University of Alberta

Teacher Burnout:

Definition, Causes, Implications, and Systemic Supports

by

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Table of Contents

Abstract

"Teachers, as well as education quality and development, are affected by their well-being" (Jian, X. et al. 2023, p. 3). While the inherent demands of the teaching profession make it likely that stress will be experienced by all teachers at one time or another, excessive and/or unmanaged stress can result in what is termed as "burnout," with significant implications for both the individual teacher and the profession as a whole. This capstone project reviews research respective to the definition, causes, prevalence, and implications of teacher burnout. The project also seeks to provide means to address the issue through best practices outlined in stress, care, and servant leadership theory, as well as systemic supports that may be implemented by school divisions and administrators; specifically, teacher mentorship and professional learning.

Introduction

A review of recent research indicates that the teaching profession is becoming increasingly stressful, with higher levels of demands, duties, and expectations. In addition to typical stressors inherent in general day to day living, Borg (1990) notes that the teaching profession often has additional stressors due to factors such as continually evolving pedagogy and objectives, curricular demands, achievement expectations, school organization, and student need.

These demands, and the subsequent impact on the physical, emotional, and mental well-being of teachers, have been further increased to an arguably unprecedented level throughout and since the COVID-19 pandemic, as teachers have been required to address student learning loss within unique contexts and with limited resources. The impact of these demands on teachers is significant, as evidenced by research completed during and immediately following the pandemic. The research indicated that indicated teachers were being impacted by the stressors that had

become inherent in the role of teaching at a level greater than even that of healthcare professionals (Etxebarria et al., 2023).

Researchers have identified that when the demands placed upon an individual exceed their ability to effectively manage the associated stressors, the individual may experience what is referred to as "burnout." The condition of burnout has been defined as, "A severe state of exhaustion, irritability, and fatigue" (Maslach, 1982, pp. 30–31), and has been cited as a significant contributor to teacher physical and mental illness along with subsequent absenteeism. The impact of burnout is also frequently cited as the primary reason for a teacher leaving the profession (Hamann, 1990). In addition to the physical and emotional impact on the individual, research shows that burnout significantly impacts teacher effectiveness, and is apparent in various indicators of school success, including student achievement (DeMatthews, et al., 2021).

As a Principal, I personally experienced the physical and mental impact of burnout to the extent that I chose to leave the role and accept a position within my school Division that allowed for greater work/life balance. I also personally witnessed the impact of burnout in teachers that I worked with as a Principal and at times I struggled with how best to support them. These experiences have led me to examine research respective to teacher burnout and reflect upon how best to address the factors contributing to teacher burnout at a school and division level.

Given the significant impact of burnout on both individual teachers and the educational system, it is essential for school administrators and school divisions to actively address this increasingly prevalent condition.

Teacher Burnout

Definition

Cardona (2021) notes that stress is a physical and emotional response to the demands of life and/or challenges inherent in one's surrounding environment. A reasonable level of stress is to be expected and is generally manageable. However, when excessive or not effectively managed, stress can lead to burnout; a term first introduced in the 1970s by the American psychologist Herbert Freudenberger. He used the term to describe the consequences of severe stress in "helping" professions. Subsequent researchers have further defined the term, with Shirom and Melamed (2006) describing burnout as feelings of emotional exhaustion and fatigue, and Maslach et al. describing burnout as a "psychological syndrome of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy experienced in response to chronic job stresses" (1993, p. 2).

Hamann (1990) defined burnout as a syndrome involving intense psychological feelings, attitudes, motives, and expectations that include distress, discomfort, and dysfunction with often negative consequences. He further described burnout as "stress that had gotten out of control" (p. 31). As cited by Tsang et al. (2019), teachers experiencing burnout may present with feelings of frustration, exhaustion, anxiety and depression. They may express being continually emotionally overextended and drained, detached from their work, and having a decreased sense of competence or purpose.

While not included in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders–Fifth edition*, the World Health Organization has classified burnout as a psychological syndrome in its International Classification of Diseases (Napoles, 2021).

Prevalence

While recognized as a challenge impacting individuals throughout all professions (Maslach et al., 1997), burnout has come to be used in conjunction with teachers far more often than any other occupational group (Farber, 2000). Canadian statistics compiled in 2021 indicate a substantial increase in teacher absenteeism, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, that may be attributed in some part to the manifestation of burnout. For example, At York Region District School Board, 711 teachers took a three month or longer sick leave during the 2020-21 school year, up from 372 teachers from 2018-19. At the Toronto District School Board, 808 elementary school teachers took a sick leave for three months or longer in the 2020-2021 school year, up from 388 teachers in 2019-2020. In addition, a 2021 report from the University of British Columbia indicated that 22.9 percent of 1,206 participating teachers experienced mental distress, with 56.5 percent having experienced moderate mental distress, and more than two in five (41.3 percent) reporting that they are likely to leave the profession (Wilson, 2021).

A review of data from the United States also indicates concerning trends, with the prevalence of teacher burnout increasing. Research from 1991 estimated that 30-35% of American teachers were strongly dissatisfied with their profession and 5-20% were burned out. According to Etxebarria et al. (2023), this figure rose to 52% during the pandemic; a rate even higher than that of healthcare professionals.

Multiple researchers have found that the relationship between stress and burnout may be influenced by factors such as age, gender, coping strategies, emotional intelligence, and personality traits (Tsang, 2019), with female teachers in their first 5 years of teaching reporting the highest levels of burnout. Another contributing factor is the specifics of a teaching

assignment, with teachers in specialized programs reportedly experiencing higher levels of burnout in comparison to teachers in 'regular' programs (Mo, 1991).

Causes

In developing recommendations to address the issue of teacher burnout, it is first necessary to examine possible causes as outlined in research. Freudenberger (1974), one of the first researchers to focus on the syndrome of burnout, described it as resulting in individuals who are under increasing pressure to succeed at serving others and demand more of themselves than they are able to give; ultimately exhausting themselves. Freudenberger's description has become particularly applicable to the teaching profession as the demands of teaching have increased exponentially over time without a corresponding increase in available resources; significantly impacting the ability of teachers to serve and support the students they work with. In addition, higher level policy reform and accountability measures have resulted in teachers "[feeling] increased pressure to achieve 'better' educational results with greater diversity of students and fewer resources" (Farber, 2000, p. 676).

In addition to systemic challenges, teachers have also reported stressors such as excessive paperwork and administrative tasks, lack of autonomy over curriculum, a sense of isolation, large class sizes, disruptive students, and a lack of administrative support as being contributing factors. Tsang (2019) identified student misbehaviour and undesirable attitudes, excessive non-teaching duties and workload, as well as lack of recognition from parents and administration as being commonly reported stressors, with workload being reported as the strongest determinant.

A study by Kennon and Patterson (2016) investigated the causes of burnout in deaf education teachers and identified eight stressors listed in order of stress level. These included excessive paperwork, high-stakes testing, dealing with parents, lack of administrative support,

lack of parental support, lack of resources, responsibility of multiple roles, and inconsistency inherent in curriculum requirements.

Clearly, the factors contributing to teacher burnout are multi-faceted and complex, combining to create an environment where many dedicated teachers are feeling tremendous pressure to succeed while also experiencing, "a sense that their efforts on the job are not met with commensurate rewards, satisfaction, or fulfillment" (Tsang, 2019, p. 676). This pressure, along with a lack of resources and supports, at times can lead teachers to experience the feelings and physical/psychological symptoms associated with burnout.

Implications

According to Carey (2023), the physical signs of burnout within an individual may include fatigue, difficulty completing everyday tasks, mood swings, anxiety, headaches, gastrointestinal issues, and muscle pain. Burnout has also been found to weaken the immune system, subsequently resulting in an increased frequency of other types of illness. In addition to the physical and emotional impact on the teacher, burnout has been shown to contribute to a reduction in teaching performance, with a subsequent and significant negative impact on student achievement (Borg, 1990).

Educational research is consistent in recognizing that effective teachers are critical to improving schools, and that job-related stress and subsequent burnout limit such effectiveness (DeMatthews et al., 2021). Specifically, the feelings associated with stress and burnout often manifest in higher absenteeism and/or decreased productivity, and have a direct impact on the quality of instruction being provided to students (Maslach et al., 2001).

Supports to Address Teacher Burnout

Research on preventing and recovering from burnout has increased due to the prevalence of pandemic-related burnout (Johnson, 2022). However, suggestions for addressing burnout primarily focus on steps that may be taken by the individual themselves, rather than system-wide solutions, and there is limited research specific to the educational sector. Figley and Luck (2017), have looked to other professions such as health care to suggest four key steps to recovery from burnout, including engaging in evidence-based self-care such as meditation and making time for preferred activities, finding social support, developing detachment skills such as setting boundaries around work outside of school to develop strong work/life balance, and building compassion satisfaction by keeping records of success and accomplishments.

While an awareness of individualized supports is important, Gilmore et al., (2023) argue that addressing the burnout of individual educators without attending to school working conditions may do little to improve overall prevalence. Working conditions include collegiality, time pressures, professional development, and school safety (Johnson et al., 2012; Kraft et al., 2016; Sandilos & DiPerna, 2022), with the primary responsibility for shaping these working conditions falling to the school administrator (Burkhauser, 2017). Specifically, in addition to operational decisions such as resource allocation, personnel management, and program scheduling, working conditions are shaped by the support provided by administrators, the level of input they provide teachers in decision-making, their communication with staff, and the coaching they provide as instructional leaders.

Theoretical

Research theory identifies leadership practices that are effective in shaping a working environment that is conducive to teacher growth while also supporting teacher health and well-

being. In particular, care theory, stress theory, and servant leadership theory identify

foundational understandings and best practices that may be implemented by school leaders to

address teacher burnout.

Care Theory

The emergence of care ethics as a distinct moral theory is most often attributed to the

work of psychologist Carol Gilligan and philosopher Ned Noddings in the mid-1980s.

Subsequently, Joan Tronto added to the work with an exploration of the links between care

ethics, feminist theory, and political science, as well as the identification of phases of care

(Sander-Staudt, n.d.).

Gilligan's work became the foundation of care theory, and sought to correct the tendency

to use only the male perspective as the standard in moral reasoning (Gilligan, 1982). This work

has contributed to an increased awareness that care is an integral part of moral reasoning, and

educational approaches based on Gilligan's work have emphasized empathy and care responses,

both in teachers and leaders.

In her 1984 work, *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*,

philosopher Nel Noddings contributed to the work of care theory with a focus on the value of

relationships and the role of teachers and leaders as moral educators (Noddings, 2015). In

Nodding's theory, actions are not motivated by reasons and principles, but instead by the needs

of and responsibility for others (Bergmark, 2020). As such, a leader's response to an issue, need,

or concern should be situational and specific to the individuals directly involved.

Noddings emphasized care as a reciprocal act, or a relationship between a giver and a

receiver of care. When applied to educational leadership, Noddings theory suggests that to lead

effectively, leaders must know those they lead well and look for signs that the care, or support

they are providing has been received (Bergmark, 2020). According to Noddings, caring leaders make decisions based not solely on data, or "proof", but on what they know to be true about the needs of those they work with. Noddings promoted teacher choice in respect to curriculum and making operational decisions based on their contribution to the building of relationships, rather than the potential for higher test scores. Noddings also encouraged leaders to ask big picture questions with an intent to continually revisit the larger goals and aims of education (Noddings, 2002).

As stated by Noddings, "Caring leaders should be teachers" (Noddings, 2002, p. 344). They need to listen, ask questions, invite a sharing of perspectives, and lead discussions. They need to make it comfortable for teachers to seek help, and serve as models by continually engaging in critical thinking around processes and goals. They need to balance the demands of the larger Division with the needs and objectives of their particular school environment, and they need to demonstrate courage in remaining true to their convictions. Ultimately, "A caring leader must show the way" (p. 344).

Tronto's work, *An Ethic of Care* (1998), drew upon the work of others to restore the meaning of the word "ethics" to its original form; that being "knowledge about how to live a good life" (p. 15). Tronto asserted that making daily and thoughtful judgments about caring is a high moral calling" (p. 16), and expanded upon the definition of care to include the inner self and the surrounding environment.

In their work, Tronto et al. identified four phases of care, which they referred to as caring about, caring for, caregiving, and care receiving. "Caring about" involves being aware of and paying attention to the need for caring. It involves listening to needs, either articulated or unspoken, and determining which needs to address. "Caring for" then occurs when responsibility

is assumed for meeting an identified need through organizing, attaining or managing resources, and assuming fiscal responsibility, if required. "Caregiving" refers to the actual meeting or fulfilling of the need, and requires competence in completing specific tasks or roles. Finally, "Care receiving" involves the response of the individual or group receiving care, and will generally occur regardless of whether the need has been met or not. This response often brings the process full circle, as the individual providing the care must be attentive to the response in order to determine if additional needs have been identified.

One challenge recognized in Tronto's work that is often a contributor to teacher burnout is that within current popular culture, many individuals are unwilling to recognize or acknowledge their need for care as legitimate. Tronto states, "In a society in which vulnerability is perceived as weakness, those who are perceived to need more care, regardless of the situation, are in a more vulnerable position" (p. 19). Tronto suggested that some of the challenges related to the ethics of care may be overcome if the need for care was embraced as a part of human life and its role in creating interconnections and relationships was recognized as a benefit.

When applied to the realm of educational leadership, theories of care recognize the need for a relationship between the carer (principal) and the cared-for (teachers), and provide best practices by which such relationships may be developed and maintained. Within the model, a leader's demonstration of care includes their ability to identify with a particular situation or need, take responsibility, and accept consequences that may occur as a result of decision making (Kropiewnicki & Shapiro, 2001). Further, as an extension of care toward others, principals applying ethics of care demonstrate an awareness of and attention to an entire situation, including ideas and causes, as they address the outcomes or consequences of a problem in a holistic manner. Such decision-making has a direct impact on the environment and supports

made available to teachers, and as such, when applied effectively, may have a positive impact on the stressors and subsequent burnout teachers experience.

Stress Theory

Multiple researchers have made significant contributions to the understanding of stress and the subsequent impact it has on individuals. In particular, the theoretical underpinnings and application of principles outlined in theories such as the Transactional Stress Theory (TST), the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), and the Person-Environment Fit Theory (PEFT), may be directly applied by administrators and school divisions in addressing the issue of teacher stress and subsequent burnout.

The transactional theory of stress asserts that an individual responds to work stressors based on their individualized appraisal of that stressor (Lazarus et al., 1987). Responsibilities or demands may be appraised to be a hindrance, and perceived as threatening and debilitating, or appraised as a challenge, and perceived to be motivating or energizing. Appraising a responsibility as a hindrance rather than a challenge is associated with higher levels of emotional exhaustion, fatigue, work-to-family conflict, and subsequent burnout (Shirom et al., 2006). Transactional stress theory points to these differing perceptions as an explanation as to why the same demand may be responded to in significantly different ways among individuals (Kraimer, M., 2022), and notes that an individual's appraisal of a stressor may also be influenced by contextual conditions such as non-work-related demands or available supports and resources (Lazarus et al. 1987).

In an educational context, transactional stress theory posits that teacher stress results when classroom demands combine with the stress of other, external demands to exceed available resources and/or personal coping mechanisms. As such, teacher stress and burnout will likely be

specific to an individual and/or the context specific factors at play. For example, levels of teacher stress and the prevalence of burnout have been found to be greater in high-needs schools or those where teachers are required to meet the needs of students with limited resources (McCarthy et al., 2021). The variant responses of teachers to similar stressors suggests the need for administrators to develop relationships with teachers, an awareness of the specific contexts and demands placed upon them, and provide individualized support and/or resources as required.

Self-determination theory (SDT) is a theory of human motivation and personality development (Hood et al., 2020) which suggests that satisfying the basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness can enhance motivation and engagement, reduce levels of stress, and lead to improved performance (Bayly et al., 2020). Within a teaching context, the need for competence relates to a teacher's sense of ability and efficacy when interacting within the school environment. The need for autonomy involves experiencing a feeling of having choice and being in control respective to curriculum and pedagogy, and the need for relatedness refers to a sense of belonging and connection with others (Deci et al., 2000).

Specifically, SDT would assert that teachers who feel their work is having a direct impact on student success, are satisfied with the level of choice they have respective to their professional autonomy, and feel supported by their colleagues and administrators will subsequently experience lower levels of stress and/or burnout (Bayly et al., 2020). Conversely, "Where needs are unmet or thwarted, [teachers] have been found to be at an increased risk of stress, turnover intention and absenteeism (Hood et al., 2020, p.693).

A challenge with implementing SDT, as noted by Jansen et al. (2018), is that the satisfaction of these basic needs is determined by individuals' perceptions of their environment, and such perception may vary amongst individuals as a result of differing external and personal

factors. In other words, two teachers working in exactly the same environment and with similar provisions of competence, autonomy, and relatedness, may perceive the satisfaction of these needs differently and subsequently still experience different levels of stress. This suggests, as with the aforementioned transactional stress theory, that administrators need to be cognizant of individualized differences and respond as needed to factors that may be impacting a teachers' perception of the demands and supports existing within the school environment. Specifically, while challenging, school administrators should work to determine individual preferences and needs related to the provision of feedback and support. These needs may also vary depending upon the teacher's level of experience and the availability of collegial support or collaboration.

The person-environment fit theory (PEFT) emphasizes the interaction and conformity between an individual's traits, values, and abilities, and the requirements of the job assigned to them. As cited by Senal-Durak et al. (2021), "Environmental fit is particularly crucial for the concept of burnout" (p. 658), as incongruence between the person and the demands of their role make them vulnerable to negative outcomes such as poor well-being and high stress (Lambert et al., 2011). In addition to intrinsic traits, fit may be influenced by factors such as gender, age, education, and years of experience, as well as factors specific to and inherent in the environment itself. Studies have shown that irrespective of intrinsic traits, individuals placed in environments not conducive to their level of education and/or experience have reported higher levels of emotional exhaustion and subsequent burnout (Armstrong et al., 2014). For example, a 2022 study by researchers Jian, Wijaya, & Yu, demonstrated that younger, less experienced teachers reported higher levels of stress than their older, more experienced counterparts. The researchers inferred that increased stress levels in younger teachers may primarily be because those teachers are still adapting to the demands of the profession and developing effective teaching pedagogy.

Administrators who apply the PEF theory will carefully examine teacher traits, experience, and specific training in order to ensure they are placed within a congruent assignment. For example, an educator in their first year of teaching would ideally not be placed within a classroom consisting of students with complex needs. Applying PEF theory will become a challenge when inevitably the pool of available choices is limited. At such times, a "perfect" fit may not be possible, resulting in the need for additional supports. Conversely, administrators should be cognizant that even teachers who appear to be in a good fit assignment may become vulnerable to the demands becoming excessive over time.

Servant Leadership Theory

In seeking to identify leadership practices that align most closely with the principles outlined within stress and care theories, as well as containing supports described by teachers as being most helpful in addressing the levels of stress placed upon them, servant leadership stands out as a particularly applicable theory. According to Robert Greenleaf, who first developed the concept, the servant leader shares power, puts the needs of others first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible (Greenleaf, 1970). While the model continues to be developed and refined, Spears (2004) asserts that servant leaders are characterized by interactive listening, empathy, a commitment to healing others, awareness, an ability to persuade, clearly conceptualized goals, foresight, stewardship, commitment to growth, and a fostering of community. Northouse (2022) views servant leadership as a "moral process" (p. 15) that seeks to create change for the common good, and further asserts that servant leaders have an "ethical responsibility to attend to the needs and concerns of followers" (p. 7). Servant leaders learn from others through active immersion within the daily work, and subsequently develop those skills which provide the highest level of support.

In contrast to other theories of leadership, servant leadership is committed to helping followers develop and perform to their fullest potential rather than the accumulation and exercise of power (Terosky et al., 2016). Additionally, while other authoritative and power focused approaches to leadership may involve providing guidance, direction, and motivation from the top down, the main goal of a servant leader is to provide service in collaboration with others within a learning community (Tait, 2020). Servant leaders believe that leadership is most effective when a leader walks *"alongside"* others as an active participant in initiatives and learning, and takes on whatever role or task is needed in each moment in order to support others in their work.

As a strength, servant leadership is considered by many to be one of the most effective leadership models, and has been shown to have a direct impact on organizational performance (Northouse, 2022), teacher effectiveness, and subsequent student achievement (Schroder, 2016). An extensive review of peer-reviewed empirical studies conducted by van Dierendonck (2011) concluded that those who are supervised by servant leaders perform better, demonstrate greater satisfaction and commitment, and maintain positive job attitudes. Additionally, researchers Sipe and Frick (2009) have asserted that servant leadership reinforces ethical, insightful and principle-centered decisions.

It should be noted that, if not managed carefully, a servant leadership approach may result in excessive stress for the leader themselves. While working to serve others, a leader ascribing to such an approach must be cognizant of their individual workload and establish clear expectations and boundaries in order to maintain their own personal well-being.

Synthesis

As stated by Jian et al, (2023), "Schools need to be more attentive to teachers' sustainable well-being rather than just focusing on their performance" (p. 10). Care, stress, and servant

leadership theory each emphasize the importance of relationships, a holistic awareness of factors impacting decision making, and an empathetic, situational approach. The impact of a relationship-based, caring approach to leadership on both teacher well-being and student success is significantly supported by other leadership research, and as such, the study and application of principles ascribed by these researchers would be beneficial to principals and other school leaders, specifically in the attempt to reduce teacher stress and burnout.

Additional Supports

Mentorship

Feelings of isolation and a lack of collegial support have been identified as significant contributing factors to both the level of and ability of teachers to manage job-related stress. Teachers primarily work alone within their classrooms, often plan independently of others, and are often seen as being solely responsible for the success of their students. It is worth noting that the Covid-19 pandemic further increased this isolation due to the lack of in-person contact with fellow teachers, resulting in a degeneration of network support (Grissom, et al., 2021). This has been particularly impactful for less experienced teachers who would especially benefit from the information and support provided by colleague mentors. In addition, burnout itself is isolating, with the natural tendency of individuals experiencing such feelings being to isolate and withdraw (Navarra, 2021).

This sense of isolation and excessive responsibility may be reduced through the support of teacher colleagues. Robust research supports the importance of teachers' relationships with their colleagues as a key contributor to their own professional well-being (Gilmour et al., 2023). Teacher collaboration is associated with a variety of positive outcomes such as increased job satisfaction, improved instructional quality, and increased collective efficacy (Goddard et al.,

2015). This is particularly true for early career teachers, with research indicating they are less likely to leave the profession when they are supported through positive collaboration with colleagues. (Smith et al., 2004). Research has also noted that such collaboration and mentorship have a positive impact on decreasing stress and facilitating the development of effective coping skills (Demir, Buler, Bulut, & Hisar, 2014). As stated by researchers Rommel and Cooner (2020) "Every [teacher] needs a trusted colleague, friend, or mentor that can provide sage advice, listen to the occasional venting, offer support, and bring laughter to a situation" (p. 2).

Generally, opportunities for collaboration or mentorship within schools are formed on a "as needed" basis, in the example of committee work, or teacher initiated through established personal connections. Some teachers, particularly those new to the profession, may not have connections or feel comfortable seeking support from their more experienced colleagues. A structured mentorship/collaboration program, while considering the need to limit additional burdens on teachers by perhaps using existing meeting times, could provide opportunities for informal, yet structured, non-evaluative conversation and support.

Professional Learning

Teachers' access to high-quality, relevant professional learning; specifically, that which directly addresses their needs as opposed to adding another task to their already full plates, has been shown to enhance educator self-efficacy, reduce feelings of stress, and provide support in the management of job demands (Renbarger & Davis, 2019). In contrast, "When teachers perceive barriers to PD, their job satisfaction—a construct that has an inverse relationship with burnout—is reduced" (Gilmour, 2023, p. 121).

One area of professional learning that has been identified as being of particular support is in the area of classroom management. Klassen and Chiu (2010) found that teachers' experience

with classroom stress was negatively associated with their self-efficacy for classroom management. Providing teachers with professional learning specific to the area of classroom management may subsequently decrease overall levels of stress. In addition, professional learning in areas such as conflict resolution, relationship building, and effective coping strategies would be beneficial in both mitigating and managing the demands of the position.

Finally, school leaders also experience significant stress and a subsequent impact on their effectiveness, particularly in their first years as principals; therefore, intervention at the administrator level, through professional learning and coaching, can result in meaningful changes to schools (Gates et al., 2019). Training for administrators could focus specifically on shaping working conditions and applying leadership practices best suited to supporting all teachers, such as those outlined in servant leadership, care, and stress theory.

Conclusion

Given the strength and scope of the impact of an effective teacher, investing in successful strategies to mitigate the effects of stress and related burnout is likely to have a very large payoff (Grissom, Egalite & Lindsay, 2021). Administrators who are aware of, consider, and apply the principles of care and stress theory, actively embody the tenets of servant leadership, and ensure that teachers have access to meaningful, timely mentorship and professional learning, will directly address the level of stress inherent in the profession and have a direct impact on subsequent burnout.

Additional research specific to teacher burnout is needed; specifically, the impact of systemic working conditions on teacher stress. The prevalence and impact of teacher burnout clearly indicates that system-level issues are at play, and such issues cannot be addressed by focusing on changing the burnout or efficacy of individual teachers. Instead, leveraging

administrators with training and resources to create conditions within schools that promote positive working and learning environments, continuing to advocate for and effectively allocate resources directly to classrooms, and promoting ongoing research into best practices to support teacher wellness is necessary to truly make an impactful and long-lasting difference to the issue of teacher burnout.

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