

Appendix: Interview Questions

Introductory Questions

1. Tell me about your teaching career, such as why you decided to go into teaching, where you've taught, what you've taught, etc.?
 - a. What is your educational background?
 - i. Level of education?
 - ii. Age?
 - b. How many years have you been in the teaching profession?
 - c. What grade level do you currently teach?
 - i. Have you always taught that grade level?
 - d. What subject do you currently teach? (where applicable)
 - i. Have you always taught that subject?
 - e. Why did you go into teaching in the first place?
 - i. What motivated you to enter the teaching profession?
 1. Does that still motivate you?
 - f. Have you always taught in your current building?
 - i. How many different physical building moves have you made within your current district?
 - ii. How many different physical building moves have you made over the course of your career?
 - g. How stable has your current district been?
 - i. How do you perceive your district?
 1. What are its strengths and weaknesses?
 - ii. Why did you decide to work in this district?
 1. Where are you originally from?

[SEGWAY]

Research Questions

(1) How do teachers explain their decisions or reasons to be absent?

(2) How do teachers who are chronically absent differ from teachers who are not chronically absent in their explanation of their own absenteeism?

1. There are a lot of different policies around sick and vacation time. I'm wondering if you could tell me a little bit about the policies in your district as outlined in your district's collective bargaining agreement? (This might be referred to as a teacher attendance policy, sick/emergency/vacation time, paid time off.)
2. How does your district enforce these policies?
 - a. In other schools, I've noticed that sometimes schools enforce formal "teacher attendance policies" differently. To what degree does your school enforce the district wide teacher attendance policy as outlined in your district's collective bargaining agreement?

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- b. Are there any instances that you know of where the district's formal teacher attendance policy is enforced differently? (i.e., in own school and other schools in district)
 - i. What does it look like?
 - c. What do you think about what the district/school does in terms of enforcing the teacher attendance policy as outlined in your district's collective bargaining agreement?
 - i. Are there any "loopholes" to the teacher attendance policy in the collective bargaining agreement that allow teachers to take more days off than their allotted days?
3. I've also noticed that sometimes there are "informal policies and agreements" around teacher time off. For example [give example]. What, if any, informal agreements exist around teacher time off in your school?
 - a. What about in other schools?
4. Teachers use a lot of strategies when using their paid time off. Some save up all the time, some use it throughout the year as needed, some use it around vacation time. What is your approach to using your allotted paid time off?
 - a. In general, do you exhaust your paid time off each year? Why or why not?
 - i. How often do you use more than your allotted paid time off each year (in days)?
 - b. Do you take your paid time off as needed? Or, do you plan it out at the beginning of each school year? Why do you take this approach?
 - c. Are there other strategies that you've thought of or heard of?
 - d. Why did you decide on the strategy you mentioned earlier?
5. What do you do when you want to take a day off for illness or personal reasons?
 - a. Do you have to specify what you are using your days off for?
6. Teachers use their days off for different purposes, such as running errands, childcare, caring for elderly parents, health, job searching/interviews, or they just need a day. When you use paid time off, what reason(s) do you use it for? What reasons make up for most of your days off?
 - a. What reasons do you report?
 - b. How do these reported reasons differ from actual reasons for using paid time off?
 - i. What are some reasons for using paid time off that you do not officially report?
 - ii. How common is it for you to use a day off as a personal day?
7. In what ways do you think other teachers use their days off?
8. How do you handle a situation where your days off are exhausted, but you need a day off?
 - a. How often do you find yourself in such a situation? Why?
 - iii. Is it because you aren't allotted enough days off? Job stress? Personal stress?
 - b. How do other teachers handle this situation?
9. A lot of people find themselves in a situation where they've used all their days off, but they need another day. Has that ever happened to you? If yes, about how often does that happen? How do you deal with it?
 - a. What reasons lead you to be absent from work without using a day off?
 - iv. What about your colleagues who are absent without using paid time off (frequency and reasons)?

10. How often do you miss work due to job-related stress (i.e., not illness or vacation related)?
 - a. In your perception, how often do your colleagues miss work due to job-related stress?
11. How do you decide whether to be absent from work?
 - a. What work-related factors contribute to your decisions whether to be absent from work?
12. Are there any official school and/or district level incentives that encourage teachers not to use their days off? If yes, what are they?
 - a. Are there any unofficial incentives?
13. Do you think these incentives impact your attendance? How?
14. Is there anything your school or district could do to change how you use your days off? (i.e., If your school was less chaotic, if you felt more supported, if you had a better leader, etc.)
 - a. If yes, what would it look like?
 - b. How would a greater incentive impact your attendance behavior, if at all?
15. What would have the greatest impact on your attendance behaviors?
 - a. Incentive?
 - b. Culture/climate?

Concluding Questions

1. What else would you like to tell me?
2. Do you have any questions for me?