



Stopping the Brain Drain of Skilled Veteran Teachers: Retaining and Valuing their Hard-Won Experience

William L. Fibkins

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Veteran educators are being encouraged to take early retirement in order to create jobs for less-experienced, lower-paid novices. Veteran educators are not alone: early retirement promotions have become the norm for aging workers in America. Consequently, there is a brain-drain of skilled workers at the national, state, and local levels. The early retirement of our most talented veteran educators is leaving our schools without the necessary leadership, hard-earned experience, proven skills, and wisdom to meet the evolving challenges our country faces. Indeed, there are long-term consequences of losing skilled educators while they are in the prime of their professional lives. Addressing these concerns, this book challenges the “good news only” theory of early retirement promotions which suggest that veteran educators are no longer needed as they age and that their retirement is the only way schools can survive financially in times of economic uncertainty. This theory contends that everyone involved gets a reward: the novice educators get jobs and the veterans get some cash. This trade is seemingly no problem, until the veteran educators are out the door and the school staff, students, and parents are left without their steady guiding hands. Instead of hastily luring prime educators out the schoolhouse door with planned buyout promotions, schools should offer our most gifted veteran educators career alternatives that will encourage and reward them to remain on board, thereby allowing them to lead novice and mid-career staff, students, parents, and community members. Examining the negative consequences of early retirement promotions on school culture, administrative leadership, teacher and student performance, community reaction, *Stopping the Brain Drain of Skilled Veteran Teachers* will not only expose some of the major drawbacks of early buyouts of veteran educators, but will also suggest creative career alternative to keep such teachers on board.

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