and/or private bank</td>
<td>5.10% 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhaust whatever savings I have set aside and then borrow the balance</td>
<td>3.83% 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depend on my school or school district to cover half or more of my tuition and borrow the balance needed</td>
<td>8.42% 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek a scholarship/fellowship or other assistantship at the institution I plan to attend</td>
<td>11.99% 47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take a part-time job in addition to continuing to work full-time, while pursuing graduate studies, in order to avoid borrowing funds</td>
<td>3.06% 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First finish paying off all of my other loans before taking out new ones for my education</td>
<td>13.52% 53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relocate to less expensive housing and/or sell assets for funds to use</td>
<td>0.26% 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borrow 100% from FASFA and apply for loan forgiveness with a 5+ year commitment to teach in a required field/school location</td>
<td>16.33% 64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know/no plan yet</td>
<td>31.38% 123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>6.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q17 Following is a list of potential resources people sometimes use to find, research, and explore program options. Please indicate the top 3 resources you have used recently or are most likely to use to explore program options to find the best fit for your requirements and preferences.

Answered: 392  Skipped: 484
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of Information Discovery</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radio, TV, or outdoor advertising</td>
<td>3.06%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key word search online that takes me to tagged web sites of institutions anywhere</td>
<td>19.64%</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word of mouth recommendations of friends and colleagues at work</td>
<td>50.77%</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending career fairs</td>
<td>7.91%</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading flyers and checking out email messages received internally from my employer</td>
<td>18.62%</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other online community</td>
<td>7.40%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading and following blogs found through social media or on particular web sites</td>
<td>5.61%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading or watching testimonials of recent graduates from particular institutions, found online or in print articles</td>
<td>4.59%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navigating the web sites of specific institutions known to offer graduate education for teachers and administrators</td>
<td>51.79%</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following up on school, district, or department of education resources and recommendations</td>
<td>40.05%</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First looking at every institution/location in Metro Charleston, then within South Carolina, then nationwide (if online instruction is considered an option)</td>
<td>27.81%</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiring on the web site of the SC Commission on Higher Education or higher education accreditation body</td>
<td>16.33%</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directly contacting the institutions with the strongest reputation in education to speak with someone in Admissions</td>
<td>22.70%</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researching and finding professors with experience, recognized expertise, and publish research in my chosen field of study</td>
<td>9.95%</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Respondents:** 392
**Q18 What is your preferred type of course delivery? (choose only one)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional, 100% in classroom, face-to-face instruction, in the presence of other students</td>
<td>16.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent face-to-face instruction plus face-to-face discussion with fellow students, possibly including live videoconference with a second, remote classroom of students, with some content delivered online (i.e., hybrid, primarily face-to-face)</td>
<td>24.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asynchronous (one-way) access to archived lectures and power point slides upon demand, some but infrequent face-to-face instruction, with online forums with other students when not together in the classroom (i.e., hybrid, primarily online)</td>
<td>28.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asynchronous (no live face-to-face) online instruction, with all content accessible on demand - progress at my own pace - and without interaction with any other students</td>
<td>30.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>392</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q19 Even if some course content is delivered online, what is your preference for facility physical location? (choose only one)

Answered: 392  Skipped: 484

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Charleston - The Citadel or the College of Charleston main campus</td>
<td>7.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Charleston - Lowcountry Graduate Center - or other location on the I-526 corridor</td>
<td>14.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goose Creek/Highway 52 area east of I-26 (Berkeley County)</td>
<td>7.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summerville/Highway 78 area west of I-26 (Dorchester County)</td>
<td>33.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Pleasant/Highway 17 North towards Georgetown</td>
<td>3.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any of the above except Downtown Charleston</td>
<td>5.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No preference</td>
<td>15.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not relevant. Mu only option is strictly 100% online delivery</td>
<td>11.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>392</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q20 How long would you be willing to drive one way to access a facility for a face-to-face class in your chosen program? Choose only one response.

Answered: 392  Skipped: 484

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No more than 20 minutes</td>
<td>17.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No more than 30 minutes</td>
<td>44.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No more than one hour</td>
<td>21.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No more than 90 minutes</td>
<td>3.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No absolute limit on driving time/distance</td>
<td>2.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not relevant. My only option is strictly online delivery.</td>
<td>10.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>392</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q21 Even if some course content is delivered online, please indicate the following class time or class schedule that is most convenient or preferred by you.

Answered: 392   Skipped: 484

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekday evenings</td>
<td>42.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturdays every week</td>
<td>15.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive format (i.e., all day, weekend session once a month, such as all day Friday and Saturday)</td>
<td>16.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending class is not...</td>
<td>25.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q22 How important is it for you to be part of a cohort while pursuing graduate studies? (Please consider a cohort to be a group of students working through the same academic program at the same time.)

Answered: 392  Skipped: 484

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all important</td>
<td>15.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of minor importance</td>
<td>25.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither important nor unimportant</td>
<td>15.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat important</td>
<td>34.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely important</td>
<td>8.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q23 Which of the following best describes your preference for an instructor in graduate studies? (choose only one).

Answered: 392   Skipped: 484

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career academician (terminal degree in the field in which the instructor is teaching, with evidence of extensive published research)</td>
<td>11.73% 46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practitioner in the field, with a depth of work experience relevant to the graduate program</td>
<td>65.31% 256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entirely indifferent, without a preference</td>
<td>22.96% 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>392</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q24 How much guidance, information, and encouragement does your current employer - including your supervisor - give you regarding your professional development and career path? (choose only one)

Answered: 392  Skipped: 484

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None at all - I am entirely on my own to explore and plan for myself</td>
<td>26.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some information - but it is without any guidance or suggestions</td>
<td>27.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some guidance, with information, from national and state sources, but it is only posted and rarely discussed</td>
<td>20.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some information about trends and opportunities and where special funding sources may exists, with some guidance discussed during the annual performance review</td>
<td>14.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plentiful and encouraging information with guidance and suggestions that are relevant to me personally, with career mentoring by one or more individuals</td>
<td>10.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>392</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q25 Does your current employer provide tuition subsidies for graduate level study from an accredited institution?

Answered: 392  Skipped: 484

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, 100% of tuition</td>
<td>0.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, at least 50% of tuition but less</td>
<td>4.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>than 100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, but less than 50% of tuition</td>
<td>2.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>43.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>49.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q26 How much time has passed since you completed your bachelor's degree?

Answered: 392  Skipped: 484

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 years or less</td>
<td>6.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 2 years but less than 5 years</td>
<td>13.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 10 years</td>
<td>22.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 years</td>
<td>57.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>392</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q27 In the program you are considering, how much time each week, including homework assignments and class time, do you expect to devote to to each graduate level course you take? (Select only one)

Answered: 392  Skipped: 484

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 3 hours per week</td>
<td>7.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 3 hours but less than 5 hours per week</td>
<td>35.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 5 hours but less than 7 hours per week</td>
<td>27.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 7 hours but less than 9 hours per week</td>
<td>17.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know/have not given this any thought</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total                                               | 392
Q28 Thank you for participating in the survey. If you would like to participate in the drawing for an iPad Mini, please enter your name and phone number below. This information will only be used for the drawing and not associated with your previous responses.

Answered: 314   Skipped: 562

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Name</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last Name</td>
<td>99.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone number</td>
<td>99.36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q29 Would you be willing to participate in an hour-long focus group in North Charleston to discuss results of this survey, if compensated for your time and mileage expense?

Answered: 392   Skipped: 484

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>21.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>49.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q30 If you answered "Yes" or "Maybe" to the previous question, please enter contact information for us in organizing a focus group.

Answered: 194  Skipped: 682

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Name</td>
<td>98.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last Name</td>
<td>98.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone Number</td>
<td>99.48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>