

A STUDY OF TEACHER "TURNOVER" IN SECOND CLASS
CITY HIGH SCHOOLS IN KANSAS, 1961-62

by

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A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

School of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

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Approved by:


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INTRODUCTION

Having taught in Kansas schools the past 26 years in various positions and observing the number of teachers that changed positions each year, the author felt that this rapid turnover was detrimental to educational progress of our modern schools. It was decided it would be interesting to make a study to determine, if possible, why so many changes are being made.

Teacher tenure in Kansas Schools has received considerable attention by various educational organizations in the last few years. The national concern for the promotion of better education for American youth has caused many institutions to study the problem of teacher turnover.

In studying the present teacher tenure situation in Kansas, educators have found that there is a need for an improvement in teacher security. Hummel says, "no person in his right mind would deny that teachers need and deserve a strong and effective guarantee of professional security, but tenure as now practiced needs drastic revision."¹

The general purpose of tenure provisions is to aid in the establishment of competent staff for a school system. If tenure is to have its full value as an aid to good schools, all persons connected with the

¹Charlton G. Hummel, "Not a Crutch for the Incompetent, Tenure is a Right Only if Deserved," NEA Journal, January 1960, 49:67.

schools must assume some responsibility for it. First of all, they must be convinced that adequate tenure provisions are a necessary part of the conditions provided by a good school. Stover states, "The adequate teacher, freed from danger of insecurity and unfair dismissal, is the key figure in our schools."¹

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to determine the rate of "turnover" among teachers in second class city high schools and to identify, if possible, the reasons for such turnover.

Specifically the study identified the problem in terms of: (1) patterns and years of teaching experience, (2) reasons for changing positions among teachers, and (3) factors related to teacher "turnover," such as teaching field and salary.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many high school principals have expressed the opinion that schools operate more efficiently when teachers are well established in their positions. As a result of a six year study of teacher turnover in the Public Schools in Terre Haute, Indiana, Darrow states that:²

Teaching is no exception to the accepted principle that a rapid rate of personnel turnover is detrimental.

¹William R. Stover, "The What and Why of Tenure," NEA Journal, March, 1961, 50:47.

²N. L. Darrow, "A Six Year Study of Teacher Turnover in Public Schools Terre Haute, Indiana 1955-60," Teachers College Journal, November, 1961, 33:34-35.

to the best interests of an organization. Experience on the job makes for better understanding of the problem to be faced.

In a study of teacher turnover in public schools Lindenfeld reports that:

Between the fall of 1959 and the fall of 1960 approximately 193,200 teachers left school positions and 242,322 were hired. In other words for every 100 teachers in class rooms when school opened in 1959, 16.8 left their jobs during the year, 13.4 were hired.

Of the teachers employed in new positions 45 per cent had not taught in public schools the previous year; 32 per cent transferred from other public schools.

The turnover survey obtained information on several types of separations. From this information, it was possible to draw some conclusions on the subsequent status of some of the teachers who left the school systems in 1959-60. Not counting the 3,100 teachers who died during the year, one can be reasonably sure of the subsequent status of only two categories: (1) Six thousand teachers changed to non-teaching jobs in the districts in which they had been teaching. This figure should be interpreted as a minimum because of the possibility that not all who changed were reported as separations; furthermore the total does not include those who changed to non-teaching jobs in different systems. Given the structure of American education, such movement from classroom to supervisory positions can be considered normal; it does however create teaching vacancies. (2) Seventy-seven thousand teachers transferred to other public school systems. These figures were based on the assumption that nationally the number of transfers into school systems should equal the number of transfers out. Of the 242,300 teachers hired by local public schools four-fifths (193,000) replaced teachers who left teaching and one-fifth (49,000) filled new positions.

When public schools opened in the fall of 1960, 16 per cent of their teachers were new on the job. Since only five per cent of all the teachers employed were transferred from other public school districts, almost 11 per cent had been recruited from other sources: colleges; universities; private schools; other occupations in education and outside education; homemaking; military service; or retirement.¹

¹Dr. Frank Lindenfeld, "Teacher Turnover in Public Schools 1959-60 Summary of Office Education Survey," School Life, January 1962, 44:11-12.

In a study of teacher "turnover" in public schools made by Mason and Bain in 1957-58, they found 137,000 classroom teachers in secondary and elementary schools left the teaching profession. This number constituted 10.9 per cent of the average total teaching staff for the 1957-58 school year. Total separations, including those leaving classroom teaching and those moving from one school district to another, amounted to 214,000. This is a separation rate of 17.0 per cent of the average total teaching staff.

In the above mentioned study the highest separation rate occurred among women teachers in secondary schools (19.5 per cent). Separation rates were closely related to size of school district, being lowest in districts with an enrollment over 25,000 (14.7 per cent) and highest in districts with an enrollment under 50 (29.0 per cent).¹

In a summary "The Implications of Teacher Turnover" the editor of Phi Delta Kappan points out:

The annual turnover of teachers continues at a rate probably in excess of 10 per cent. Only about two-thirds of the people prepared for teaching ever teach, and perhaps as few as 10 per cent of this number remain in the classroom as long as ten years.

These were among the findings reported by Willavene Wolf and William Wolf of Ohio State University. They reviewed studies by W. W. Charters in 1956 and Ray Maul in 1954, as well as earlier surveys. The authors conclude that the provision of professional education for so many persons who never use it is an economic waste which should be corrected. They propose that a task force of educators should work toward (1) more critical selection of teacher candidates, (2) more rigorous and challenging teacher education programs, (3)

¹Ward S. Mason and Robert K. Bain, "Teacher Turnover in Public Schools 1957-58, Office of Education, United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare, (United States Government Printing Office) pp. 1.

adoption of such practices as team teaching which give promise of retaining superior teachers in the classroom, and (4) securing salary schedules adequate to retain the best teachers in the profession.²

Three important recent studies and the literature related to teacher tenure generally indicate that tenure in schools is limited. Reasons for teachers leaving public school teaching have been found to be varied. The situation as it applies to selected second class cities was accepted as worthy of study.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

As a guide to the reader and for further clarification the following definitions of terms were used in this report.

The term "second class city high school" was used to denote a public high school in Kansas cities with a population of from 5,000 to 25,000.

"The term 'teacher turnover' was used to mean the loss and subsequent replacement of teachers, usually expressed as the proportion of change in a specific teacher group during a stated time period, for example, one year."²

"The term 'tenure' the length of time, usually expressed in years, of teacher's service in a single position or school system."³

"The term 'security' the feeling of personal worth, self assurance, confidence, and the acceptance by the group."⁴

¹"Keeping Abreast in Research," Phi Delta Kappan, December, 1962, 44:3:127

²Carter V. Good, Dictionary of Education, p. 433.

³Ibid., p. 413.

⁴Ibid., p. 365.

METHOD AND PROCEDURES

Because of the large number of teachers in second class city high schools in Kansas it was neither feasible nor desirable to obtain data from every teacher. The study was conducted by sending questionnaires to a probability sample of teachers and making estimates for the total population of teachers from these sample data.

The principals of fifty-one second class city high schools in Kansas were mailed five questionnaires along with addressed stamped envelopes and instructions to the teachers that were to receive them. It was determined by checking the state records that no school included in this study had less than fifteen teachers in the system.

The questionnaire was constructed so as to be brief and easy to answer. The teachers were not asked to sign the questionnaire or in any way to identify themselves.

The instructions to the principals were as indicated: "If you have your high school faculty listed in alphabetical order, please hand the questionnaires out according to the following table."

Number of Teachers	Use these Numbers				
15 - 20	2	5	8	11	14
21 - 25	3	7	11	15	19
26 - 30	4	9	14	19	24
31 - 35	5	11	17	23	29
36 - 40	6	13	20	27	34
41 or more	7	15	23	31	39

The sample drawn from this population was designed to provide an estimate of the number of teachers changing positions. It was felt that in this sample teachers from all fields would be questioned and thus the results would be general rather than specific.

THE STUDY

This study was based on results received from the questionnaires that were returned. The principals of the schools were very cooperative in handing out the questionnaires to their teachers. In a few cases requests for the results of the study were received.

Of the schools to which questionnaires were mailed, twenty-eight or 55 per cent returned all five. With forty-nine of the fifty-one schools returning the questionnaires, it was felt this was a representative sample of the population.

Table 1. Number of schools reporting.

Number of Reports returned	Number of Schools	Per cent of return*
5	28	55
4	17	33
3	3	6
2	1	2
0	2	4

*The per cents in the above table were calculated to the nearest whole number.

A total of 255 questionnaires were distributed to teachers in fifty-one second class city high schools in Kansas. Of this total 220

or a little over 86 per cent responded. In most of the replies all of the questions were answered. Nearly all of the replies were received within a few days after they were mailed.

Table 2. Teachers' response to questionnaire.

Participants	Number sent out	Number returned	Per cent of return
Teachers	255	220	86.25

Table 2 shows the number of questionnaires sent out to teachers and the number returned. Completed questionnaires were received from 220 of the 255 teachers questioned. This constituted a return of over 86 per cent.

Number of years in position.

The results of the survey indicate that 40 per cent of the teachers questioned in the survey had been in their present position three years or less. This indicated that there was a rapid turnover of teachers in the second class city systems studied. It was also noted that of 220 replies, 172 had been in their present position for ten years or less.

Table 3. Number of years in present position.

Number of years in position	Number of teachers	Per cent*
1	22	10
2	36	17
3	28	13
Average 3 yr. or less	86	40
4	19	8
5	20	9
Average 5 yr. or less	125	57
6	15	6
7	11	5
8	9	4
9	8	4
10	4	2
Average 7 yr or less	172	78
11 to 37 yr.	48	22
Average for all 9 yrs.	220	100

*The per cents in the above table were calculated to the nearest whole number.

Table 3 points out that twenty-two teachers were teaching their first term in second class city high schools. This represents ten per cent of the teachers questioned. There were thirty-six, or 17 per cent of the teachers, who had been in the system for two years; twenty-eight, or 13 per cent, for three years; nineteen, or 8 per cent for four years; and twenty, or 9 per cent, for five years. There were 57 per cent of the teachers who had been in their respective positions for five years or less. This indicates that the average tenure of the 220 teachers in their present positions was less than nine years.

A number of teachers indicated they had started teaching in their present position. However, it was indicated in the results from the

survey that a majority of the teachers had been in their previous teaching positions less than five years. Here again it was indicated that there was a rapid rate of turnover of the teachers represented in this survey.

Table 4. Number of years in previous position.

No. of years in past position	Number of teachers	Per cent*
Started in present position	47	21
Five years or less	129	59
From six to ten years	28	13
Ten years or more	16	7

*The per cents in the above table were calculated to the nearest whole number.

Table 4 points out that of 220 teachers questioned, forty-seven started teaching in their present position. This represents 21 per cent of the total. A total of 129 teachers had been in their past positions for five years or less, this represents 59 per cent. Only twenty-eight, or 13 per cent had been in their past positions from six to ten years; sixteen, or 7 per cent for more than ten years.

Reasons for teacher "turnover."

The above tables point out that there was an identifiable amount of teacher "turnover" in second class city high schools in Kansas. The following tables indicate some of the important reasons for the changes made by many teachers. As one might expect, the most important reason was found to be increase in salary, this was followed by the desire to

teach in the first teaching field.

Table 5. Reasons for changing positions.

Reason	Number of teachers	Per cent*
First position	47	21
Teach in first field	22	10
Increased salary	70	32
Better living conditions	11	5
Various other reasons	70	32

*The per cents in the above table were calculated to the nearest whole number.

Table 5 points out two important reasons for teachers moving to a new position in a second class city high school. There were twenty-two or 10 per cent who moved to get into their first teaching field. A total of seventy, or 32 per cent moved to receive an increase in salary. There were various other reasons listed by seventy, or 32 per cent of the teachers. A sample of these include; moved to be with husband or wife, wanted to be in a larger city, to live in home town, to be in a larger school system, wanted to live with parents, and many other similar reasons.

Many teachers moved to second class city high schools from other types of schools. There were a large number who moved from rural high schools; however, about as many moved from one second class city to another.

Table 6. Type of school taught in before moving to present position.

Type of school	Number of Teachers	Per Cent	a	b	c	d
Rural high school	53	25	5	27	8	13
Second class city	48	22	3	24	2	19
Third class city	37	17	5	14	3	15
Elementary	17	7	5	7	2	3
Others	18	8				
First position	47	21				

- a - Number of teachers that moved to teach in first field.
b - Number of teachers that moved for better living conditions.
c - Number of teachers that moved for an increase in salary.
d - Number of teachers that moved for numerous other reasons.

Table 6 shows some of the more prominent reasons for teachers making changes. It was found that fifty-three, or 25 per cent of the teachers moved from rural high schools to second class city high schools. There were forty-eight, or 22 per cent who moved from other second class cities, and thirty-seven, or 17 per cent from third class cities. Only a very few moved to get into their first teaching field. Other reasons for moving were varied from better living conditions to living with husband or wife.

Teaching field and "turnover."

The teachers questioned represented a sample from a wide variety of teaching fields. (See Table 7 p. 13) In all the teaching fields there was a general tendency for teachers to move in order to receive a higher salary.

Table 7. Teaching fields and reasons for moving.

Field	a	b	c	d	e	f
Industrial Arts	24	1	3	10	6	4
Science	22	2	2	7	5	6
Mathematics	18	1	2	6	3	6
Vocational Ag.	8	0	1	0	4	3
Social Science	32	3	2	11	6	10
English	40	6	4	10	16	4
Foreign Lang.	5	1	0	2	2	0
Music	10	0	1	6	3	0
Physical Ed.	19	1	3	12	3	0
Home Ec.	10	2	1	3	3	1
Art	2	0	0	0	0	2
Business Ed.	27	0	2	5	10	10
Drivers Ed.	1	0	0	1	0	0
None specified	2	0	0	0	0	0

a - Number of teachers reporting each teaching field.

b - Number of teachers that moved to teach in first field

c - Number of teachers that moved for better living conditions.

d - Number of teachers that moved for an increase in salary.

e - Number of teachers that moved for numerous other reasons.

f - Number of teachers that were in their first year teaching.

The largest number of teachers that responded were in the field of English, a total of forty or about 19 per cent. It was found that ten of the above mentioned English teachers moved to receive a higher salary, six to be able to teach in their first teaching field.

In the field of social science there were thirty-two who replied, or about 15 per cent. Of the thirty-two eleven indicated they moved to obtain a higher salary.

In the business education field there were twenty-seven who replied, or about 12 per cent. Of the twenty-seven, five indicated they moved to obtain a higher salary. Ten listed various other reasons, such as to live in their home town or to live with husband or wife.

In the industrial arts field twenty-four replies were received. Here again it was found that of the twenty-four, ten or about one-half moved to obtain a higher salary.

In the field of science twenty-two teachers answered, six or about one-third of these teachers indicated they moved to gain a higher salary. In the field of physical education nineteen answered, twelve, or over one-half indicated they moved in order to receive a higher salary.

As indicated in the above table and related facts the desire to move for a higher salary was common to most teaching fields. It was also indicated that in the field of science and physical education more teachers moved to receive higher salaries than any other reason.

It was found that a majority of teachers questioned were teaching in their first teaching field. Only a small per cent of the teachers were teaching in their second field.

Table 8. Number of teachers teaching in first teaching field.

Field	Number of teachers	Per cent
First field	143	65
Second field	21	9
Both fields	50	24
In neither field	6	2

As identified in Table 8 it was found that 65 per cent of the teachers questioned were teaching in their first teaching field. There were nine per cent teaching in their second teaching field and 23 per cent were teaching in both their first and second field. There were six teachers that indicated they were not teaching in either of their teaching fields.

One of the reasons for teachers moving, as indicated in this study, was to be able to teach in their first field. However as pointed out in Table 8 there were 65 per cent teaching in their first field. This fact indicates that 35 per cent of the teachers were still teaching in their second field.

Salary.

Responses from the questionnaire revealed the fact that a large number of second class cities have some type of salary schedule.

Table 9. Number of schools with a salary schedule.

Salary Schedule	Number	per cent
Yes	172	79
No	48	21

Of the 220 teachers who reported 172 or 79 per cent indicated that their school had some type of salary schedule.

Tenure.

The majority of the teachers indicated that they favored staying in a school system over a long period of time. Only sixteen or 7 per

cent replied that they did not care to remain in a system any length of time. There were seven who did not answer the question.

Table 10. Favor remaining in a system a long period of time.

Answer	Number	Per cent*
Yes	197	90
No	16	7
No answer	7	3

*The per cents in the above table were calculated to the nearest whole number.

Table 10 points out that 197 or 90 per cent of the teachers questioned favor remaining in a system a long period of time.

In answer to the question, "In your opinion would a teacher tenure plan help improve education for Kansas youth?" A majority, or 72 per cent of the respondents answered yes. Twenty-three per cent gave a negative answer. There were five per cent that did not answer the question.

Table 11. Teachers opinion in regard to tenure.

Improves education	Number	Per cent
Yes	157	72
No	51	23
No answer	12	5

Table 11 indicates that teachers questioned in this survey were of the opinion that tenure would help improve education for Kansas youth.

In general the results of this survey indicate there was a rapid "turnover" of teachers in second class cities in Kansas. As pointed out in the study the desire for increase in salary was an important factor in causing many of the changes. In a large number of cases teachers expressed the desire to remain in a given school system a long period of time.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to determine the rate of "turnover" among teachers in second class city high schools and to identify, if possible, the reasons for such turnover.

It was found that the average tenure for teachers in second class city high schools was less than nine years. The results indicated forty per cent of the teachers had been in their present positions for three years or less. Ten per cent of the total stated that this was their first year in the school. Over fifty per cent of the teachers had been in their positions for five years or less.

It was found that fifty-nine per cent of the teachers had been in their previous positions for five years or less. Only seven per cent had been in their previous positions over ten years.

It was found that tenure in second class city high schools in Kansas is limited. It was also found that teachers preferred to stay in the same school system and that they felt that tenure helped improve education.

Generally, results of this study indicate that teacher "turnover" is a problem in second class city high schools in Kansas. The most important factor contributing to the limited tenure in the high schools studied was shown to be salary. Even though the teachers, who responded, identified the teaching field to be a problem, a majority were teaching in the first teaching field.

This study identifies the fact that second class cities should study the factors related to this problem of "teacher turnover." Such study would provide suggestions that could minimize the problem and increase tenure to a reasonable maximum which would keep the capable teacher in the classroom.

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APPENDIX

2408 Hlaco Rd.
Manhattan, Kansas
January 3, 1962

Dear Fellow Teacher:

I am a teacher in the Manhattan High School and would like to ask your cooperation as a fellow teacher in answering a brief questionnaire in regard to teaching tenure in Kansas schools. I am sending this out with the approval of the Department of Education at Kansas State University. The answers will provide information needed to complete my Master's study.

Please fill out the questionnaire by January 15, 1962, and mail it to me in the enclosed addressed stamped envelope. A summary of this report will be available by writing to me after August 10, 1962. I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Raymond K. Hower

2408 Pines Rd.
 Manhattan, Kansas
 January 3, 1962

Dear Mr.

I am working on my Master's study at Kansas State University and would like to have the enclosed questionnaires filled out by five of your teachers. If you have your high school faculty listed in alphabetical order please hand the questionnaires out according to the following table.

Number of teachers	Use these numbers				
15 - 20	2	5	8	11	14
21 - 25	3	7	11	15	19
26 - 30	4	9	14	19	24
31 - 35	5	11	17	23	29
36 - 39	6	13	20	27	34
40 or more	7	15	23	31	39

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Raymond K. Hower

A STUDY OF TEACHER TENURE IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS OF 2ND CLASS CITIES IN KANSAS

Sponsor: Department of Education, Kansas State University.

Send results to Raymond K. Hower, 2408 Himes Rd., Manhattan, Kansas.

Please select an answer for each of the following general questions and place it in the space provided.

1. How many years have you taught in your present position including the 1961-62 school year? _____
2. How many years have you taught school including the 1961-62 school year? _____
3. How many years did you teach in your preceding position? _____

Please check the following or fill in the space provided for other statements.

4. What was the reason for changing from your past to your present position?

Increased salary _____

Better living conditions _____

To be able to teach in your teaching field _____

Other reasons please state _____

5. In what type of school did you teach before taking your present position?

Rural High School _____

Elementary School _____

2nd Class City _____

3rd Class City _____

Private School _____

6. Please state your teaching field, Mathematics, Science, etc.

1st teaching field _____

2nd teaching field _____

7. Are you at present time teaching in your 1st teaching field, 2nd teaching field, or both?

1st teaching field

2nd Teaching field

Both

8. Is there a salary schedule in your present school system?

Yes

No

9. Do you as a teacher favor staying in one school system over a long period of time?

Yes

No

10. In your opinion would a teacher tenure plan help improve education for Kansas youth?

Yes

No

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The purpose of this study was to determine the rate of "turnover" among teachers in second class city high schools and to identify, if possible the reasons for such turnover.

Specifically the study identified the problem in terms of: (1) patterns and years of teaching experience, (2) reasons for changing positions among teachers, and (3) factors related to teacher "turnover," such as teaching field and salary.

A questionnaire was sent to 255 teachers in second class city high schools in Kansas. Replies were received from 220 or 86 per cent of the total number.

It was found that the average tenure for teachers in second class city high schools was less than nine years. The results indicated forty per cent of the teachers had been in their present positions for three years or less. Ten per cent of the total stated that this was their first year in the school. Over fifty per cent of the teachers had been in their positions for five years or less.

It was found that fifty-nine per cent of the teachers had been in their previous positions for five years or less. Only seven per cent had been in their previous positions over ten years.

It was found that tenure in second class city schools in Kansas is limited. It was also found that teachers preferred to stay in the same school system and that they felt that tenure helped improve education.

Generally, results of this study indicate that teacher "turnover" is a problem in second class city high schools in Kansas. The most important factor contributing to the limited tenure in the high schools studied was shown to be salary. Even though the teachers, who responded,

identified the teaching field to be a problem, a majority were teaching in the first teaching field.

This study identifies the fact that second class cities should study the factors related to the problem of "teacher turnover." Such study would provide suggestions that could minimize the problem and increase tenure to a reasonable maximum which would keep the capable teacher in the classroom.