



The Impact of the Wisconsin Educator Effectiveness Process on New Teacher Turnover



Wisconsin Educator Effectiveness Research Partnership

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Since the passage of Act 10 in 2011, which greatly diminished the collective bargaining rights and retirement benefits of teachers, Wisconsin districts have experienced increased teacher turnover through retirements and transfers, which has resulted in teacher shortages (Umhoeher, & Hauer, 2016).

Tied up in this difficult political context, Wisconsin Educator Effectiveness (EE) is intended to promote the use of performance feedback to enhance the quality of teaching and student learning across the state. New teachers complete a structured process that involves a series of observations and feedback opportunities with an administrator. EE encourages schools to use the EE process, less as an accountability tool, but more as a learning-centered process (Kimball, et. al, August 2019). Given that new teachers, as a group, are at a greater risk of moving away from their school (Lankford,

Loeb, & Wychoff, 2002), EE has the potential to either help or hurt the teacher turnover challenges facing Wisconsin schools. **In this brief we explore how the implementation of the EE process relates to new teacher retention.**

Key Findings

New teachers in schools that implement EE as a learning-centered process, with useful and accurate feedback, have greater trust in their principal and view them as a more effective leader.

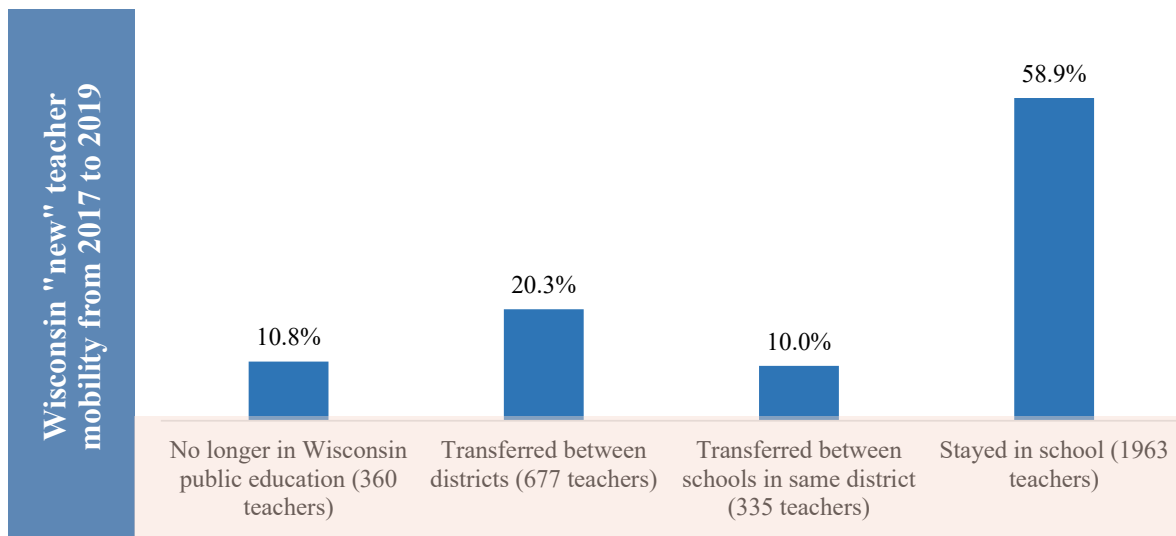
By increasing the trust teachers have with their principal, a learning-centered EE approach promotes greater teacher commitment to their school and results in greater teacher retention. The opposite is true in schools that provide less and less effective feedback.

These results suggest that EE can either promote or hinder the retention of new teachers, depending on how it is implemented.

Key Findings

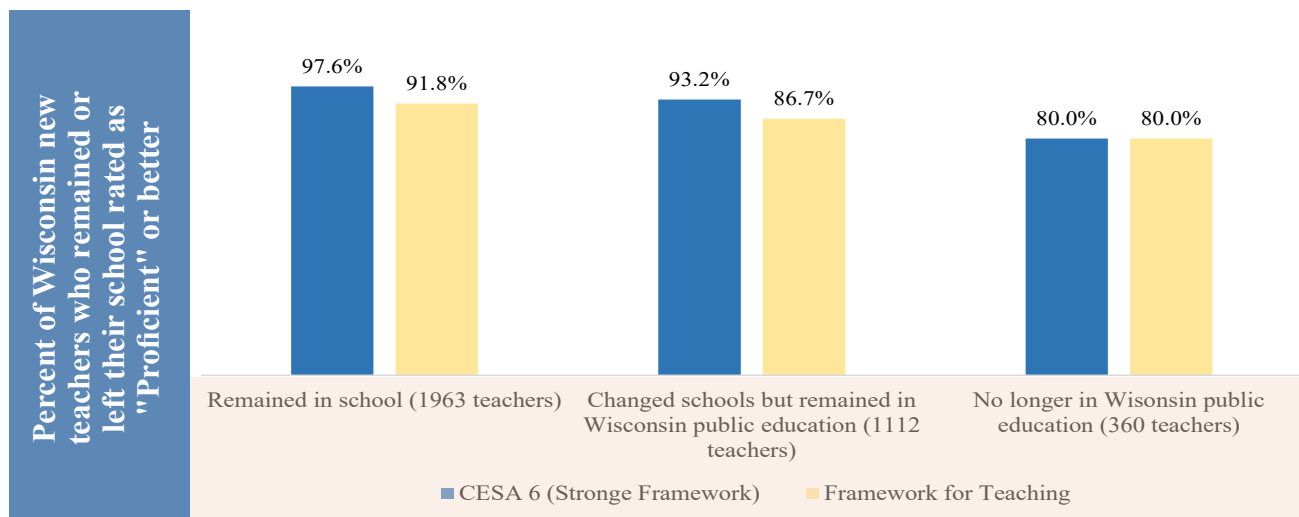
After two years, more than 40% of "new" teachers transferred to a new school or district, or left public education

Of the 3,335 new teachers in 2016-17, roughly six in ten teachers new to their school or to public education remained in their school by 2018-19. More than one in ten were no longer working in Wisconsin public education.



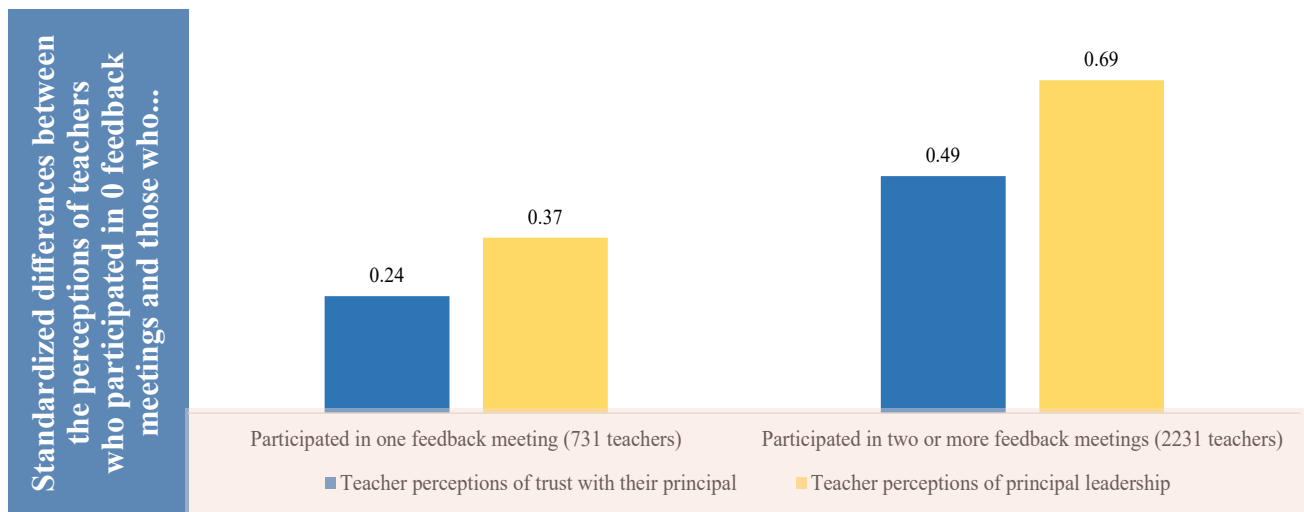
Schools lost effective teachers

Most new teachers who transferred or left public education were rated as effective overall. While fewer teachers who transferred or ceased to work in public education were rated as effective than those who remained in their school, the great majority of these teachers were rated as proficient or better on most aspects of professional practice, according to their local evaluation process.



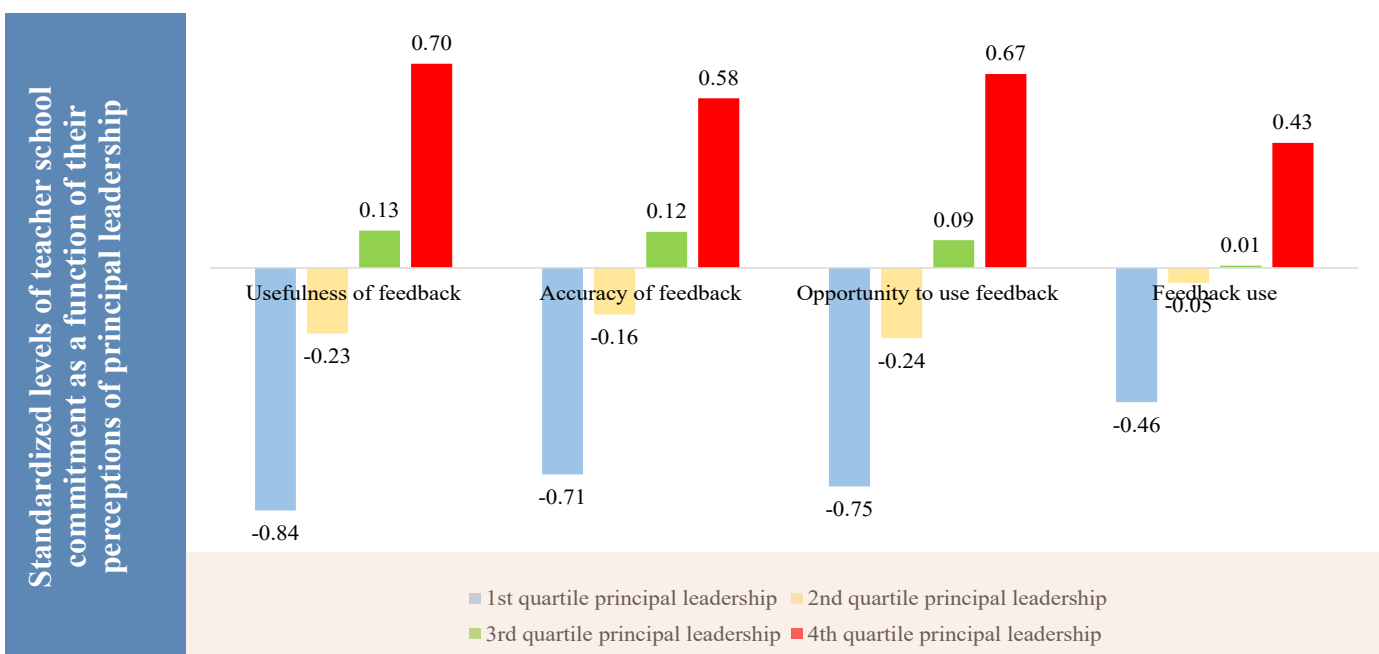
New teachers who received verbal feedback from their principal or evaluator were more likely to view their principal as an effective leader

Compared to teachers who participated in two or more feedback meetings, the roughly 11% (358) of all new teachers who reported they did not participate in any feedback meetings with their evaluator, rated their principal as .49 standard deviations less trusted by teachers and their leadership as .69 standard deviations less effective. This leadership effect size difference suggests that 76% of teachers with two or more feedback meetings viewed their principal as a more effective leader than those who did not participate in any. Having just one feedback meeting had roughly half the effect on teacher perceptions of their principal.



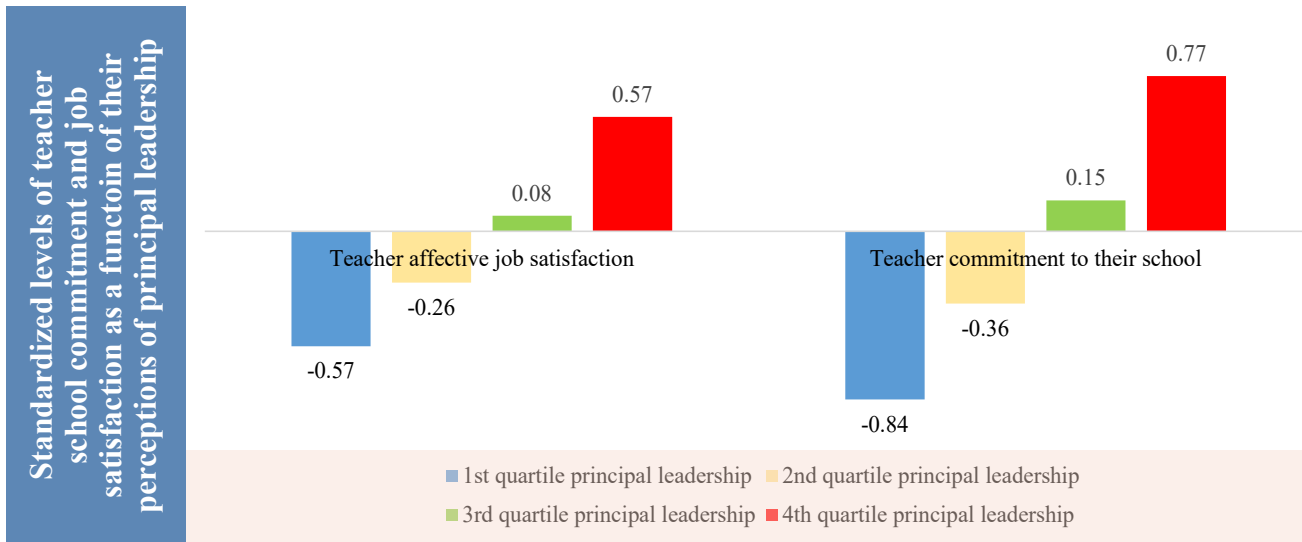
New teachers who received useful and accurate feedback were more likely to view their principal as an effective leader

The feedback provided to new teachers who viewed their principal as a strong leader (4th quartile) was rated as over 1 and 1/2 standard deviations more useful and nearly 1 and 1/3 standard deviations more accurate than the feedback provided to teachers who viewed their principal as a less effective leader (1st quartile).



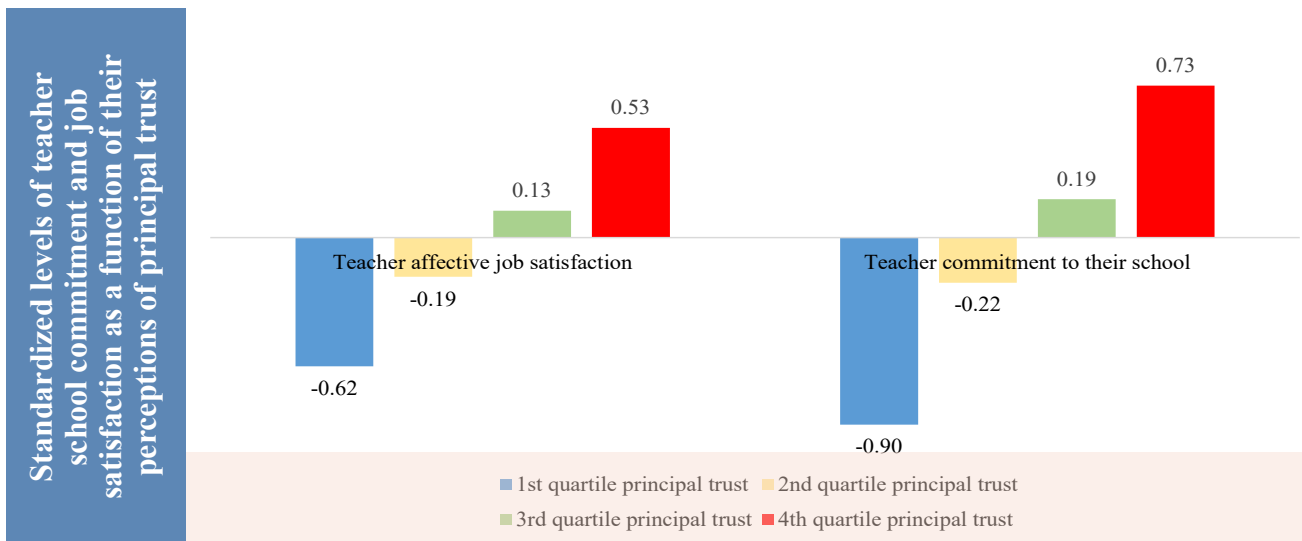
New teachers who viewed their principal as an effective leader were more committed to their school and satisfied with their job

New teachers who viewed their principal as a strong leader (4th quartile) were over 1 and 1/2 standard deviations more committed to their school (0.77 compared to -0.84) and over one standard deviation more satisfied with their job (0.57 compared to -0.57) than teachers who viewed their principal as a less effective leader (1st quartile).



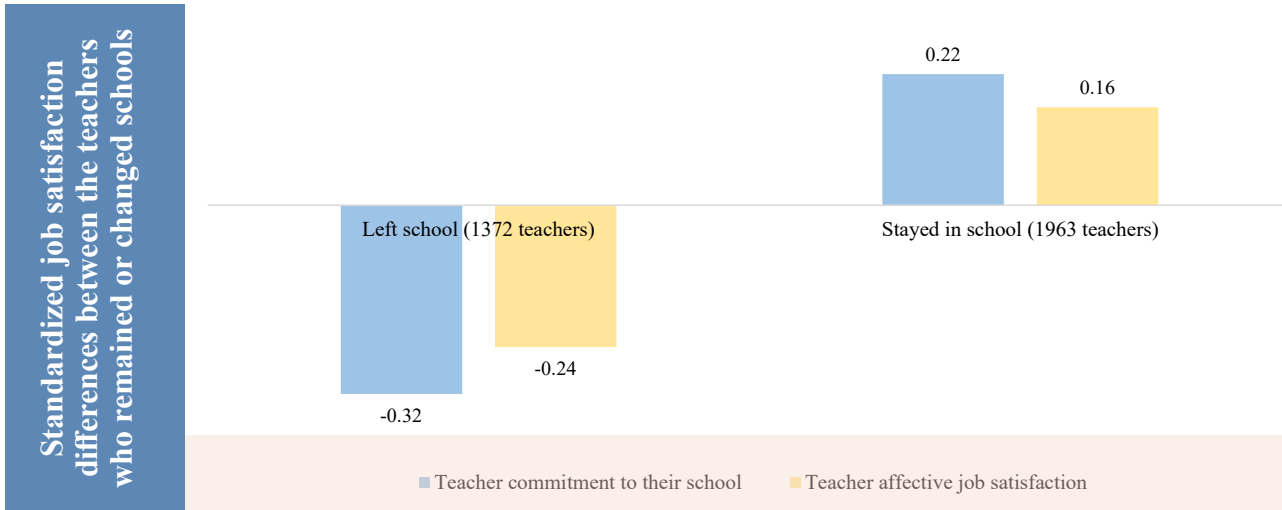
New teachers who viewed their principal as more trusted by teachers were more committed to their school and satisfied with their job

New teachers who viewed their principal as someone teachers could trust (4th quartile) were nearly 1 and 2/3 standard deviations more committed to their school (0.73 compared to -0.90) and over one standard deviation more satisfied with their job (0.53 compared to -0.62) than teachers who viewed their principal as less trusted by teachers (1st quartile).



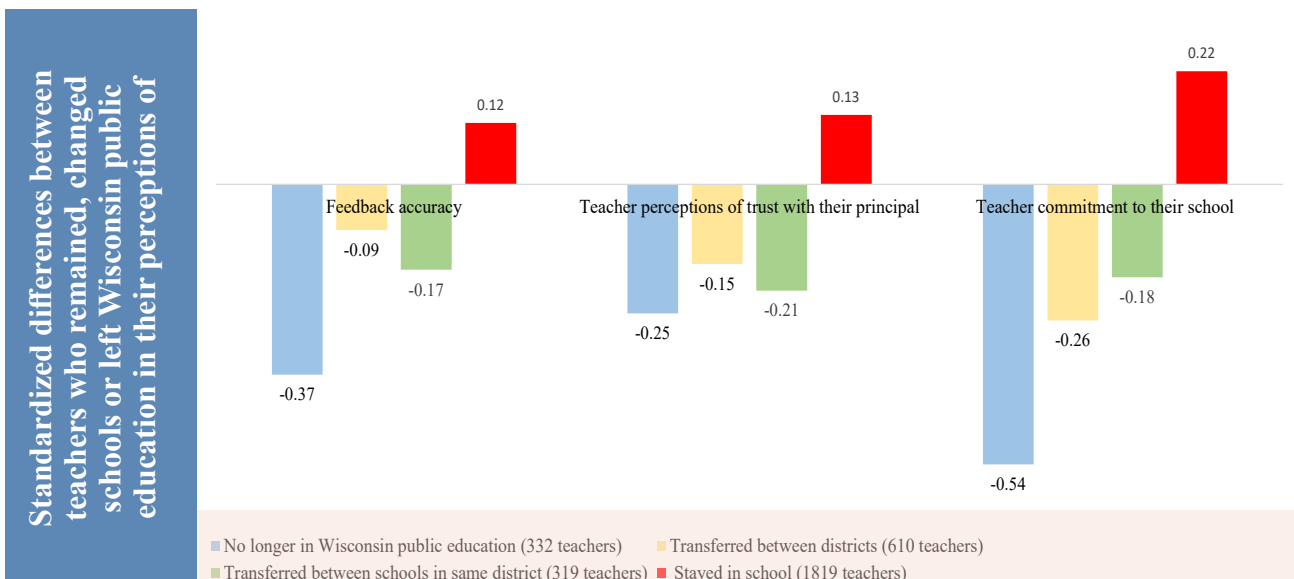
New teachers more satisfied with their job and committed to their school were more likely to remain in their school

Between the two aspects of job satisfaction, commitment to school was a stronger predictor of whether a new teacher remained in their school after two years. The .54 (.22 compared to -.32) effect size difference between the school commitment of those who remained in their school and those who left suggests 71% of new teachers who stayed reported being more committed to their school than the average teacher who left.



New teachers who remained in their school received more accurate feedback, trusted their principal more, and were more committed to their school

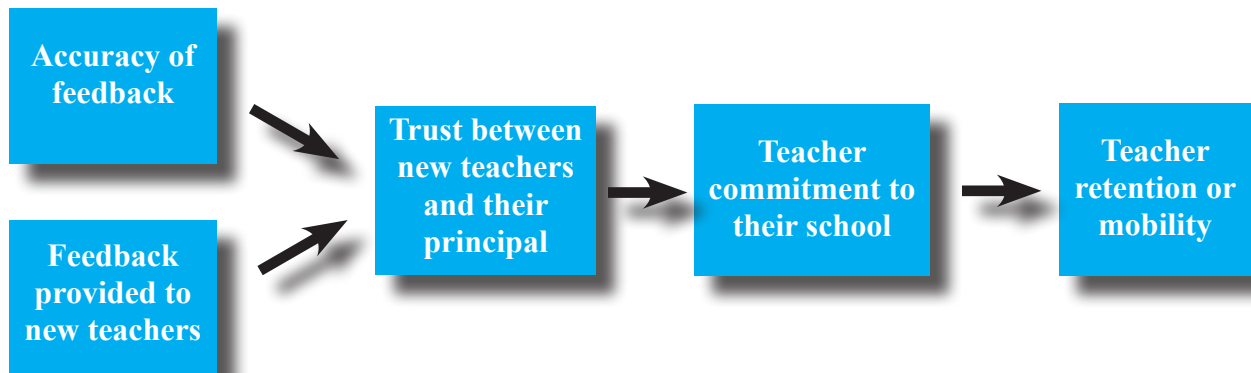
Multivariate statistics were used to compare the relative importance of each study factor with the ultimate outcome of teacher retention. The results of these show that feedback accuracy was the best predictor of principal trust, principal trust was the best predictor of school commitment, and school commitment was the best predictor of new teacher retention (the specific results are in the appendix). The figure below presents new teacher perceptions across these factors broken down by their employment status two years later.



Summary

Fundamentally, more satisfied employees are more productive (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001) and more satisfied teachers are far more likely to stay in their schools and continue in the field of education (Borg & Riding, 1991; Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2012). Teacher turnover, especially in the case of early career teachers, is a problem that drains school resources and lowers the quality of teaching students experience, especially in urban and high-poverty schools (Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2002; Hanushek, Rivkin, & Schiman, 2016). Through these processes, teacher turnover has a negative impact on student achievement (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013).

This brief establishes the connection between the teacher evaluation process, or Wisconsin Educator Effectiveness (EE) System, and new teacher turnover. A school's implementation of their evaluation and feedback process has a large effect on how teachers view their principal and to what extent they are committed to their school. Since new teacher turnover was found to be closely linked to their feelings of school commitment, the EE process done well, with teachers participating in at least two feedback meetings where accurate performance feedback is provided, can promote teacher retention. When not done well, more teachers will look for other opportunities. Given the higher teacher turnover seen in Wisconsin since Act 10, it is therefore critical that schools implement the EE process with a learning-centered approach that promotes educator growth.



How do we define "new" teachers?

Each year, Wisconsin schools assign an evaluation process to each teacher in the My Learning Plan (MLP) Educator Effectiveness data management system. Teachers new to a school, either because they transferred to the school or because they are new to public education, are identified as such in MLP. Typically, this means they are in their first three years at that school. MLP included 8,017 new teachers. 3,876 (48%) responded to a survey. Of these, 3,335 were linked to an individual school and were included in the analyses presented in this brief.

How did we determine "new" teacher mobility?

Teacher mobility was measured by comparing the school and district where teachers worked in the 2016-17 and 2018-2019 school years (two years later). These data are publicly available on the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) WiseStaff data system.

How do we measure teacher effectiveness?

At the end of the year, new teachers receive performance ratings from their evaluator on either the 22 components of the Framework for Teaching (Danielson, 2013) or 6 domains of the Stronge Framework (2002). The performance of teachers receiving more "Proficient" (3) than "Basic" ratings (2) were classified as "Effective". Ratings were documented for 2,771 of the 3,335 teachers included in this study.

How did we measure implementation of the performance feedback process?

Teachers were asked the number of times they met with their evaluator to receive verbal performance feedback. For teachers who indicated they received performance feedback, scales from the Examining Evaluator Feedback Survey (Cherasaro, Brodersen, Yanoski, Welp, & Reale, 2015) were then used to measure several aspects of how teachers experience the feedback process including: to what degree they use feedback to improve, the opportunities teachers have to use feedback, the accuracy of feedback, and the usefulness of feedback. The internal consistency of these scales is .903, .812, .840, and .938 respectively.

How did we measure teacher perceptions of their principal?

Two scales from the University of Chicago's 5Essentials Survey (Klugman, Gordon, Sebring, & Sporte, 2015) were used to measure teacher perceptions of the Trust between Teachers and Principals and Principal Leadership. The internal consistency of these two eight-item scales is .934 and .957 respectively.

How did we measure teacher perceptions of their job?

The Brief Index of Affective Job Satisfaction (Thompson & Phua, 2012) was used to measure affective teacher Job Satisfaction. The internal consistency of this four-item scale is .937. One scale from the University of Chicago's 5Essentials Survey was used to measure teacher School Commitment. The internal consistency of this four-item scale is .885.

Correlations of study factors

	Retention in school	Usefulness of feedback	Accuracy of feedback	Opportunity to use feedback	Use of feedback	Trust between teachers and principals	Principal leadership	Job satisfaction	Commitment to school
Retention in school	1								
Usefulness of feedback	.084**	1							
Accuracy of feedback	.141**	.593**	1						
Opportunity to use feedback	.049*	.611**	.482**	1					
Use of feedback	-0.028	.464**	.249**	.469**	1				
Trust between teachers and principals	.151**	.499**	.510**	.446**	.235**	1			
Principal leadership	.132**	.567**	.505**	.516**	.314**	.869**	1		
Job satisfaction	.188**	.363**	.372**	.344**	.192**	.437**	.440**	1	
Commitment to school	.263**	.449**	.458**	.399**	.199**	.627**	.616**	.712**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Listwise N=2646

Results of statistical models

The results of three statistical models are presented below. These models demonstrate the relative importance of each school organizational factor that leads a teacher to either stay or leave their school. Models 1 and 2 were tested using linear regression. Model 3 was tested using binomial regression.

	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>sig</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>
Model 1: Feedback predicting principal trust (adjusted $R^2 = .405$)				
Usefulness	0.231	0.023	< .001	
Accuracy	0.301	0.020	< .001	
Opportunity	0.178	0.021	< .001	
Use	-0.025	0.018	0.176	
Model 2: Principal effectiveness predicting job satisfaction (adjusted $R^2 = .202$)				
Principal leadership	0.297	0.028	< .001	
Principal trust	0.372	0.028	< .001	
Model 3: Job satisfaction predicting retention (adjusted $R^2 = .07$)				
School commitment	0.522	0.055	< .001	1.686
Job satisfaction	0.052	0.054	0.334	1.054

Effect Size Percentile Conversion Table

The table below presents Cohen's U^3 as a function of the standardized effect size difference for two groups. Cohen's U^3 is the percent of one group that is above the mean of another group. For example, an effect size difference of .5 suggests 69.2% of one group is above the mean of the othergroup.

Cohen's d (effect size difference)	Cohen's U^3 (percent of group that is above the mean of another group)
.1	54.0%
.2	57.9%
.3	61.8%
.4	65.5%
.5	69.2%
.6	72.6%
.7	75.8%
.8	78.8%
.9	81.6%
1.0	84.1%
1.1	86.4%
1.2	88.5%
1.3	90.3%
1.4	91.9%
1.5	93.3%
1.6	94.5%
1.7	95.5%
1.8	96.4%
1.9	97.1%
2.0	97.7%

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Wisconsin Educator Effectiveness Research Partnership

WEERP conducts rigorous and relevant research to inform the efforts of Wisconsin Educators to improve educator effectiveness and achievement for all students.

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