

# **SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER TURNOVER: WHAT WE KNOW, WHAT WE CAN DO**

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# ORGANIZING TOPICS

1. Conceptual model of retention
2. Contributors to turnover/retention
3. Needs for additional research
4. Increasing the attractiveness of special education teaching
5. Possible roles for teacher educators in retention

# **1. CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF TURNOVER**

# ECONOMIC LABOR MARKET THEORY OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND\*

- Individuals will remain if most attractive activity available.
  - Overall compensation
- Adjust the attractiveness of the job
- Elements of attractiveness become the policy levers to increase retention

\*Applied to teacher supply, demand and retention by Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006

## 2. CONTRIBUTORS TO TURNOVER

- Teacher characteristics
- Teacher preparation
- District/school characteristics
- Teacher reasons
- Work conditions

# RESEARCH REVIEWS OF TEACHER TURNOVER

	<b>Billingsley (2004), JSE</b>	<b>Guarino, Santibanez, &amp; Daley (2006), RER</b>
<b>Teacher type</b>	special educators	general educators
<b>Definition of attrition</b>	exit from teaching, movers, switchers, <i>and intent</i>	exit from teaching, movers (although not defined, do include some intent studies)
<b>Time period</b>	1992-2002	1990-2004
<b>Number of studies</b>	20	46

# TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS AND TURNOVER

Billingsley, 2004; Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006

Notations on strength of relationship based on my interpretation of the two literature reviews.

For specific studies discussed during presentation, please see the reviews.

	<b>Special education</b>	<b>General education</b>
<b>Younger</b>	<b>***</b>	<b>***</b>
<b>White</b>	<b>?</b>	<b>***</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>?</b>	<b>***</b>
<b>High academic ability</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>**</b>

# ANNUAL EXIT ATTRITION

Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2006a

Teacher  
Preparation

Extensive

8.6%

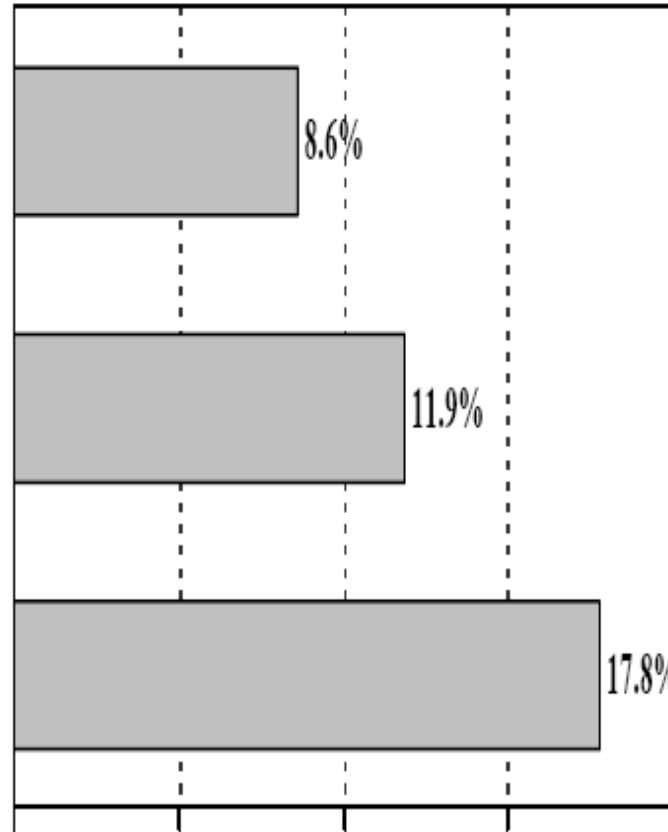
Some

11.9%

Little / No

17.8%

0% 5% 10% 15% 20%





# REASONS FOR TURNOVER

Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2006b

	<b>Special Educators</b>	<b>General Educators</b>
Escape teaching	37%	24%
Personal	32%	29%
Retirement	17%	29%
Professional development	8%	9%
Involuntary	7%	10%

# **WORK CONDITIONS AND TURNOVER**

Billingsley, 2004; Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006

	<b>Special education</b>	<b>General education</b>
<b>Lower district salary</b>	<b>***</b>	<b>***</b>
<b>Low ratings on school climate</b>	<b>**</b>	
<b>Lack of administrative/ colleague support</b>	<b>***</b>	<b>**</b>
<b>Lack of autonomy</b>		<b>**</b>

# WORK CONDITIONS AND TURNOVER (cont.)

Billingsley, 2004; Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006

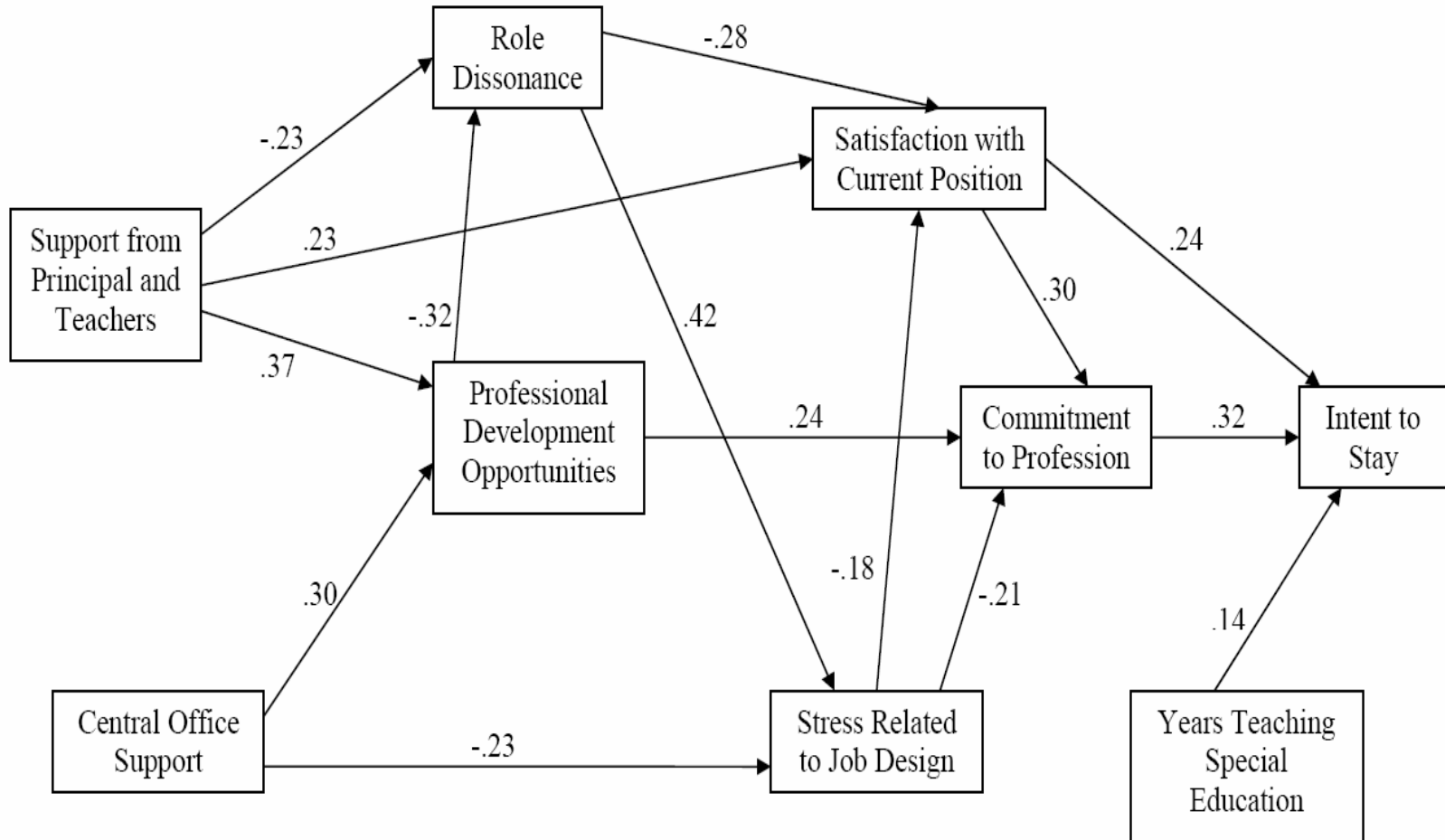
	<b>Special education</b>	<b>General education</b>
<b>Fewer opportunities for professional growth</b>	*	
<b>Role problems (e.g., paperwork; class size, role ambiguity)</b>	***	*
<b>Discipline problems</b>	*	**
<b>Inadequate induction and mentoring</b>	*	**
<b>Career advancement opportunities</b>		

# Smith & Ingersoll (2004)

More types of support teachers experienced, the lower likelihood of leaving or changing schools

- Mentor in same field
- Common planning time
- Regularly scheduled collaboration
- Part of an external network of teachers

# Gersten, 2001



# Five Types of Role Problems

## Billingsley, 2005

<b>Role ambiguity</b>	May be unclear about their roles
<b>Role conflict</b>	May receive differing messages about how to spend their time
<b>Role dissonance</b>	May not be able to spend their time in the ways they value
<b>Role confusion</b>	May be misunderstood by others
<b>Role overload</b>	Often struggle with managing their assignments

*Does the job, with all it entails, make sense? Is it feasible? Is it one that well trained, interested, special education professionals can manage in order to accomplish their main objective—enhancing students' academic, social, and vocational competence?*

Gersten et al., 2001, p. 551

# **SUMMARY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION TURNOVER FINDINGS**

- Younger and inexperienced special educators are more likely to leave
- District and school working conditions, work assignment factors, contribute to leaving (e.g., salary, climate, support, role demands)
- Personal factors account for about 1/3 of leaving decision
- Uncertified/less well-prepared teachers are more likely to leave



### **3. NEED FOR RESEARCH— CHARACTERISTICS AND PREPARATION**

- Information teacher characteristics and qualifications and staying and leaving
- Effects of varied types of preparation on turnover
  - Alternative route vs. traditional
  - Dual certification vs. special education certification
  - Categorical vs. multicategorical preparation

### **3. NEED FOR RESEARCH: WORK CONDITIONS (cont.)**

- Search and hiring processes and turnover.
- Impact of current policy context on teachers roles, perspectives, and turnover.
- Longitudinal studies of teachers from preservice to leaving:
  - In-depth descriptions of special educators, their work lives, and challenges they encounter.

# **4. INCREASING THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHING**

- Raise salaries/benefits
- Improve work conditions
- Promote personal satisfaction
- Create career advancement opportunities

*Keeping good teachers should be  
one of the most important  
agenda items for any school  
leader.*

Darling-Hammond, 2003, p. 6

**TEACHER  
LEADERSHIP**

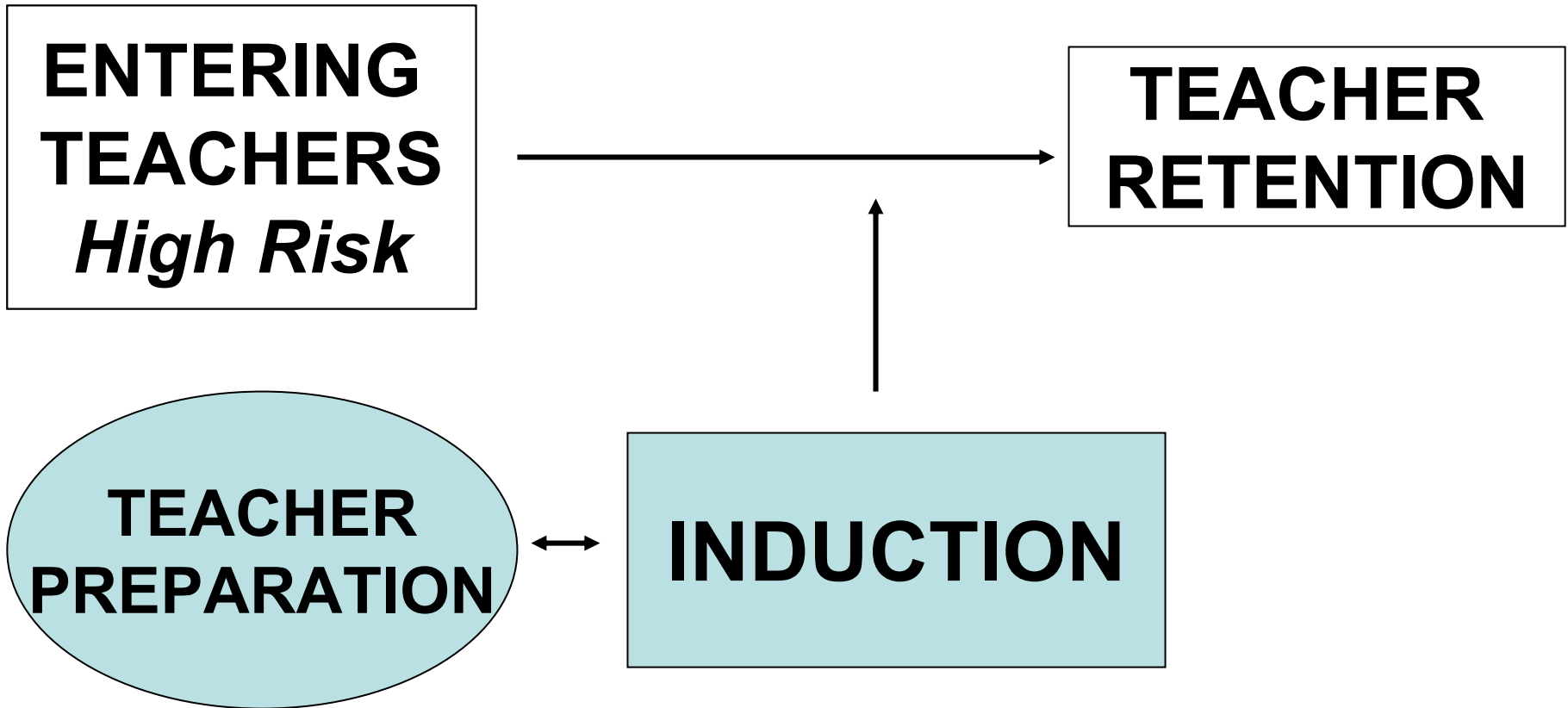
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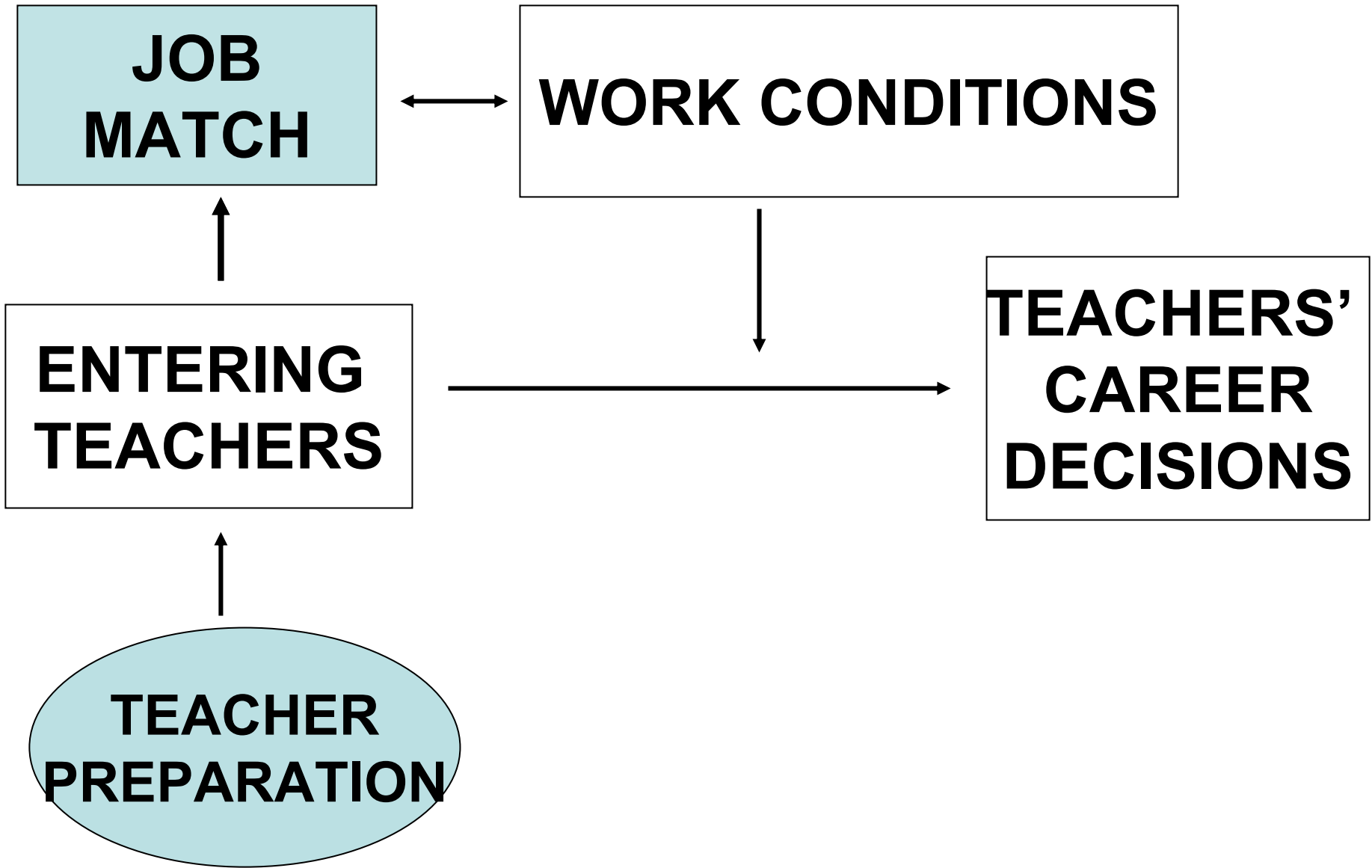
**TEACHERS'  
CAREER  
DECISIONS**



# **5. THE ROLE OF TEACHER EDUCATORS IN RETENTION**

# UNIVERSITY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS







# MULTI-MEDIA RESOURCES ABOUT ATTRITION AND INDUCTION

- *Addressing the revolving door: How to retain your content for a multimedia project for the IRIS Project, Vanderbilt University.*

<http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/retention/chalcycle.htm>

- *Supporting beginning special education teachers. IRIS Project, Vanderbilt University.*

<http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/beginteach/chalcycle.htm>

Thank you for attending!

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