

**UNDERSTANDING RESIGNATIONS OF
SCIENCE, MATHEMATICS, AND READING TEACHERS
(UR-SMART)**

A PROPOSAL TO THE
MULTI-UNIVERSITY READING, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE INITIATIVE
(MURMSI) FOR A PILOT STUDY

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1. ABSTRACT

This pilot study describes the first steps in a larger plan to address a major statewide problem of teacher turnover and retention. A necessary first step is to obtain reliable and highly specific data concerning why teachers leave. The second step uses this information to design appropriate interventions for an ongoing process. To this end a highly detailed set of data will be collected to allow analysis of the reasons for K-12 teacher resignations and of how their importance varies with subject taught, level of instruction, length of service, school environmental and demographic factors, avenue of entry to teaching, administrative support, pre-service, in-service experience, and other factors. Privacy-secure data will be sought by telephone from all teachers that resigned in 2002-2003 and 2003-2004. This information will be compared with data that will be secured from a random sample of continuing teachers stratified to possess the same characteristics as the resigned teachers. The principal participating districts are Hillsborough and Pinellas counties, whose 418 schools have a wide range of characteristics. These districts lost 1159 teachers in 2001-2002. Other districts have also been invited to contribute data.

The pilot study will be conducted under the general supervision of the PI and a small Steering Committee of USF faculty and School District staff, and managed by a project director. The Steering Committee will approve the detailed interview protocols, scripts, and survey forms for submission to the USF Institutional Research Board. Districts will provide names, schools, and contact information for teachers, however, no records will be kept that would allow direct association of results and data with individual teachers or schools. The project director will be assisted by support personnel under specific contracts to conduct interviews and to compile results. Results will be published in established journals and as special reports.

We will make and promote adoption of recommendations that reduce unwanted teacher turnover based on the first year's pilot study. We will seek additional support to expand this effort to increase reliability of data where needed and to develop, implement and evaluate intervention strategies.