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A Descriptive Study of the Relationship Between Teacher Mentoring Programs and Retention Rates

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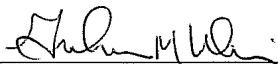
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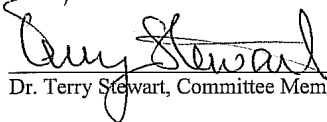
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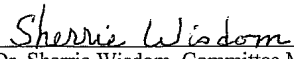
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I want to thank my family for seeing me through this undertaking with

patience, love and understanding.

Abstract

The design of this descriptive study is to identify those factors contributing to the

high rate of early career teacher attrition and to identify a means for its reduction. The

subjects for this study were limited to teachers from the southwest section of a

Midwestern state. Five school districts were randomly selected based upon the

researcher having previously met school district personnel in various professional

settings and request letters were sent to superintendents and building principals.

Voluntary teacher participation in completing a short, internet-based survey served as

the basis with five districts responding. These districts, while confined to a southwest

portion of a Midwestern state, are demographically representative of school districts

across the nation by including both suburban and rural. Additionally, districts

included in the distribution of this survey dispersed across the socio-economic

spectrum as well as being representative in along the continuum in areas of ethnicity,

free/reduced lunch, and other special populations. The researcher developed the

survey instrument for this study. Responses from the survey were limited to data

collected during the 2008 school year. A longer period of data collection could be

beneficial in order to identify existing trends. Implementing a formal mentoring

program has surfaced as a vital tool in shaping educators today. Additionally, these

programs need to be comprehensive, coherent, and sustained in order to be effective.

They should incorporate many activities and serve many people while also being

logically connected and supportive, making a smooth transition for new teachers as

they engage in professional development programs offered by their districts (Portner,

2005). The focus was to determine whether the 51 responding teachers in a small, southwest region of a Midwestern state value participation in a mentoring program within the first five years as an important factor in teacher retention.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Background of the Study

Quality teachers are the most important contributing factor in schools across the United States. After the support received at home, teachers are the most significant determinant of a child's academic success, more significant than either classroom size or school facility (Buckley, Schneider, & Shang, 2004).

President Clinton's *Call to Action for American Education in the 21st Century* educated the public, stating there would be a need for two million teachers over the next decade to keep pace with the number of retirements and to accommodate an increasing student enrollment. Universities began focusing efforts on:

> teacher education and recruitment. When the supply did not seem to catch up to the demand many believed the reason was a shortage of teacher candidates. However, an analysis of national data by Richard Ingersoll showed that widely publicized school staffing problems were not solely, or even primarily, the result of too few trained and recruited teachers. Rather, the data indicated that school staffing problems were the result of a revolving door phenomenon in which large numbers of teachers were leaving the profession long before retirement. (Portner, 2005, p. 31)

In light of such empirical data, the greatest challenge facing school administrators is the hiring and retention of the best teachers. Statistics show, however, that three out of every ten new teachers move to a different school or quit

teaching altogether after their first year (Mulford, 2003). Adding to the crisis is the fact that teacher attrition rates are the most severe among teachers who have been in the classroom only four to five years, according to a report by the Education Commission of the States regarding teacher recruitment and retention with attrition being the greatest among middle and high school teachers (Cochran & Reese, 2007). An educator's duty is to support students along their paths to academic success. School administrators have a responsibility to meet the standards and goals set forth by local, state, and federal government; to accomplish this they must equip classrooms with the necessary materials and retain the most highly qualified teachers available. One proven way to achieve this is through teacher mentoring programs that have increased in recent years in direct response to increase teacher retention, to support new teachers, and to improve student achievement, as mandated by law in many states (Hanson & Moir, 2008).

Nationwide, a startling one-third of new teachers leave the profession within the first three years, and as many as 50 percent leave teaching within the first five years, costing districts about $50,000 per year for each teacher who is interviewed and hired and then leaves. In fact, "a report by the Alliance for Excellent Education dated June 2004 revealed that American schools spend more than $2.6 billion annually to replace teachers who have dropped out of the teaching profession" (Portner, 2005, p. 32). Many educators attribute this phenomenon to the sink-or-swim, trial-by-fire attitude of the teaching profession (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004) and

at a time when the primary focus remains on improving student achievement, schools must find ways to keep good teachers (Portner, 2005).

This is an eye-opening realization considering there is a need for new teachers every year to fill positions left as veteran teachers retire. In a field already inundated with responsibilities and accountabilities, the importance of educators staying on the cutting edge of the newest strategies and methodologies in teaching is difficult when the profession loses so many new recruits within the first few years. The profession needs to provide as much assistance in these formative years in order to secure America's academic future.

Furthermore, a study conducted in 2002 by Podgursky, Monroe, and Watson demonstrated a direct correlation between teacher attrition rates and ACT/SAT scores. In a startling finding, data shows that the best and the brightest appear to be the ones most likely to leave the profession before retirement. Data demonstrated showed that both men and women who have above average, college entrance exam scores leave the teaching profession sooner than lower-scoring counterparts do.

In another study, the data showed that those who scored in the top quartile on college entrance exams were twice as likely to leave the profession as those who scored in the bottom quartile (Henke, Chen, & Geis, 2000). Statistics such as these clearly show that support systems need to be in place to provide an adequate professional safety net for the formative years in this career field. When considering how challenging the first year of teaching is, no matter how much student teaching experience someone has or the number of theory classes taken, the need for help to

get through it seems only logical. When in the classroom alone with students, first year teachers are overwhelmed (Wood, 2005). With this in mind, several states have adopted well-designed and well-implemented induction programs for new teachers and are already seeing a reduction in teacher attrition rates by as much as two-thirds after the initial phase (Rowland & Coble, 2005). At this time of critical need to retain quality teachers across the United States, mentoring programs are proving to be one of the most effective means of accomplishing the goal.

Statement of the Problem

A daunting problem facing school districts each year is how to attract and retain quality teachers. Portner (2005) reported that, even though salary is always an issue, paychecks are not at the top of the list of reasons teachers leave. "According to a national study, only 10 percent of teachers left because they were dissatisfied with salaries and benefits" (p. 31). Further, research shows that support is a more important factor than dollar amounts when it comes to contract renewal time. "Teacher induction and mentoring programs play a role in keeping new teachers in the profession by assisting them in navigating what can sometimes be the rough waters of their first years of teaching" (Cochran & Reese, 2007, p. 25).

Purpose of the Study

Implementing a formal mentoring program has surfaced as a vital tool in shaping today's educators. In researching the means in which to do this, educators consider many factors and collect data through ongoing research. Additionally, these programs need to be comprehensive, coherent, and sustainable in order to be

effective. They should incorporate many activities and serve many people while also being "logically connected and supportive of each other, seamlessly sending novice teachers into the district's ongoing professional development program" (Portner, 2005, p. 31). The focus of this dissertation was to determine whether teachers in a small, southwest region of a Midwestern state value participation in a mentoring program within the first five years as an important factor in teacher retention.

Research Questions

To facilitate this study in a small, southwest region of a Midwestern state, the following questions will be explored:

1. What are the factors contributing to teacher attrition?

2. How is a mentoring program helpful to new teachers?

3. How does participation in a mentoring program relate to the perceptions of teachers continuing in the education field?

Significance of the Study

This study will assist administrators and other educators in determining those factors contributing to the high rate of teacher attrition and identifying a means for its reduction. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) contended that same-field mentors, common collaboration time with other teachers in the same subject area, and participation in an outside network of teachers are the most important factors for reducing teacher attrition. "Research has also shown that many new teachers are reluctant to seek help from experienced teachers and that veteran teachers are disinclined to offer support to novice teachers fearing they will be intruding" (Lee et al., 2006, p. 236). The

implementation of formal mentoring programs for new teachers is taking place in numerous school districts, and the fact that many are already seeing the benefits of such support systems is not surprising. The premise of this study is that well-designed and implemented mentoring programs are essential to teacher retention in the first five years in the field.

Limitations of the Study

The subjects for this study were limited to teachers from a small, southwest section of a Midwestern state. Five school districts were identified and request letters were sent to superintendents and building principals. Teachers who are demographically representative of school districts across the nation were asked for their voluntary participation in completing a short, internet-based survey. Rural as well as large city districts were included in this study.

The survey instrument for this study was developed by the researcher. Possible limitations based upon this might include, but not be limited to, only those questions thought of as pertinent by the researcher, unintentionally leading questions used to direct respondents along a particular line of thinking, and any other omissions brought about due to this study having only one developer. Responses to the survey were self-reported by the participants.

Responses from the survey were limited to data collected during the 2008 school year. A longer period of data collection could be beneficial in order to identify trends in the data. For an accurate estimate of the relationship between variables, a descriptive study usually needs a sample of hundreds or even thousands of subjects.

The estimate of the relationship is less likely to be biased if there is a high participation rate in a sample selected randomly from a population.

Definitions of Key Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions were used:

Attrition. Teachers leaving the teaching profession for jobs in fields other than education.

Induction program. Guidance and orientation programs including various forms of activities such as classes, workshops, and seminars in which new teachers are required to attend as part of their teaching contract. (Term interchangeable with mentoring program.)

Mentoring program. Personal guidance in which new teachers are paired with others who have taught more than three years. (Term interchangeable with induction program.)

Retention. Keeping teachers employed and teaching within the school district for the duration of their careers.

Summary

Data show that teacher attrition rates are a concern for administrators and educators across the United States. Programs are needed to address this problem while providing adequate support for early career teachers. Because of this growing concern, many school leaders have turned to mandated teacher mentoring programs and are experiencing a rise in teacher retention rates. Lee et al. (2006) suggested viewing mentoring as a process in which nurturing occurs between a more skilled

person and one who is less. Those who are more experienced serve as role models, teaching and encouraging others as they work toward professional and personal development.

Portner (2005) added his views on what he believes to be the strongest attributes of mentoring programs. He offered that mentoring provides a positive impact on all parties, not just the new teacher. While he agrees it allows early career teachers the support they need in the classroom leading to a more enjoyable experience, he further noted the benefits for veteran teachers as well as building administrators. Through their participation in the induction and mentoring process, a sense of community evolves including increased feelings of "pride and accomplishment that comes from helping others grow" (p. 32). As the pace of change increases in the field of education, the focus should be on programs that will help school districts across the nation attract and retain the best educators available for America's youth.

Chapter Two: Review of Relevant Literature

The purpose of this study was to help administrators and other educators determine those factors contributing to the high rate of teacher attrition and to identify a means for its reduction. In this chapter, the review of literature is divided into the following areas: (a) history, (b) factors contributing to teacher attrition, (c) factors contributing to teacher retention, (d) the importance of mentoring programs, (e) components of a comprehensive induction system, (f) mentoring as a component of induction, (g) induction and mentoring models, (h) state examples of induction and mentoring models, (i) retaining and compensating mentors, and (j) formal versus informal mentoring programs.

History of Teacher Support Programs

History shows that support for education by the federal government has been modest. During the 20th century funding increased, but much of it was earmarked solely for the children of the country's most impoverished families. It is only within the last decade that an apparent shift has taken place and federal policy has focused on teacher quality. One specific area gaining attention for its promising investment is that of sustainment for early career teachers while new to the classroom (Hess, Rotherham, & Walsh, 2004).

Before the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1965, federal support for schools was largely limited to financial stability to help in areas deemed as "federally-impacted" and land grants reserved for solely for colleges. Public schools fell under the states' domain, though the federal government did make

history by increasing teacher supply through support for post-secondary education. With the passing of the Morrill Act in 1862, the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, and the Servicemen's Readjustment Act (commonly known today as the GI Bill) in 1944, established provisions promoted teacher education (Lawrence & Cotner, 2004).

A major study conducted by James Coleman in the mid-1960s caught the attention of the nation when his findings suggested, "pupil achievement could not be significantly elevated until conditions governed by race, class, and income inequality were rearranged to strengthen the positive role of healthy families" (Fallon, 2003, p. 3).

In 1972, sociologist Christopher Jencks confirmed Coleman's theory by summarizing, "The character of a school's output depends largely on a single input, namely the characteristics of the entering children" (Fallon, 2003, p. 3). Despite these conclusions, the early 1970s saw the American education system placing increased focus on attracting and retaining new teachers to the profession. By the mid-1970s, experts debated various ways of supporting new teachers including longer preparatory programs, extensive internships and induction programs. The establishment of such programs had grown so much by 1979 that the Educational Testing Service commissioned a survey in order to evaluate orientation programs and track their evolution (Lawrence & Cotner, 2004).

The idea of teacher induction programs was so widely supported that in the mid-1980s, many state legislatures mandated induction programs with a few focusing on the structure of delivery and control of all content. During this same time,

American schools were under the microscope, gaining national attention with the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, which called for powerful reform in education. Claiming that American teachers were ill-prepared and unable to teach higher-level thinking, particularly in math and science, researchers began searching for ways to attract and retain quality teachers. *A Nation Prepared* followed in 1986, outlined the need for a national board to "establish high standards for what teachers need to know and be able to do, and to certify teachers who meet that standard" (Grosso de Leon, 2003, p. 4). Recognition of this recommendation occurred through the establishment of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards that included induction programs and other means of supporting teachers.

By the 1990s, educators realized that induction programs were even more important than once thought as they:

> positively related to the quality of the first teaching experience. In 1996, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future suggested the first few years of teaching to be structured like that of a medical residency. New teachers would be required to communicate regularly with expert teachers on instructional practices and classroom supervision while receiving feedback and being formally evaluated. (Fallon, 2003, p. 3)

That same year, the Association of Teacher Educators and Kappa Delta Pi combined resources to create the Commission on Professional Support and Development for New Teachers (Hoover, 2010, p. 16). As with any new job, proper training and support is imperative to future success, and in education, mentoring programs aimed

at pairing new teachers with veterans filled the void. Through the analysis of new teacher data, the underlying premise is that high rates of teacher turnover are of concern not only because they contribute to school staffing problems and perennial shortages but also because this form of organizational instability is likely to be related to organizational effectiveness (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004, p. 32).

Factors Contributing to Teacher Attrition

In recent years, much focus has turned in educational circles to determining the reasons why teacher attrition rates are so high within the first five years of employment. An important issue has surfaced regarding the teacher preparation programs themselves. The main problem with these programs is that "teacher preparation programs vary dramatically in quality. States have broad flexibility to set their own criteria for teacher education" (Kaplan & Owings, 2002, p. 31) making it difficult for employers to compare potential candidates. Having a teaching degree in-hand does not necessarily indicate the readiness of new hires, and many school districts are feeling the ramifications of poor teacher certification standards.

Similarly, Kaplan and Owings (2002) reported that "teacher certification lacks consistent standards to classify candidates' effectiveness. Sadly, as a profession, teaching has no consensus on how to train good teachers or ensure they have mastered essential skills and knowledge" (p. 31). In January 2003, *Education Week* published a list detailing state support for new teachers. The *State Support for New Teachers* report (2003), which included all 50 states and the District of Columbia, painted a dismal picture of how this nation fared when it comes to new teacher

support. While 30 of the 51 offered some sort of induction program, only 16 states required new teacher participation as well as provided the funding. Additionally, eight states required adequate matching of mentors to mentees based on school, subject, and/or grade level, and seven allowed mentors release time. Seven states reported the requirement of compensation for mentors for their work while Louisiana and New Mexico providing the funding for compensation but not requiring it. Perhaps this is contributes to the reasons so many novice teachers leave the field so quickly when their education has failed to provide them with the necessary tools for success.

After the awarding of a grant in 2003 by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the University of Central Missouri established the Missouri Center for Career Education (MCCE). Heeding the signs of a much-needed support system in its state's public schools, MCCE established teacher support systems aimed at helping new educators succeed. Included were the New Teacher Institute and a two-year induction program with a mentoring element for new teachers. "The first year experiences focus on program standards for student achievement while the second year of the program focuses more on improving instruction, enhancing professionalism, and refining activities begun in the first year" (Cochran & Reese, 2007, p. 26).

A more recent survey conducted by researcher Janice Hall found "slightly higher levels of statewide participation in teacher induction programs in 2004. She reported that 33 states now mandated new teacher mentoring programs with 22

providing state funding for those programs" (Hall, 2005, p. 218). Additionally, data showed 23 states required training for all mentors. In 2007, the National Council on Teacher Quality reported 45 states as mandating some form of mentoring for beginning teachers. Additionally, 31 of these states required training for those serving as mentors with 21 states requiring that at least regular observations of new teachers take place (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2008).

Shockingly, some school districts are targeting new teachers to teach classes in which they are not certified to teach and about which they have little knowledge. While many high school classrooms host teachers with subject area certification in courses such as math, science, English, and foreign language, strikingly different statistics exist in many subfields. In fact, the website for the National Center for Education Statistics stated that in classes such as "Earth sciences, economics, geography, and government/civics, fewer than 50 percent of classes were taught by a teacher who held a major in the respective subfield" (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008). Much has been written about the need to provide assistance to new teachers, yet little time is often given to this endeavor. "The dual goals of recruiting and retaining effective teachers are often difficult to realize because of insufficient or sometimes dwindling resources" (Guarino, Santibanez & Daley, 2006, p. 173). Due to current economic conditions, many states are tightening the purse strings when it comes to public education. Without adequate funding, programs designed to raise the quality of teaching will suffer and so will the students (Guarino et al., 2006).

One particular area worth noting when searching for potential reasons for the high teacher attrition rate is that of special education. "One of the most important findings has been that teacher turnover is strongly affected by academic field. Special education, mathematics, and science are typically found to be the fields of highest turnover" (Ingersoll, 2002, p. 17). When asked what factors directly affect their decision whether or not to stay in teaching, special education teachers "reported being more fearful of verbal and physical abuse, troubled by noisy students, and unappreciated by staff and administrators" (Ax, Conderman, & Stephens, 2001, p. 67). Also indicated in the report is that "of those ED/BD teachers surveyed [by Ax and Stephens in 1998,] 42 percent indicated a lack of support as a primary reason for leaving the field, 25 percent highlighted the lack of administrative support as central to their decision" (Ax et al., 2001, p. 67).

Another area specifically researched by McCann, Johannessen, & Ricca in 2005 and again in 2008 by Hans-Vaughn & Scherff was English. While the list of reasons English teachers left included poor working conditions, inadequate teacher preparation programs, student discipline problems, low salaries, no buy-in regarding the decision-making process, and lack of support, these educators also indicated they felt especially targeted due to NCLB requirements and an overemphasis put on standardized testing (Hans-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008, p. 23).

Delving deeper into the area of English, additional reasons, though related to some earlier reasons, for leaving surfaced including outwardly antagonistic behavior toward these teachers from colleagues in other disciplines when standardized test

scores were low and increased special education demands in the classroom, again due to the mandates of NCLB (Hans-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008, p. 22). Interesting to note is that during the course of research conducted by McCann et al. two of the six teachers participating in the study left by year five.

A survey conducted in 2001 by the National Center for Education Statistics of public and private school teachers found that 38 percent of those who left the profession attributed their leaving to dissatisfaction with administrative support and that 32 percent of those who were departing did so because of workplace conditions (p. 1). In order to handle the inevitable dilemmas that will arise, support is key. Deciding upon a teaching style while keeping their students in mind, novice educators require colleagues who can help bear the load. When one's job is already stressful and demanding, a lack of support can be extremely detrimental to job performance, satisfaction, and retention (Meyer, 2002). So significant are these findings that states are increasingly acknowledging the fact that teachers' growth spans more than just their first year in the classroom. Beginning teacher programs are changing across the country, moving away from those focused only on brand-new teachers. Conway (2006) contended:

> A clearer awareness can be seen as school districts continue support programs
> for teachers in their second, third, and fourth years who often continue to face
> challenges that go beyond survival. Good teachers know that learning to teach
> is a career-long endeavor, but many leave the profession in the first five years

due to frustration. If the profession can support teachers throughout this difficult five-year period, the chances for retention are much greater. (p. 57)

The most significant result of teachers leaving the field early in their careers, coupled with inadequate support systems is found in high poverty schools where impoverished students are taught by ill prepared, novice teachers, the vast majority of whom have less than three years in the field (Berry, 2004). With teacher attrition rates on the rise each year, it is concerning that U.S. students "face less-experienced and less-effective teachers nearly every year throughout their primary education. Incoming teachers are often not as successful compared to more experienced teachers in raising student achievement, student test scores, and school standards" (Abdallah, 2009, p. 1).

Many leave the profession within the first five years, requiring numerous poor, urban schools to hire teachers without certification in a subject area or some on emergency waivers just to fill their openings (Carey, 2004). In fact, at the turn of millennium, statistics showed that in the U.S., underprivileged urban children had only a 50 percent probability of being taught by a teacher with a college major in the subject areas of either science or math (Ingersoll, 1999). With funding secured through private sources and supplemented by the State Department of Education (SDE), the Urban Mentoring Program (UMP) was implemented in the northeastern part of the United States as a means of providing full-time mentors to schools in need.

The identification of such schools was accomplished by looking at criteria that included a student population of 50 percent or more qualifying for free or reduced

lunch status, high teacher attrition rates with 10 or more first or second year teachers in the building. Once meeting the designated criteria, a "package deal" offer to schools was made, providing teacher placement as well as mentoring for these struggling urban sites. Per program requirements, mentors spent three and a half days a week working in their designated schools with 12 to 15 mentees each. Mentor duties included materials preparation for lessons, observations and critiques of lessons taught, as well as aiding their protégés with the integration of technology in the classroom.

After the completion a 16-month study on the UMP, Yendol-Hoppy et al. (2009) reported the importance of focusing on the distinct characteristics inherent in urban schools. Based upon data and observations gleaned from their study, the researchers indicated specific characteristics as hallmarks of urban districts. These hallmarks included the following: academically struggling students, overcrowded classrooms, aging facilities, high student mobility rate, increased pressure due to high-stakes standardized tests, difficulty with the recruitment/retention of qualified teachers, and a decreasing tax base due to local, state and federal economic shifts (p. 27).

Furthermore, Yendol-Hoppy et al. (2009) contended such characteristics as those identified must be addressed and at the forefront of any mentoring program developed in order for them to be successful. "Mentoring in under-resourced urban schools requires substantive, targeted resources if we are going to address new teacher success and survival as well as cultivate dispositions of responsibility and

social justice" (p. 42). The incorporation of mentors throughout the school culture is imperative in viewing them as active members in the school and district community, maintaining a firm grasp on its pulse. Being on the inside and having buy-in to students' daily needs is vital to urban school survival.

Another explanation, at least in terms of areas outside large cities, may be that colleges are not graduating enough teacher candidates to fill the growing demand in classrooms due to attrition or retirement. An example of this can be found in the Moffat County School District in Craig, Colorado during the 2007-08 school year. In a circumstance that fluctuates across the spectrum each year, this school system found itself facing an almost 15 percent increase in the attrition rate when "24 teachers and other licensed staff left their positions in the school district" (Manley, 2008, p. 1). Considering the area in which this district is located, almost 200 miles from Denver, teacher candidates were scarce, leaving administrators worried about filling all the openings. Another example of rural district staffing issues is in Alaska where 53 percent of the state's schools are located well outside any large city. The Alaska Department of Education reported high staff turnover rates with the average teacher hired leaving within the first three years. In an effort to attract applicants, these rural districts strive to maintain attractive salaries and good benefits including health insurance. Additionally, some districts offer other incentives such as furnished housing, signing bonuses, as well as covering at least some portion of travel/moving expenses. In some cases, offering teacher candidates partial to full student loan forgiveness is just another enticement in the concerted effort to attract employees

(Gaquin, 2008). When left to determine how best to fill these open positions, schools are turning more often to candidates who are less qualified sometimes meaning they had little to no coursework in their teacher preparation program for the courses they are hired to teach.

When examining high-poverty districts, several factors help to explain why they are less likely to employ high-quality teachers and often lose those they do hire. Low teacher salaries are the one obvious contributing factor. Districts that cannot afford to pay their teachers competitive salaries find themselves left behind for wealthier schools (Mullinix, 2002). Levin and Quinn (2003) further noted that oftentimes, urban schools lose the best candidates, namely those who really want to work in such places, because of "lengthy, bureaucratic hiring processes" (p. 7) in their report for the New Teacher Project.

California's New Teacher Project (NTP) paired new hires with exemplary teachers who have shown at least five years of successful practices and teaching in the classroom. After completing the application and interview process, newly selected mentors are given release time, usually for three years, from their regular classroom assignment to work as a full-time mentor for 15 to 18 mentees. With five days of initial training finished, NTP mentors meet weekly or bi-weekly with their new teacher protégés, providing a one-on-one, first line of defense support system for these early career educators. In her 2010 article regarding the NTP, Hoover maintained, "Competent and well-trained teachers positively impact their students'

learning; ergo, investing in a strong foundation for novice teachers' learning is critically important" (p. 23).

Contrastingly, the Harvard Project on the Next Generation of Teachers reported that research showed new teachers based their decisions on whether to leave low income schools on how well they were supported with vital resources such as being assigned to a mentor, guidance in understanding curriculum, and encouraging hiring processes (Hess et al., 2004). Information such as this lends credence to the ideas of professional development and a vast cache of support structures being a vital component of any new teacher's calendar. Failure to provide such imperative pieces to the educational career puzzle will likely result in young educators leaving the school district long before they receive tenure. The report concluded by saying:

> Given the many challenges of working in low-income schools, teachers need
> to have broad, substantive support from a range of experienced colleagues. At
> a minimum, new teachers in these schools need substantive, structured,
> regular interactions with expert, veteran colleagues. (Moore-Johnson, Kardos,
> Kauffman, Lui, & Donaldson, 2004, p. 24)

Leaving out vital components of any process is detrimental to the outcome, and hoping for success without appropriate preparation and support for educators leaves them destined for failure.

"Another important finding has been that teachers' decisions whether to stay or leave the teaching profession are highly influenced by their age. Researchers have consistently found that younger teachers have higher rates of departure" (Ingersoll,

2002, p. 17). The belief is that novice teachers should be afforded adequate support and in return, they will be better teachers while experiencing an increased sense of efficacy and self-confidence, which will result in attrition rates decreasing (Meyer, 2002). Whether in their 20s or beyond, it is safe to say that secure and stable environments are essential in the lives of career educators, and it is the responsibility of the school site as well as the district to provide this atmosphere for their employees. Without doing so, the likelihood of teacher retention is doomed from the start.

Along these same lines, it is the expectation for new teachers to do the same job as seasoned teachers but with added responsibilities. "New teachers often find themselves overwhelmed with work, both at school and at home. Yet we continue to ask them to do all of the extras that veterans do" (Renard, 2003, p. 63). Anyone knowledgeable about the education field knows that new teachers are hired not only to teach but to fill any openings the school has in extra-curricular activities, making for a hectic schedule. With this in mind, many dissatisfied teachers seek what they perceive will be "new teaching positions where they could have more reasonable assignments, sufficient help with the curriculum, positive communication with parents, and support from colleagues and the principal" (Berry, 2004, p. 7) in districts strikingly different from their current assignment.

In her article entitled, "Setting New Teachers Up for Failure…or Success," Renard (2003) suggested the "major concerns of many new teachers include classroom management, student motivation, differentiation for individual student

needs, assessment and evaluation of learning, and dealing effectively with parents"
(p. 63). It is not enough for principals to hire a teacher and then leave them alone in
the classroom without the proper amount of support; districts should offer programs
specifically designed with these novice professionals in mind. While it is true that
beginning-teacher support systems exist in many states, it is also true that their
policies vary greatly depending on how well these programs are funded (Conway,
2006).

School leaders need to offer the proper training, guidance, and support in the
field of teaching or the attrition rate will continue to skyrocket through the next
decade. In a concerted effort to remedy these problems, teacher mentoring and
induction programs have grown rapidly in recent decades with more than 80 percent
of new teachers participating in some kind of program. This is a significant increase
from only 40 percent in 1990-91 (Russell, 2006).

At a critical point in their career when they should be given ample time to
prepare and learn the art of teaching while finding their own style, the practice is to
overload new teachers with an unreasonable amount of responsibilities that send
many looking for new employment. Couple this with the additional stress of the day-
to-day challenges inherent in classroom management; it should come as no surprise
that so many early-career educators are lost.

Factors Contributing to Teacher Retention

Finding ways of aiding in the retention of new teachers is imperative to the
field of teaching. Even though "recent stories have surfaced demonstrating that salary

increases have expanded the supply of certified teachers for several hard-to-staff-schools" (Berry, 2004, p. 6), research increasingly points to the desperate need for beginning teacher support structures. Collaborative planning time and focus groups are two such examples of these support structures.

In any organization, conscious efforts that develop the skills of all staff and aid them in working and learning together are crucial. Allowing teachers collaborative time that is allocated within the parameters of the school day gives them the opportunity to form professional relationships that can keep them in the classroom for many years to come.

> In high-quality schools, teachers form discussion groups to focus on education issues directly related to student needs. The teachers with a common planning period met in a study group to explore education issues. The single rule was that the time could not be used as a gripe session. (Marshall, Pritchard & Gunderson, 2001, p. 67)

Teachers, perhaps even more than other professionals, need time for professional dialogue and planning to be the best they can be and common planning time and collaboration with other teachers have been noted as strong indicators of new teachers remaining in the classroom and in the education profession (Berry, 2004).

Learning communities are another option for providing support to teachers who often work in isolation. The culture of such a community is defined by participants' collaborative endeavors, shared norms, values, and practices (Meyer, 2002). The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards supports learning

communities, embracing the practices of inquiry, self-reflection, and systematic thinking as teachers learn through experience and develop their skills.

Another type of support structure often mentioned in education is the induction program. New teacher orientation and induction programs provide guidance first-year guidance. Oftentimes, coupled with other means of support, "principals can arrange an induction process that includes high-quality mentoring for new teachers to help them quickly understand and adjust to the school culture and role expectations" (Kaplan & Owings, 2002, p. 31). A solid induction program provided to beginning teachers should include professional development that is specific to this early stage in their career meaning the focus should be on the challenges they will face in the beginning such as balancing home and work, classroom management, and effective lesson planning (Conway et al., 2002).

Recent reports at the national level identify 38 states as offering some kind of program targeted at novice teachers with research further showing "the induction process works best when it is systematically embedded in the school culture" (Wood, 2005, p. 45). Additionally, *Education Week* reported, "80 percent to 90 percent of teachers who go through high-caliber induction programs stay in the field for five years or more" (Sack, 2005, p. 18). As with any new job, helping new teachers formally acclimate to their new environment while providing a basis for support is essential in teacher retention.

Another similar technique worth mentioning is peer coaching. While many aspects mirror those in mentoring, peer coaching focuses specifically on content area

when assigning a veteran to an early career teacher. "Peer coaching is another strategy that principals can provide to help new teachers regularly observe and confer with master teachers in their content area" (Kaplan & Owings, 2002, p. 33). This type of support can provide new teachers with invaluable tools that will enable them to perform to the highest standard in their own classrooms. Though similar to mentoring, "coaching is more focused and usually shorter in duration, and relies on job-related tasks or skills and is accomplished through instruction, demonstration, and high-impact feedback" (Hopkins-Thompson, 2000, p. 29). Coaching that allows new teachers a chance to observe veteran teachers as well as vital face-to-face contact with someone who is willing to help them fine-tune their own teaching.

Perhaps the answer to the question of how new teachers would best be supported lies in part in the information gathered by Smith and Ingersoll (2004) which revealed that if new teachers had helpful mentors, attrition after their first year was greatly diminished. A few years later, the consideration of this idea was vital in teacher retention. Additionally, Conway (2006) expressed the importance of new teacher support by saying:

> It is hard to watch beginning teachers teach their second year for the rest of their careers. And while these teachers mean well; they like kids, and they try to make connections for students they still lack the reflective capacity needed to continue to grow. Recognizing the need for professional development support beyond the first year will help not only in retaining the reflective

teachers, but also to create reflective teachers among those who are not

naturally reflective. (p.57)

With these ideas in mind and the success of America's schools at stake, the need for

programs geared toward the teaching and support of teachers is critical. Teachers

deserve the encouragement and sustainment inherent in mentoring programs and in

turn, students will benefit from more confident and well-trained staff.

The National Center for Education Statistics estimated that over the course of

the next decade approximately 2.4 million new teachers will need to be hired, but that

is only a small part of the task which lies ahead (Uate, 2005). With this staggering

number of new educators comes the daunting task of providing an adequate support

system as well as on-going professional development in an effort to see them become

tenured, and eventually, veteran classroom teachers. Educators should commit

themselves to creating a profession that nurtures its young rather than feeding on

them (Renard, 2003).

Importance of Mentoring Programs

Because a high teacher turnover rate can "disrupt the quality of school climate

and student achievement" (Kaplan & Owings, 2002, p. 31), finding a way to retain

quality teachers by giving them what they need in their formative years in the

teaching field is tremendously important. Startling as it may seem, teachers leaving

the field or dropping out is higher than the student dropout rate in some districts. In

the end, though, it is students who are most affected, suffering due to classroom

exposure of inexperienced teachers (Fulton et al., 2005). Additionally, Fulton et al. (2005) suggested:

> Research confirms what we already know from experience: students who have an   ineffective teacher at any point during their educational experience may test as much as one year behind their peers taught by a more effective teacher. Those unfortunate enough to have weak teachers for three or more years in a row may never catch up. (p. 2)

Mentoring is widely becoming the support strategy of choice for school districts all across the nation, receiving the most acclaim in recent years for its success.

"Mentoring is an intense relationship in which a senior person oversees the career development and psychosocial development of a less-experienced person" (Hopkins-Thompson, 2000, p. 29). Increased demands in education are making it necessary for new teachers to receive more support than ever in this challenging career. Offering one-on-one support is proving to be a lifeline long needed in this field considering assistance should be provided for someone starting a new job, especially when that job is as complex as teaching (Ganser, 1999). Districts are finding that mentors provide their mentees with much needed assessment tools used to access background knowledge and interests. They also serve an invaluable resource and sounding board for the purposes of classroom instruction and assessment (Fayne & Ortquist-Ahrens, 2006). "Mentoring is one of the most encouraging ways that first-year and indeed all teachers can feel invited to improve their own classroom effectiveness" (Hoffmeyer, Milliren & Eckstein, 2005, p. 59).

In the past, new teachers were left to wade through the unknowns of their job with very little help or support from fellow teachers. This is not to say that teachers do not help other teachers, but programs did not exist to prompt such a professional relationship. In fact, many teachers' work lives consist of days spent in isolation from their professional peers by the confines of self-contained classrooms (Meyer, 2002). Separation from colleagues in teaching must be addressed in order to prepare successful teachers (Buckner & McDowelle, 2000). By allowing veteran teachers the opportunity to work with novice teachers, districts may see improvement in teaching across the board.

When serving as a mentor for others, teachers may begin rethinking their own methods of instruction and classroom management. These seasoned teachers may even try new things in an effort to share these new ideas and strategies with others (Conway, 2006). When solid workplace relationships are built, everyone is a winner and "the more time a mentee spends with a mentor, the greater the mentee satisfaction with the mentor and their respective career and psychosocial development progress" (Van Ast & Field, 2005, p. 187). Mentoring provides the opportunity for teacher colleagues to form symbiotic relationships in which early career educators learn from veterans while forging support systems that can function in either direction. These positive working environments offer a sense of safety and security for the daily routine as well as creating a bond between co-workers.

Research suggests that collaborative development of curriculum helps novices learn from mentors. In co-planning, novice teachers learn from hearing and

seeing how their mentors articulate buried, practical knowledge. Conversely,

as they work to develop a unit of instruction, a mentor can learn about new

curriculum materials or pedagogy from the novice. (Meyer, 2002, p. 28)

The support pre-service teachers receive from collaboration, feedback, and dialogue

characteristic of mentoring, peer coaching, and study groups help in supporting them

as they implement differentiated curriculum and instruction (Brimijoin & Alouf,

2003).

The significance of hiring and retaining quality teachers has piqued the

attention of legislators across the nation. One case in point is Rep. George Miller of

California, a leading Democrat in Congress, who announced legislation in 2005.

Robelen (2005) reported Miller as saying:

To attract and retain highly qualified teachers, including provisions that would

offer higher pay for exemplary educators who transfer into hard-to-staff

schools. The bill would help create what a press release says are true career

ladders by augmenting salaries for teachers who advance their professional

development and mentor new colleagues. The legislation would underwrite

state-of-the-art induction programs, help veteran teachers improve their skills

through peer mentoring and review programs, and help states overhaul and

upgrade their principal certification and professional development programs.

(p. 26)

The proposed legislation, Teacher Excellence for All Children Act (TEACH Act),

included an estimated $3.4 billion price tag including the following budget items:

$2.2 billion for highly qualified teachers in hard-to-staff schools, $300 million in

grants for the creation and implementation of formal induction programs, and $200

million for career ladder advancement to augment master teacher salaries.

Additionally earmarked were $200 million for the recruitment of math and science

teachers and $100 million for principal training improvements as well as funding

grants for undergraduates who promise to teach and loan forgiveness for veteran

teachers (District Administration, 2005). Such programs, if properly funded and

implemented, could be part of the answer to this country's high attrition rate in

education while saving money for school districts. Some sources estimate that for

every $1.00 funneled into such programs, the payoff may be nearly $1.50 (Russell,

2006). Unfortunately, other factors contribute to waning numbers of teachers making

the classroom their career home.

Since the introduction of the TEACH Act in 2005, the appointment of Rep.

Miller as the Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee occurred. From

the early ideas of legislation geared toward federal support for educators, 2010

brought about a huge step in educational reform. With the Reauthorization of the

Elementary and Secondary Education Act in March, "new federal requirements for

states regarding teacher qualifications will undoubtedly have a tremendous affect on

teacher preparation programs, mentoring of newly hired teachers, the assessment of

in-service teachers and partnerships between local school districts and institutions of

higher education" (Whildan, 2010, p. 10). Aimed at significant changes in the

education system including the No Child Left Behind Act, Congress recognized the

importance of a major overhaul to better serve educators and students alike through the concerted efforts of Congressional and Administrative Department staff as well as associations across the United States that serve higher education. Additionally signed into law in August 2010, the Education Jobs and Medicaid Assistance Act is expected to create and/or save some 319,000 American jobs including 161,000 in teaching (Belknap, 2010).

Seriously disconcerting is the thought that the placement of ill-prepared teachers is happening in high poverty school buildings where the normal problems educators face are multiplied several times over. "High turnover among new teachers (e.g., up to 50 percent within the first 5 years) leaves students in hard-to-staff-schools facing a revolving door of untried novices who do not have the skills to help them reach higher academic standards" (Berry, 2004, p. 6). This creates a potentially catastrophic climate in light of local, state, and federal mandates on educational achievement expectations. Clearly, support systems are the door to aid and mentoring programs are the key to unlocking new teacher success. The reflective and collaborative processes inherent in mentoring, peer coaching, and study groups, "can enhance best practice in differentiation and provide the means for sustaining 'reform-based' professional development that ensures effective transfer from theory to practice" (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman & Yoon, 2001, p. 920).

Unlike other programs used in educational circles in the past, mentoring programs can be designed to meet goals that are more ambitious than promoting occasional opportunities for mentors to ask their protégés how it is going (Ganser,

1999). Though all support from colleagues should be welcomed whole-heartedly, this structured support base is providing solid evidence that it is just what has been needed for new hires in education. "Mentoring is vital. Veteran teachers can become exhilarated by sharing their experiences with a novice teacher, and new teachers gain indispensible knowledge" (Uate, 2005, p. 42). In a recent qualitative study, statistics show that, within a teacher's first three years, "the attrition rate for new teachers who had participated in an induction program was only about 15 percent, compared with 26 percent for teachers who had not received any induction support" (Berry, 2004, p. 16) emphatically demonstrating a positive correlation between participation in mentoring programs and teacher retention. Worth noting is that the developing relationship between mentor and mentee has a greater impact on the psychosocial development of each than their professional growth.

Additionally, support systems, when taught and implemented correctly, show positive strides in career development (Van Ast & Field, 2005). In 2005-06, the New York City School District spent some $36 million on full-time mentors who were able to give new teachers at least 1.25 hours per week of structured, one-to-one coaching. Additionally, other teachers continued to be mentored during their second and third years of teaching rather than being released from the program after year one. These teachers gave the program high marks, with 80 percent or more saying they found their mentors very helpful in their on-going professional development. To the great excitement of many, the percentage of mentored teachers who left the New York City

school district after the first year of teaching dropped from 9.4 percent in 2004-05 to 6.5 percent in 2005-06 (Keller, 2007).

Data provided by the National Center for Education Statistics' Schools and Staffing Survey shows that attrition can be cut in half by participation in comprehensive induction programs, suggesting that educators view such programs as an integral part of the design system for U.S. school districts and utilize the positive impact they have on keeping new teachers in the classroom. Simply put, a mentoring program can extend beyond the provision of support and encouragement to focus on the dispositions, knowledge, and performance associated with effective teaching (Ganser, 1999). With such powerful feedback from teachers who have participated coming in, one would have to question any other primary method of support.

In her September 2000 article for the *NASSP Bulletin*, Peggy A. Hopkins-Thompson suggested:

Mentoring and coaching processes can serve to augment the succession planning and professional development of districts. They can model a culture of collaboration and congeniality in which best thinking occurs through collaborative judgment. In short, they are the low-cost answer to the best way adults learn. (p. 29)

By fostering such professional relationships, educators can only begin to imagine the long-term affect mentoring will have on the future of education.

One example of a district that took a chance by changing and implementing a

formal induction/mentoring program is New York's Islip Public Schools. "In 1998-99, Islip retained only 29 of the 46 new teachers hired. Over the next three school years, after instituting its induction and mentoring program, the district retained 65 of 68 new hires" (Portner, 2005, p. 31). With data to support the need for such programming, Islip's administrators were excited about the results. Because new teachers are highly valued and mentoring by veteran colleagues is considered:

> fundamental to their professional growth as well as their ability to better serve our children, it is essential for the school district to develop, support, and maintain an effective induction and mentoring program for new teachers. It is safe to say that if taken seriously and implemented effectively, the investment in induction and mentoring programs will result in far-reaching dividends (Portner, 2005, p. 33).

As if in response to Islip's lead, 2004 saw 33 states requiring mentoring programs for new teachers.

Induction refers to both a system of supports, which are available to beginning teachers *and* a stage in professional development. An induction system

> should include a network of supports, people, and processes all focused on assuring that new educators become effective in their work. An induction system is both a phase, and a set period in time and a network of relationships and supports with well-defined roles, activities, and outcomes. (Fulton et al., 2005, p. 4)

The definition of mentoring is the "process by which a trusted and experienced person takes a direct and personal interest in the development and education of younger or less experienced individuals" (Arin-Krupp, 1987, p. 12). Veteran teachers serving as mentors should help by being a resource of teaching methods and experience. They should strive to be not only colleagues, but also confidantes for their mentees and positive role models for the profession. A mentor should also serve as a model to enable teachers to become an independent professional and a questioner to promote thinking, analysis, diagnosis, problem solving, and planning. A mentor should also be visionary and reflective. By giving their time, support, and energy to early career teachers, they have much to gain themselves. Many mentors discussed the opportunity mentoring gave them to reflect on teaching and why and how experienced teachers do the things they do. Their participation in a mentoring program gave them the time to reflect and helped them verbalize to other teachers some of the tricks of the trade. Before, many of the teachers stated they went about their routines from day to day, week to week, the whole school year, and never gave much thought to why they did what they did (Hayes, 2003). Participation in mentoring programs touches many aspects of teachers' lives. From strong support structures for teaching and classroom management to the formation of lasting professional relationships, mentoring programs provide essential components to teacher retention.

Recruiting New Teachers, a national organization based in Belmont, Massachusetts, defines induction and mentoring as a period of socialization to

the teaching profession, adjustment to the procedures and mores of a school site and school system, and development of effective instructional and classroom management skills. In an operational sense, new teacher induction and mentoring concentrate their focus on four key components: students and community, school and district policies and procedures, curriculum and instruction, and assessment. (Portner, 2005, p. 31)

The basic principle for such programs is that by improving the quality of teaching, the quality of learning improves which results in higher student learning/achievement levels (Portner, 2005).

Dramatically higher student achievement is just what the Islip Public Schools in New York celebrated after they created and implemented a well-designed and supported induction and mentoring program in the 2000-01 school year. The data show that

in the 1998-99 school year, only 40 percent of Islip's high school graduates earned Regents diplomas, and 80 students were enrolled in Advanced Placement classes. Those numbers rose to 70 percent of the graduates earning Regents diplomas and 120 students enrolling in AP classes just one year after the induction program started (Portner, 2005, p. 31).

One word of caution is needed, however when dealing with mentoring programs. The viewing of these programs as a quick fix in helping new teachers adjust how they teach should not occur. This would be both inaccurate and overly simplistic. It is precarious to view mentoring programs as a final effort to salvage new

hires to the teaching field who should have never been there in the first place (Ganser, 1999). It would not be wise to think mentoring programs were the answer to all of education's problems, but they are moving the profession in the right direction when considering proactive ways of both training and retaining quality teachers.

> The overall purposes of induction are to acculturate the new professional to the professional community in the school and district and to support them through the course of structured learning and professional growth (generally 1-3 years) that will become the basis for ongoing professional development and life-long learning throughout their career. (Ferguson & Morihara, 2007, p. 3)

When considering mentoring programs, recommended components vary little across the spectrum. A short, 2-4 day orientation before school begins is the consensus (Wong, 2004). This allows mentors and mentees to meet and receive a brief overview of expectations prior to the onset of the school year. Also indicated by numerous sources is the idea that mentoring should include individual, peer, and group sessions (Curran & Goldrick, 2002; Wong, 2004; Fulton et al., 2005; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Cuddapah, 2002). Having numerous resources as well as people at the disposal of a new teacher, helps ensure the likelihood they will receive the necessary support in a timely fashion. When there is only one go-to person for a mentee, frustration and a sense of lack of support may occur if the assigned mentor is unavailable.

Howe (2006) and Wong (2004) identified observation of other classrooms as well as the opportunity to visit other schools as an integral means of enhancing the mentoring experience. Oftentimes, new teachers spend much of their in isolation, either teaching or working on other aspects of their job in the confines of their own room. Requiring mentees to spend time watching other teachers in their own element rather than just discussing what and how they operate, affords a first-hand look at the inside of the profession. Similarly, the formation of study groups comprised new and seasoned teachers both within and across buildings (Brimijoin & Alouf, 2003) was also seen as a beneficial means of support.

Actively participating in ongoing learning enriches the mentee teacher experience by allowing for the acquirement of new knowledge and skills through seminars, workshops, university classes and other structured learning (Howe, 2006; Kelley, 2004; Fulton et al., 2005; Wong, 2004). Considering certification requirements mandate teachers continue with their education even after obtaining a job, these offerings allow those to be met while gaining more resources from which to draw. Likewise, teacher participation in external networks of professionals through classes, seminars, workshops, e-mentoring and e-networking, and list serves, etc. (Fulton et al., 2005; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004) provides additional means of connecting with others when questions and concerns arise.

Opportunities through school committees structured around the need for ongoing collaboration between colleagues regarding curriculum design, teaching, and analysis of student work (Fulton et al., 2005) added to the learning and basis of

building support systems. Relationships forged through these means give new teachers a sense of belonging and ownership in the school community. Working together in groups focused on a common goal, makes the maintenance of program alignment between induction, classroom needs and professional standards (Whisnant, Elliott & Pynchon, 2005) easier to achieve. Meeting goals while keeping policy mandates and curriculum standards in mind is imperative to classroom success as a teacher. Providing ongoing formative assessment and feedback based on clear standards (Curran & Goldrick, 2002) guides mentors and mentees, ensuring program requirements are met.

Finally, support and participation from building and district administrators as well as cooperation and coordination with teacher unions (Whisnant et al., 2005; Wood, 2005; Wong, 2004) was identified as a strong indicator for mentoring program success. Providing incentives for both new and veteran teachers to participate in induction/mentoring activities such as common planning time and the financing of necessary materials, as well as a viewing a reduced workloads were vital components. Additionally, the availability of enhanced mentoring programs for teachers serving in high-poverty, hard-to-staff schools with highly diverse student populations (Bartlett, Lopez, Sugarman, & Wilson, 2005; Simmons, 2000; Whisnant et al., 2005) was considered an important component to any mandated mentoring program.

Mentoring as Part of Induction

"Across the many studies reviewed, researchers found that both induction systems and mentoring programs, whether they were a component induction or served

as the sole induction strategy for the new teacher, were highly variable across states and districts. Mentoring programs, in particular, varied both in focus or purpose and in structure leading to variable outcomes and effectiveness" (Ferguson & Morihara, 2007, p. 4). The point is that unless the focus and purposes of the mentoring component are clearly articulated, they can vary across mentors who are left to draw upon their own theories, perspectives, and experiences (Young, Bullough, Draper, Smith & Erickson, 2005). Whether the focus of the mentoring component is well articulated and overt or left to the interpretation of mentors, teachers, and administrators, the studies and program descriptions reviewed also revealed a wide variety in the structures of mentoring programs (Cuddapah, 2002).

First, the length or duration of most new teacher mentoring programs lasted one school year, but those identified as being more effective overall were often two- or three-year programs with different developmental focuses each subsequent year (Cuddapah, 2002; Fulton et al., 2005). The more time spent mentoring new teachers, it is more likely they will receive the support they need to remain in the classroom. Along with this, Curran and Goldrick (2002) and Kilburg and Hancock (2006) cited data from the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education. They reported that 38% of new teacher protégés who worked with mentors a few times a year acknowledged significant instructional skills improvement. Interestingly, that figure increases to a startling 88% for those who work with mentors at least once a week.

Another area of variance found in mentoring programs was in the number of serviced teachers in the beginning of their careers. Some programs outlined the

mentor teacher as a full-time classroom teacher with no release time meaning he or she typically works with only one mentee teacher. Conversely, afforded release time for the mentor teacher means he or she could conceivably serve one or two protégés simultaneously. Another option is when the mentor teacher is either recently retired or specifically hired as a full-time coach for new teachers, it is possible for him or her to have a caseload of anywhere from four to 16 mentees (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Kilburg & Hancock 2006).

The studies recommended careful attention be placed on matching mentors to mentees, with an emphasis put on them teaching in the same building as well as the same subject area or grade level. Time for one-on-one interactions between mentors and mentees reduced drastically if they did not work in the same building. Regularly calling and emailing can help with this somewhat, but the sheer nature of the mentoring changes (Kilburg & Hancock, 2006).

Further, suggested was factoring in such variables as ethnicity, gender, and learning styles when choosing mentors. Also, found to be highly important was the fact that mentoring needed to be voluntary and not required with some self-selected mentor volunteers in conjunction with those appointed either by a building principal or by the district. (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000). Additionally, data indicated a range in the number of years of experience mentors had, ranging anywhere from four years to 20 or more years. Using experience and recognition as an excellent teacher as a major part of the selection criteria seemed to be widely practiced, but this should not be the sole basis for choosing teacher mentors.

A wide variance across the spectrum was found when considering the activities comprised in mentoring programs. Mentoring activities ranged from base level to fully comprehensive depending on funding and level of commitment to supporting new teachers. Activities included, but were limited to simple orientation to lessons modeled by veteran mentor teachers, weekly mentor/mentee meetings, as well as peer observations (Curran & Goldrick, 2002; Humphrey, Wechsler & Bosetti, 2007).

Finally, the inherent need for mentoring/induction programs to be state, district, or grant funded, or some combination of these three, is apparent. If local, state, or federal legislation mandates such programs are put into place, financing is topmost priority. Research showed that if a state required new teacher mentoring as a step in achieving licensure, these programs were nearly all state funded (Bartlett et al, 2005); however, some instances of unfunded mandates in which districts offered simpler, less supportive programs exist.

Intense and insightful evaluation and documentation of mentoring program implementation and learning was lacking in a majority of the programs researched by Bartlett et al. (2005). A notable exception was the University of California, Santa Cruz New Teacher Center where mentors serve in informal programs more akin to a buddy system in which pairing with first-year teachers occurs, offering emotional support and getting-to-know-the-ropes tips. When paid stipends, mentors also generally received formal training, ranging from 2-3 half or full-day workshops to programs that followed up summer institutes with monthly mentor meetings,

professional development workshops, and structured mentor networking. Additionally, an emphasis on awareness of current pedagogy, assessment driven planning, and standards on the part of the mentor was important to avoid reinforcing status-quo manners of teaching. Some programs used kits or materials already prepared by others as the backbone for their training while others developed their own handbooks (Simmons, 2000).

Regardless of the article, study, or program description, the critical need for mentor preparation and ongoing professional development is evident. In fact, several asserted that the most significant component of any mentoring program is the quality of the mentor (Brimijoin & Alouf, 2003; Curran & Goldrick, 2002; Hoffmeyer et al., 2005; Howe, 2006; Krull, 2005; Moir, 2000; Suters & Kershaw, 2002). Other studies reported that even after mentor training, nearly 20% of the mentors felt that they could still use additional direction, support and resources to carry out their roles, (Suters & Kershaw, 2002) which supports the need for ongoing mentor development. Simply having years of teaching experience, then, is insufficient either to be a mentor or even to qualify for mentor training in some cases. "Though states have increasingly been involved in mandating and funding induction programs, there is by no means consistency across districts and states, nor adequate services for all novice teachers" (Russell, 2006, p. 1). Regardless of whether they are more similar than different, the research supports the importance of new teacher mentoring programs.

Induction and Mentoring Models

The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (2006) highlighted an exemplary model of new teacher induction. The New Teacher Center (NTC) at the University of California, Santa Cruz may very well be on the cutting edge when it comes to formal programs. "The central element of the NTC Induction Model is one-on-one mentoring by a carefully selected and highly-trained mentor" (Russell, 2006, p. 2). Additionally, participants included all first through second-year teachers and their mentors who are provided support through the program network. All teachers involved are afforded release time to meet expectations detailed in the program, which include "assisting new teachers, formative assessments, linkages to pre-service education, program evaluation, and other elements" (Russell, 2006, p. 2). The hope is that career learning and positive relationships abound through the implementation of this induction and mentoring model.

Another induction model developed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) is The Pathwise Framework Induction Program. The Pathwise model is comprehensive in design, providing not only support, but also training for mentors and beginning teachers. Through the utilization of strictly defined tasks, early career teachers and their mentors work on developing and mastering integral teaching skills. Computer-based support is also available including teacher resource pages, refresher courses for both teacher and mentor, and discussion boards (Russell, 2006).

Finally, the Teachers for a New Era Project of the Carnegie Corporation of New York is working to strengthen all levels of teaching by creating state-of-the-art

programs at the collegiate level where budding teachers receive their introductory education. Establishing teaching as a clinical profession is the base principle of the New Era Project. Specifically, this means that any premiere teacher education program will function under the premise that the first two years of teaching is a period of residency. During this time, new teachers will be mentored and monitored insuring the highest possible learning experience for early career educators (Russell, 2006).

State Examples Induction and Mentoring Models

An early example of state directive aimed specifically at supporting new teachers is found in California. In the late 1980s, the state's New Teacher Project researched and funded various induction models, leading to legislation that provided for Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment programs throughout the state (Russell, 2006). With information gathered from these programs, similar programs began emerging throughout the United States over the course of the next decade and beyond.

As the implementation and success of mentoring programs spread across the nation, more legislation was introduced and new systems were put in place to help beginning teachers. In fact in 2004, the University of Alaska and the Alaska Department of Education forged a partnership to begin what they called the Statewide Mentor Project based on the National Teacher Council (NTC) model. With data that supported the effectiveness of the program in increasing teacher retention, the state legislature voted to approve funding for a statewide program (Russell, 2006).

In New Jersey, the state determined that all districts should have some type of mentoring program in place. While these programs vary greatly due mainly to uneven funding, Mentoring for Quality Induction is required in all schools (Russell, 2006). This statewide approach to districts across New Jersey is common across the U.S. with increasing numbers of participants each year. Dating back more than two decades, the idea that support systems for new teachers are vital has become the general norm in educational circles.

After legislation was enacted in the 1990s, the New Teacher Induction/Teacher Mentoring Program mandated three years of formal mentoring for all new Michigan teachers (Russell, 2006). Providing them with all the necessary resources in order to adhere to program standards, Michigan teachers benefit from a support system backed by their Department of Education that ensuring steps are taken to help them achieve success during their first years of teaching.

Even with statistics to support the impact mentoring programs have on early career teachers, Virginia only funds about half of the costs for its mandated mentoring program. Like Michigan, support from the state Department of Education is apparent in such aspects as guidelines aimed at program effectiveness and the implementation of 20 pilot induction programs across the state (Russell, 2006). Virginia school districts have embraced such mentoring programs for many years now and hope that more state funding becomes available with the introduction of new legislation in the years to come.

In Georgia, higher education institutions have been involved in developing

resources for new teacher support. Albany State University, the University of Georgia, and Valdosta State University founded the Georgia Systemic Teacher Education Program in 2000 which has a BRIDGE (Building Resources: Induction and Development of Georgia Educators) component. This is a peer-reviewed, interactive online resource and mentoring site for teachers (Russell, 2006). The idea behind computer-aided support is so that new teachers can receive help whenever and wherever they need it, even when another human being may not be readily available. These on-line resources allow teachers to access information via any computer or internet capable device, offering an additional means of written and visual teaching support.

Support for beginning teachers is imperative for success and the United States is making strides to develop programs intended to serve as teaching and learning opportunities in the early career years. While numerous factors play a role in how these programs are developed, implemented and funded it is important to remember that mentors are the key to achieving the goals set forth in any mentoring program.

Retaining and Compensating Mentors

Retention of quality teachers remains front and center within school systems. With this in mind, mentoring it may be best thought of "as a way to engage, challenge and keep good, effective teachers. As practicing teachers, mentors appreciate and value the opportunities they have to interact, share expertise and develop" (Tillman, 2000, p. 24) while supporting the career track's newest members. In some cases, the opportunity to shine and share where they may have only hesitated or hidden, is given

to teachers. For some who may have been otherwise isolated inside their classrooms and considered to be intimidating by colleagues, a rare opportunity to flourish may come through mentorship. The opposite of this would be when mentors are not purposefully selected and serve to perpetuate a stalemate in educational approaches, undermine teacher education, and stifle reform (Feiman-Nemser, 1996).

While the retention of good mentors is paramount, the importance of evaluations as a tool to monitor their effectiveness and administrative responsibilities in establishing "clear and objective criteria for differentially encouraging continued participation of mentors should be kept at the forefront of these systems. Once they have been recruited and identified as effective, however, experts agree the mentor should be retained" (Mullinix, 2002, p. 1). Surprisingly though, little documentation can be found of current strategies utilized to retain mentors.

"The last half-decade has seen a significant amount of research which has focused on the benefits experienced teachers receive from serving as mentors. Best categorized as professional development, these benefits fall into the following seven categories: improved professional competency; reflective practice; professional renewal; psychological benefits (enhanced self-esteem); collaboration and collegiality; contributions to teacher leadership; and pedagogical inquiry/teacher research These appear to be the key reasons mentors continue to serve in this capacity" (Huling & Resta, 2001, p. 1) .

Also receiving attention is the important matter of suitably matching mentors to mentees. While the use of many different means to accomplish this are possible,

the most common way is by subject area. Pairing a beginning teacher with a seasoned one who is not only knowledgeable, but also experienced with the curriculum allows for a deeper knowledge base and possibly similar interests to build a solid relationship. Considering the ramifications of this symbiotic relationship, some focus aims at addressing the needs of minority teachers. With minority teachers decreasing in number and leaving the profession early, some attention needs to focus on this select group of teachers (Lewis, 1996). The inclusion of diversity in classrooms and schools buildings across the United States allows students an experience that is more realistic in terms of what they will encounter in the workforce in addition to the cultural exposure such teachers can offer. Maximizing support for this specific population of educators "involves integrating strategies for multicultural mentoring" (Rodriguez & Sjostrom, 2000, p. 1). While "disparity remains over the possible advantages and disadvantages of matching characteristics in mentoring relationships, it has been noted that personal relationships at the core of mentoring can be problematic when the mentor and protégé are of different genders, races, or ethnic backgrounds" (Kerka, 1998, p. 1). If the availability of veteran minority teachers is scarce, the advice to program leaders is focusing on creating the very best conditions for mentoring rather than trying to find the closest physical matches (Tauer, 1996).

On-going training and support designed specifically for mentors often serves as an important mechanism for retaining mentors. "Without adequate resources, institutional support, and deliberate planning, the success of mentoring often rests on mentors' good will, intuition, and commitment" (Meyer, 2002, p. 28). Mentor

training should be as practical as possible, ensuring their effectiveness when working

their mentees. Clear, concise guidelines coupled with adequate resources help ensure

both mentors and mentees receive what the program is designed to provide at every

step of the mentoring process.

> While requirements for mentors operating within various programs often
>
> differ, generally the distinction between evaluation, supervision and
>
> mentoring are similar if not the same and important considerations to
>
> understand and address in training programs. Training that includes
>
> experiential orientation to techniques of observation, consultation, coaching
>
> and theories of adult learning help acquaint mentors with their new roles.
>
> (Feiman-Nemser, 1996, p. 1)

Professional development designed to address issues such as time management,

various styles of leadership and establishing a workable balance between teaching

and mentoring responsibilities is beneficial for all those involved. The additional

component of studying current strategies in teaching, as well as the research

supporting such professional development tools, aids in developing mentors. "Groups

whose specific purpose is open communication between mentors can also play a

significant role in collaborative reflection and shared learning during the mentoring

process" (Mullinix, 2002, p. 1). Furthermore, Mullinix (2002) said

> While many of the retention strategies provide compensatory support to
>
> mentors, compensation is traditionally viewed as financial in nature.
>
> Recognizing the need to restructure compensation programs to reward teacher

knowledge and skill was directly addressed in, What Matters Most: Improving

Teaching and Learning, the 1996 report of the National Commission on

Teaching & America's Future. The NCTAF recommended reallocating $10

billion in support of this idea. (p. 1)

Mentors are a vital component in educational reform. In February 2001, research-based data gathered by the State Higher Education Executive Officers on teacher recruitment showed support for the $10 billion reallocation recommendation and further noted that "compensation of teacher mentors should extend to enabling in-class support of novice teachers in their initial years of teaching" (Hirsch, 2001, p. 1).

States across the nation continue implementing cutting-edge programs in an effort to find the best, most favorable combination of incentive and compensation strategies to positively impact the basic benefits of mentoring while adequately crediting the work and knowledge put forth by mentors (Ballinger, 2000; Smith, 2000). Consequently, Ballinger and Smith as well as others noted specific forms of compensation typically afforded mentors. Such means included stipends paid directly to mentors and release-time for mentoring, observation, in-class support, joint planning and teaching, In some cases, additional compensatory personal time was funded as well as monies allocated to support mentoring program costs such as mentor release time, substitutes and travel between schools, or even percentages of augmented mentor salaries. Finally, provisions for additional help in the classroom and other support for teaching and non-teaching responsibilities as well as the

utilization of financial support and priority access to professional development such as college credit courses, workshops, and conferences.

Other non-monetary and non-outlined outcome compensations discussed by the researchers above include increased involvement in decision-making, increased status and respect and, longer-term recruitment into administrative and supervisory positions. Creative options for additional compensation as well as more careful evaluation of current strategies are worthy of future exploration. "Mentors may well provide the turnkey to educational renewal and reform. If so, the attention paid to appropriately structuring programs that support their strategic recruitment, thoughtful retention, and appropriate compensation will represent time well spent" (Mullinix, 2002, p. 1).

Formal versus Informal Mentoring Programs

The question of whether to implement a formal or informal mentoring program is one that should be addressed, but one that may not have a definitive answer. Proponents of mentoring programs agree that any kind of quality program that raises retention rates will provide new teachers with an "opportunity to observe and analyze good teaching in real situations, guidance and assessment by highly trained, content-specific mentors, reduced workloads to provide more learning time, and assistance in meeting licensure standards through performance-based assessments" (Berry, 2004, p. 16). This is not to say the only way to achieve these standards is through the implementation of a formal mentoring program, but it does suggest that some criteria be set for any program to succeed in retaining teachers.

After the passage of Senate Bill 2042 in 2002, California transitioned its teacher induction program from a voluntary grant-funded program to a mandatory credentialing program. Though such programs have a lengthy history in the state, principal support and involvement have varied throughout the years. With this in mind, Bartell (2004) stated

> The support of the site administrator is crucial to the success of the [induction] program at that particular school site. Site administrators need to understand and be supportive of the efforts on behalf of the new teacher at their own sites. They should understand and support the goals of the induction program so that their own advice and counseling is consistent with the goals of the program and the vision of teaching that is being promoted. They need to support those who will assist and mentor the novice teachers at their own site. (p. 49)

As is true with any program that involves people, the success of any mentoring program depends largely upon its mentors. Consequently, care must be taken in the selection, training, and support of them. Alone, the selection process can influence people's perceptions about the value of the program. Its importance is enhanced by selecting and preparing a pool of prospective mentors in advance of need and by including mentors in interview teams. This means school leaders should see the necessity of anticipating teacher mentors, and the selection process should be thorough. Teachers should not be cornered at the last minute and forced into a mentorship with another because the need has risen. Mentors must understand the complexity of their involvement and be willing participants in the education process

of a colleague because the most successful mentoring programs are designed, implemented, and evaluated in an effort to offer professional assistance for new teachers that complements, but does not replace, other types of induction assistance, both formal and informal (Ganser, 1999).

For example, prior to 2001, the Oconee County School District in Georgia had struggled to retain early career teachers. District data revealed that 15 percent of the district's certified personnel had less than five years' experience which caused much alarm for school officials. Wondering what could be done to aid in teacher longevity, the district leaders decided to pair new teachers with experienced ones who acted as informal mentors. Though this new support system helped, administrators felt they needed more. Creating a teacher induction program and hiring a specialist proved to be the answer. The dream of a teacher induction program became a reality in the 2001-02 school year. The Oconee County School Board formed a partnership with the University of Georgia and the board funded $35,000 to begin the program and hire the specialist. Almost immediately, the district reaped the rewards of its creative strategy. In the 2003-04 school year, Oconee achieved a 91 percent retention rate of teachers and the following year achieved a 100 percent retention rate. The district currently maintains an overall 90 percent yearly retention rate (Rist, 2007).

Educators and researchers alike find it difficult to determine whether all mentoring programs should be formalized as each mentoring programs is unique, and no one evaluation approach is appropriate for them all (Hayes, 2003). In their article

in *Principal Leadership*, Hansen and Matthews suggested a way to differentiate

between formal and informal mentoring programs. They articulate the fact that

>   relationships usually develop naturally as people work together. Informal
>
>   peer mentoring is casual and noncommittal and happens when interdependent
>
>   work requires individuals to interact with one another. Although informal
>
>   processes are frequently supportive and encouraging, the expectations are
>
>   often not established or agreed upon. (p. 31)

They continued by offering that expectations for structured peer mentoring programs

necessitate various aspects of responsibility and commitment. While the relationship

is voluntary, "it is intentional, functional, and mutually beneficial. It requires

organization and planning and relies on certain conditions of trust, openness, risk-

taking, problem identification, problem solving, and goal setting. The ultimate result

is professional growth and school improvement" (Hansen & Matthews, 2002, p. 31).

>   As previously stated, a definitive answer as to whether all mentoring should

be formal as opposed to informal is subjective. Sack (2005) reported

>   The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future is calling on
>
>   states, districts, and higher education institutions to offer formal teacher
>
>   induction programs that last for several years and offer more than just
>
>   individual mentoring. The commission believes that not only does the
>
>   induction period need to be longer – up to three years – but in most cases the
>
>   purpose of induction needs to be more clearly defined. (p. 1)

What is apparent when taking into consideration all the data, is that the need for support programs in the formative years of teaching is a very real fact.

Summary

Historically, teachers have graduated from teacher preparation programs, and with their degree in hand, entered the workforce ill-prepared for what lies ahead. Abounding changes in accountability and responsibility in education during recent years have created even more hurdles to overcome as early educators. The need for a support system to help novice teachers has become a serious topic for school districts across the nation.

As teacher attrition rates soar, researchers are examining at the various reasons why early career teachers do not stay past their first five years. Though suggestions of several factors playing a role in their decisions have come to light, the overwhelming majority of teachers indicate that lack of a support system is fundamental to their motive. The implementation of mentoring programs is a way to help these teachers find success and remain in the classroom.

As educators forge ahead amidst the sea of educational change, the hiring and retention of quality teachers looms before the profession. It is quickly becoming one of the driving factors behind professional development design. Educators must work to ensure the fostering of the strongest educational system America has ever seen, the basis of which is the most dynamic, well-prepared, caring educators available and the very least our nation's youth should expect.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to help administrators and other educators determine those factors contributing to the high rate of teacher attrition and to identify a means for its reduction. It is the basis of this study that well-designed and implemented mentoring programs are essential to teacher retention in the first five years in the field. Surveys were distributed to a sample of both new and tenured teachers in a small, southwest region of a Midwestern state. This chapter describes the population surveyed, the survey instrument used and how it was administered, as well as detailing the treatment of the data collected.

Research Questions

The problem addressed in this study was to help administrators and other educators determine those factors contributing to the high rate of teacher attrition and to identify a means for its reduction. The focus has been to determine whether teachers who participate in a mentoring program are more likely to stay in teaching. To facilitate this study, the following questions were explored:

1. What are the factors contributing to teacher attrition?

2. How is a mentoring program helpful to new teachers?

3. How does participation in a mentoring program relate to the likelihood of teachers continuing in the education field?

Research Perspective

According to the National Emergency Medical Services for Children Data Analysis Resources Center (2008the principle goal of a descriptive study design is to assess a sample at a specific point in time without making inferences or causal statements. The three primary reasons to conduct descriptive studies are to identify areas for further research, help in planning resource allocation/needs assessment, and provide informal information about a condition. Descriptive studies are noted for being helpful in revealing patterns and connections that might otherwise go unnoticed.

This design study was chosen primarily for the purpose of ongoing research in needs assessment. With the constantly changing population, continual research and data collection is needed to make the most informed decisions about current and future resource allocations.

Methodology

A descriptive study is one in which data derived from other sources such as case studies and surveys is used to gather information, establish and synthesize emerging patterns, and formulate questions in order to draw conclusions and/or recommendations on a given topic (Center for Applied Research in Educational Technology, 2008). All of these ideas were taken into consideration during this study. Such a study establishes only associations between variables. For an accurate estimate of the relationship between variables, a descriptive study usually needs a sample of hundreds or even thousands of subjects. The estimate of the relationship is less likely

to be biased if there is a high participation rate in a sample selected randomly from a population (Hopkins, 2008).

Research Setting and Participants

A descriptive study was done to identify those factors contributing to the high rate of teacher attrition and to identify a means for its reduction. The researcher developed a survey instrument describing a variety of topics related to mentoring programs and retention. The topics included were based upon those found in most programs the researcher encountered during the literature review or from personal experience. The survey's reliability rests solely on the honesty of those who participated and their responses. Before being used for the purposes of this research project, the researcher surveyed a small sample of educators and asked for suggestions of any changes that needed to be made. Changes including additions and deletions were made based upon this process.

A sampling of both new and tenured teachers in a small, southwest region of a Midwestern state was provided through the voluntary participation of five school districts. This was accomplished by the researcher's use of request letters to superintendents and principals. Once their acceptance was provided, a link to the survey was sent via e-mail and distributed by building administrators. The survey focused on questions regarding participation in induction/mentoring programs and their perceptions of these programs. Teachers responded by rating their perceptions on a Likert scale. The population was identified as a sample of both new and tenured

teachers in during the 2008-20010 school years. Surveys were sent to 75 teachers with 51 responding to the survey for a response rate of 68 percent.

Data Collection Procedures and Instruments

The researcher developed and sent a survey questionnaire (see Appendix A) to a sample of both new and tenured teachers in a small, southwest region of a Midwestern state. The survey's design examined how teachers view retention and the effects of a mentoring program on their careers. The researcher constructed and used the survey for the purposes of this study in the fall of 2008. Approval from both the superintendent of each school district and the building principals was granted prior to the study. The researcher contacted the district superintendent (see Appendix B) and the building principals (see Appendix C) by letter, asking permission to distribute the survey. Once permission was granted, teachers were provided a cover letter (see Appendix D) explaining the purpose of the survey and a copy of the survey itself. The survey was distributed through e-mail during the fall of 2008 and participants were asked to respond to it and submit it through e-mail back to the researcher. A thank you letter was also sent to each participating building principal.

Analytic Procedures

The data were analyzed using percentages and the results are reported in Chapter 4. The SPSS statistical package was used to analyze the data. After the input of survey responses, the frequency of responses was calculated for each survey question. These frequencies were reported as percentages and described.

Summary

The data collected during this study in the fall of 2008 was used to help determine whether teacher mentoring programs are an important factor for school districts to consider in the attraction and retention of teachers. The next chapter is an analysis of those results.

Chapter Four: Results

The purpose of this study was to help administrators and other educators determine those factors contributing to the high rate of teacher attrition as evidenced by the representative districts and to identify a means for its reduction. The researcher conducted a survey of a sampling of both new and tenured teachers in a small, southwest region of a Midwestern state. The survey instrument developed described a variety of topics related to mentoring programs and retention (see Appendix A).

Demographic Data Analysis

The demographic data obtained from the survey conducted were entered into the SPSS (Version 13.0). The data were first analyzed by examining descriptive statistics and disaggregating the data in a table of means.

Table 1

Demographics of Teachers by Highest Degree

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Bachelor's	24	47.1	47.1
Master's	25	49	96.1
Specialist	2	3.9	100
Total	51	100	
	$N = 51$	Mean = 1.57	SD = .57

Seventy-five surveys were distributed to both new and tenured teachers. Of the 75 surveys, 51 were returned and used for the purposes of this study.

Table 2

Demographics of Teachers by Years of Experience

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1.0-5.0	11	21.6	21.6
6.0-10.0	7	13.8	35.3
11.0-15.0	10	19.7	54.9
16.0-20.0	3	5.9	60.8
21.0-25.0	15	29.4	90.2
28.0+	5	9.9	100
Total	51	100	
	$N = 51$	Mean = 14.86	SD = 9.40

Years of experience from the group of teachers surveyed ranged from one to 31 years in the classroom. Of the 51 survey respondents, eleven were in their first five years of teaching. Additionally, seven had taught for six to ten years, with the remaining 33 having taught for 11 or more years.

Table 3

Demographics of Numbers of Students Enrolled in School

School Enrollment	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
575.00	1	2.00	2
600.00	29	56.9	58.8
650.00	1	2.00	60.8
1100.00	4	7.8	68.6
1200.00	5	9.8	78.4
1250+	11	21.7	100
Total	51	100	
	$N = 51$	Mean = 854.45	SD = 325.38

Data showed that the number of students enrolled in the schools surveyed ranged from 575 to 1500. Of the survey respondents, 31 taught in a school with 650 or fewer students and 20 in a school with a student population of 1100 to 1500.

Table 4

*Number of Students
Taught*

Number of Students Taught	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1.0-50.0	4	8.00	7.8
51.0-100.0	15	29.7	37.3
101.0-150.0	21	41.30	78.4
151.0-200.0	5	9.9	88.2
201.0-325.0	6	11.8	100
Total	51	100	

$N = 51$ Mean $= 130.27$ SD $= 71.1$

The number of students taught by each responding teacher varied from 12 to

325. The data showed that 37.3% of those surveyed taught 100 students or fewer,

with the remaining 62.7% teaching 103 or more students each school year.

Table 5

Demographics of Certified vs. Non-Certified Provisional Teachers

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Certified	46	90.20	90.2
Non-Certified Provisional	5	9.8	100
Total	51	100	

$N = 51$ Mean $= 1.10$ SD $= .30$

On the survey, teachers were asked to state whether they were certificated in the area

they were first hired to teach in or hired under a provisional or temporary

certification. Of those responding, 90.2% were hired to teach in the subject area and

grade level in which they received certification.

Table 6

Current Career Plans

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Remain in classroom in current area	25	49.00	49
Reassignment to another area	4	7.8	56.9
Change area and grade level	2	3.9	60.8
Move to administration	1	2.00	62.7
Pursue another career	4	7.8	70.6
Remain in teaching until retirement	15	29.4	100
Total	51	100	
	$N = 51$	Mean = 3.43	SD = 2.74

From the data collected through survey respondents, 49% plan to remain in the classroom in their current subject area with another 29.4% remaining in the classroom through retirement. Of the remaining 21.6%, 13.7% state they will stay in some facet of education; only 7.8% of those surveyed, plan to pursue another career.

Table 7

Participation in Mentoring Program

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	31	60.80	60.8
No	20	39.2	100
Total	51	100	
	$N = 51$	Mean = 1.39	SD = .49

Survey Question One

Did you participate in a mentoring program at any time during your first five years of teaching?

Thirty-one of the 51 responding teachers stated they did participate in a mentoring program at some time in their first five years of teaching, with 20 saying they did not.

Table 8

Mandated Participation in Mentoring Program

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	27	52.90	52.9
No	24	47.1	100
Total	51	100	
	$N = 51$	Mean = 1.47	SD = .50

Survey Question Two

Was this mentoring program mandated by the district?

Data shows that 52.9% of respondents indicated the mentoring program they participated in was mandated by the school district with the other 47.1% stating their participation was voluntary.

Table 9

Formal Paperwork Procedure

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	19	37.30	37.3
No	32	62.7	100
Total	51	100	
	$N = 51$	Mean = 1.63	SD = .49

Survey Question Three

Was there a particular program to follow as far as paperwork, hours to be logged,

etc.?

A majority of teachers surveyed, 62.7%, stated there was no formal paperwork

program or procedure outlined for them to follow whether they were participating in a

mandated or non-mandated mentoring program. Only 37.3% indicated formal

protocol was to be followed during their mentoring experience.

Table 10

Mentoring Experience Satisfaction

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not satisfied	4	7.80	7.8
Somewhat dissatisfied	3	5.9	13.7
Neutral	26	51	64.7
Somewhat satisfied	12	23.5	88.2
Extremely satisfied	6	11.8	100
Total	51	100	
	$N = 51$	Mean = 3.25	SD = 1.02

Survey Question Four

On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being not satisfied and 5 being extremely satisfied, please

rate your overall satisfaction with the mentoring experience.

Of the 51 teachers surveyed, 44 indicated they were somewhere between

neutral to extremely satisfied with their mentoring experience. Seven survey

participants stated they were somewhat dissatisfied to not satisfied with the mentoring program.

Table 11

Beneficial Mentoring Experience

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not beneficial	3	5.9	5.9
Somewhat not beneficial	3	5.9	11.8
Neutral	27	52.9	64.7
Somewhat beneficial	12	23.5	88.2
Extremely beneficial	6	11.8	100
Total	51	100	

$N = 51$ Mean $= 3.29$ SD $= .97$

Survey Question Five

On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being not beneficial and 5 being extremely beneficial, please rate whether you feel the mentoring program was beneficial to you as a new teacher.

Forty-five of the 51 teachers surveyed indicated the mentoring program they participated in was neutral to extremely beneficial to them as new teachers. Six teachers stated the mentoring program was somewhat to not beneficial at all to them in their early teaching experience.

Table 12

Instrumental Mentoring Experience

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not instrumental	7	13.7	13.7
Somewhat not instrumental	4	7.8	21.6
Neutral	27	52.9	74.5
Somewhat instrumental	10	19.6	94.1
Extremely instrumental	3	5.9	100
Total	51	100	
	$N = 51$	Mean $= 2.96$	SD $= 1.04$

Survey Question Six

On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being not instrumental and 5 being extremely instrumental, please rate whether you feel the mentoring program was instrumental in making you a better teacher.

The data show that 21.6% of the teachers who participated in the survey felt their mentoring experience was, to some degree, not instrumental to their growth as a teacher. Conversely, 78.4% felt their participation in a mentoring program had either a neutral or to some degree an instrumental effect on making them a better teacher.

Table 13

Teaching as a Career Choice

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not likely	2	3.9	3.9
Somewhat unlikely	3	5.9	9.8
Neutral	12	23.5	33.3
Somewhat likely	11	21.6	54.9
Extremely likely	23	45.1	100
Total	51	100	
	$N = 51$	Mean = 3.98	SD = 1.14

Survey Question Seven

On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being not likely and 5 being extremely likely, please rate

whether you feel you would choose teaching as a career if you had it to do over again.

Of all survey participants, an overwhelming majority, 46 of the 51 responding,

said they would choose teaching again as a career. Only five participants indicated

they would not choose teaching as a career again if they had it to do over.

Survey Question Eight

Based on your personal opinion, rate the following in numerical order to show which

items you believe are the most important factors contributing to teacher retention.

- Support from administrative staff

- Collaboration time with colleagues in same area/grade level

- Formal mentoring programs for new teachers

- Informal mentoring programs within your building

- Professional development activities within the district

- Professional development activities within your building

Tables 14-19 disaggregate the data collected from research question eight. Participants ranked each item in numerical order showing which items they believed to be the most important contributing factors to teacher retention. Data show the majority of teacher participants felt that support from their administrative staff and collaboration time with colleagues were the two most important contributing factors to teacher retention. Formal mentoring programs for new teachers and district professional development activities ranked lowest as contributing factors in teacher retention.

Table 14

Support From Administration

Ranking	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	28	54.9	54.9
2	16	31.4	86.3
3	1	2	88.2
4	4	7.8	96.1
5	1	2	98
6	1	2	100
Total	51	100	
	$N = 51$	Mean = 1.76	SD = 1.16

Table 15

Collaboration with Colleagues

Ranking	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	21	41.2	41.2
2	25	49	90.2
3	3	5.9	96.1
4	1	2	98
5	0	0	98
6	1	2	100
Total	51	100	
	$N = 51$	Mean = 1.76	SD = .91

Table 16

Formal Mentoring Programs

Ranking	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	1	2	2
2	5	9.8	11.8
3	14	27.5	39.2
4	8	15.7	54.9
5	7	13.7	68.6
6	16	31.4	100
Total	51	100	
	$N = 51$	Mean = 4.24	SD = 1.49

Table 17

Informal Mentoring Programs

Ranking	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	1	2	2
2	5	9.8	11.8
3	19	37.3	49
4	15	29.4	78.4
5	7	13.7	92.2
6	4	7.8	100
Total	51	100	
	$N = 51$	Mean = 3.67	SD = 1.14

Table 18

District Professional Development

Ranking	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	4	7.8	7.8
4	11	21.6	29.4
5	16	31.4	60.8
6	20	39.2	100
Total	51	100	
	$N = 51$	Mean = 5.02	SD = .97

Table 19

Building Professional Development

Ranking	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	10	19.6	19.6
4	12	23.5	43.1
5	20	39.2	82.4
6	9	17.6	100
Total	51	100	
	$N = 51$	Mean = 4.55	SD = 1.01

Survey Question Eight

Based on personal opinion, teachers rated the following in numerical order to show the most important factors are contributing to teacher retention. The items included support from administrative staff, collaboration time with colleagues in same area/grade level, formal mentoring programs for new teachers, informal mentoring programs within your building, professional development activities within the district, and professional development activities within your building.

Data showed the majority of teacher participants, 96 percent, felt that support from their administrative staff and collaboration time with colleagues were the two most important contributing factors to teacher retention. Formal mentoring programs for new teachers and district professional development activities ranked lowest as contributing factors in teacher retention.

Summary

Fifty-one teachers responded to a survey regarding a variety of topics related to mentoring programs and teacher retention. Participant demographics were included in the survey to ensure achievement of a true random sample, as well as questions asking about certification, career plans, mentoring program participation, and important factors contributing to teacher retention.

Of the 51 responding teachers, 44 indicated they felt neutral to positive regarding their mentoring experience. Similarly, 55 participants indicated their mentoring program was beneficial to them as new teachers. Though data from

research question eight show formal mentoring programs to have ranked low in important factors contributing to teacher retention, there is the potential that the 33 teachers with eleven years of experience or more in the classroom may have adversely affected this factor in a ranking format if they have not been a participant in a formal mentoring program due to such programs not having been available when they first started their teaching careers.

Chapter Five: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary of Results

The purpose of this study was to help administrators and other educators determine those factors contributing to the high rate of teacher attrition and to identify a means for its reduction. The focus was to determine whether teachers perceive that participation in a mentoring program within the first five years was important in teacher retention.

A survey questionnaire (see Appendix A) was developed by the researcher and given to a sample of both new and tenured teachers in a small, southwest section of a Midwestern state. The survey was designed to examine how teachers view retention and the effects of a mentoring program on their careers. The survey was constructed by the researcher and used for the purposes of this study in the fall of 2008.

Of the seventy-five surveys mailed out, 51 were returned to the researcher and used to complete this study. The results of the survey show that 31 of the 51 responding teachers stated they did participate in a mentoring program at some time during their first five years of teaching. Furthermore, 52.9% of the respondents indicated the mentoring program they participated in was mandated by the school district with the other 47.1% stating their participation was voluntary. The responses to all other research questions dealing with mentoring programs proved to be in favor of such programs being satisfactory, beneficial, and instrumental in offering guidance and support for new teachers. When asked what factors they felt were most important

in regards to teacher retention, participants indicated support from their administrative staff and collaborative time with colleagues at the top; formal mentoring programs and district professional development activities ranked at the bottom.

In an effort to facilitate this study, three research questions were posed including:

1. What are the factors contributing to teacher attrition?

2. How is a mentoring program helpful to new teachers?

3. How does participation in a mentoring program relate to the likelihood of teachers continuing in the education field?

Information gathered from both the survey and the literature review suggests that inconsistencies in teacher mentoring programs across the nation influence teacher attrition rates. Such differences in certification standards leave school districts guessing when it comes to what skills and knowledge prospective candidates possess. While numerous states require participation in some sort of mentoring program for new teachers, very little proof of sufficient support, especially financial, could be found. Additionally, evidence revealed some school districts target new teachers to teach subjects in which they are not certified with the largest proportion of this occurring in high poverty areas. Another finding points to specific academic fields such as special education, mathematics, and science being prone to higher teacher attrition. Finally, several other variables regarding attrition were identified including lack of support from administration, poor workplace conditions, non-competitive

salaries, age, and too many additional responsibilities (David, 2008). Without appropriate systems in place to help new teachers as well as their seasoned mentors, these stresses factor into the probability of educators vacating the classroom early in their careers.

After identifying causes of teacher attrition, exploration of retention rate factors ensued. While headlines often focus on wages, the findings of this study suggest support structures as being ultimately important in the eyes of educators. School districts valuing collaborative planning time and focus groups as a means of fostering professional relationships have proven an effective means of aiding teacher retention. Learning communities which embrace the ideas of inquiry, self-reflection, and systematic thinking and induction programs offering high-quality mentoring have been found to have positive impacts as well. Peer coaching, which differs from mentoring in focus and duration, is yet another invaluable tool shown to add vital support to new teachers. Though variances exist in length and type, the data in this study overwhelming proves the necessity of adequate support systems and professional development programs if schools are destined to retain quality educators.

The likelihood of teachers staying in the field longer than five years rests on the environment schools and districts create. Without adequate resources, the turnover rate will continue to remain at least high if not rise. Providing strategies and systems that not only support, but enhance the workplace experience inevitably provide the opportunity for longevity in the educational field. Allowing the classroom to serve as not only the place where students learn, but where adults receive one-on-one training,

career development and psychosocial assistance is an effective means of addressing the hiring and retention of teachers.

In 2005, a survey was conducted by Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff focusing on first year teachers in New York City. The survey asked these early educators to rate questions on a five-point scale concerning areas such as teaching practices, goals, and preparation experiences. With a little more than 70% of those surveyed responding, the researchers found that "dissatisfaction with job [was] the main factor that teachers cite for leaving" (Boyd et al., 2009, p. 14). Additionally, more than 40 percent of those surveyed went on to name "dissatisfaction with the administration as the most important factor" in their decision to leave the teaching profession (Boyd et al., 2009, p. 15).

Ten new teachers from both Phoenix and Portland were interviewed by researchers Singer Early and Shagoury during the 2008-09 school year. During these question and answer sessions, a similar idea appeared: support from school administrators is vital to teacher retention. In fact, "six of 10 teachers reported that administrators served as their greatest support; four shared that administrators were their chief obstacle" (Singer Early & Shagoury, 2010, p. 1). Contrasting stories further illustrate the importance of these symbiotic relationships within buildings:

> Our administrator is candid and professional. When I see her, I can tell she's taking note of what's happening in our classrooms and she cares about our well-being…She believes all teachers are capable and that it is our job to meet kids where they are in their learning and development. [M]y principal also

practices what she preaches. She works to meet *all* teachers where they are in their development; she fights to provide us with resources, time, and training. She also asks our opinion before making important decisions. It has been a rough year. I have no administrative support. I'm confident in my teaching abilities, but I have no administrators observing me. Administrators are not helpful; they just come in and watch for a little bit and leave. We never talk about my teaching afterwards. (p. 2)

With statistics and honest dialogue such as these, school leaders should take note and step up to the challenge of serving as role models and creating systems of support for the newest members to the teaching profession.

While the findings of this study were inconclusive regarding participation in teacher mentoring programs, research suggests they have a positive correlation on teacher quality. The symbiotic relationship established through systematic support structures provides both the new teacher and the mentor with long lasting implications. Feelings of overall satisfaction in career choice are heightened through the encouragement of the mentor/mentee union, offering both an open avenue of communication, collaboration, and feedback. The reflective and collaborative processes inherent in such programs provide day-to-day, hands-on, professional development by those still in the trenches. The value in both the professional growth and the psychosocial development of participants is indisputable in the ongoing battle against early educators leaving the workforce.

Increasingly, school districts are realizing the way to combat high rates of teacher attrition and increase retention is by devoting an adequate amount of resources to these programs. Recent years have seen the implementation of legislation aimed at offering higher pay for outstanding staff willing to transfer to hard-to-staff schools as well as the creation of true career ladders where salaries are augmented by advancement in professional development and serving as a mentor for new teachers. This same legislation is designed to underwrite state-of-the-art programs to help not only new teachers, but veteran teachers as well as they advance through their careers (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Conclusions

Based upon the data collected in this study, the following conclusions are evident.

Ninety-six percent of teachers believe support from their administrative staff and collaborative time with colleagues are the most important factors in retention. Research showed again and again that teachers desperately need support in order to remain in the classroom. Building administrators need to be active participants in the professional lives of these new educators, willing to help whenever called upon with resources, advice, or simply an open door. Allowing collaboration time is equally imperative in aiding staff in the development of skills fundamental to teaching. Working together gives colleagues the opportunity to form lasting, professional relationships while inherently creating a support structure for the day-to-day issues that arise. Ending the possibility of some who work in isolation, collaboration

enhances the school climate by embracing the shared values and norms of the building while teachers gain experience and knowledge.

Next, teachers believe mentoring programs are beneficial in their development as professionals. The opportunity to work with well-matched mentors in a substantive, structured atmosphere ranked high among teachers. Greatly valued are regular interactions with expert colleagues as a means of providing training and guidance in the field of teaching. The majority of teachers believed mentoring was both beneficial and instrumental in their development as educators.

Additionally, a high percentage of teachers plan to remain in the classroom until retirement and they would also choose teaching again as a career. In-place support systems are crucial to continued positive relationships and career development for classroom teachers.

Finally, survey data indicated formal mentoring and district professional development programs ranked lowest among teachers as contributing to teacher retention. Informal mentoring programs and other means of support ranked higher on the survey.

Recommendations

Good teachers are the foundation of good schools. This simple fact is often ignored when looking at ways to cut budgets during financially lean times. The fact that educating students is the reason teachers exist should never be overlooked, and in order to accomplish this task, teachers must first be educated themselves. After this has been achieved, ongoing training and development must be supplied in order to

keep teachers in the classroom, providing crucial support systems and positively impacting teacher retention rates. Based upon the conclusions of this study, recommendations are as follows:

This study should be conducted again in an effort to solicit more responses. Unwanted limitations may have been imposed by a single solicitation. Additional research is needed to verify whether teachers feel formal mentoring, i.e. mandated participation, is better or worse than informal mentoring programs. A more focused study conducted through interviews with only those teachers who have participated in a formal mentoring program is necessary to determine the retention rate of those teachers. Increased formal training for mentors should be provided allowing for consistency in training of mentees.

Implications for Practice

Research on teacher induction and mentoring programs is not new. Numerous studies have been conducted over the years with the same conclusion time and time again: Support for teachers is fundamental to success and longevity in the classroom. Information compiled by researchers such as Ingersoll (1999, 2002, 2004, 2011), Portner (2005) and Wong (2004) vehemently corroborate the fact that school districts who utilize systems designed to aid educators as they fulfill the duty of teaching fare better in teacher retention than those who do not. Regardless of where they went to school or what kind of grades they received, everyone benefits from positive, supportive relationships that foster a sense of comradeship inherent in mentoring programs.

With the goal of recruiting, hiring, training, and retaining high quality teachers in mind, districts across the nation must realize the importance of building quality mentoring programs into their strategic plans. Competitive teacher compensation is not enough to keep classrooms adequately staffed with competent educators. A comprehensive approach must be used which provides support from start to finish throughout all levels of training, from induction through administrative leadership with the goal of providing quality education as the driving force. As attrition rates for new teachers continue to rank among the highest of any profession in the nation, losing new teachers is a costly problem for school districts both financially and because it keeps experienced teachers out of the classroom. Mentoring programs are essential in winning the battle faced each year in America's schools.

Summary

This study demonstrated that teacher retention rates are a real concern for administrators and educators across the United States. Programs are needed to address this problem while providing adequate support for early career teachers. Because of this growing concern, many schools have turned to mandated teacher mentoring programs and are experiencing a rise in teacher retention rates.

The data collected through the survey supported the idea that teachers find value in being part of a structured mentoring program in their formative years as educators. Additionally, information gathered pointed to mentoring as a means of providing new teachers with the necessary skills as well as confidence needed for success in the classroom. The goal is that systems used for support would help both

teachers and students by making the overall experience smoother and more enjoyable for everyone. Such support programs also provide seasoned education professionals who participate in the induction and mentoring process an opportunity to experience a sense of satisfaction and achievement that comes from nurturing others. An increased sense of ownership and collegiality results from being part of such a collaborative effort (Portner, 2005). As time moves on and changes occur faster and faster in the field of education, it is time to focus on programs that will help school districts across the nation attract and retain the very best educators available for America's youth.

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Appendix A

Teacher Mentoring Programs – Survey

Highest Academic Degree   Number of Years Teaching

Bachelor's   _____   _____

Master's   _____

Specialist   _____

Doctorate   _____

Approximate number of students enrolled in the school where I teach _____

Number of students you teach _____

When you began teaching, you were:

Certified for the subject and grade level in which you were assigned   _____

Teaching with a provisional or temporary certificate   _____

My current plans are to:

      Remain in the classroom teaching in my current area   _____

      Change to another teaching assignment   _____

      Move into administration   _____

      Pursue another career   _____

Remain in classroom teaching until retirement   _____

Did you participate in a mentoring program at any time during your first five years

of teaching?   Yes   No

Was this mentoring program mandated by the district?   Yes   No

Was there a particular program to follow as far as paperwork, hours to be logged,

etc.?

          Yes   No

On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being not satisfied and 5 being extremely satisfied,

please rate your overall satisfaction with the mentoring experience.

          1   2   3   4   5

   not satisfied   extremely satisfied

On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being not beneficial and 5 being extremely beneficial,

please rate whether you feel the mentoring program was beneficial to you as a new

teacher.

          1   2   3   4   5

not beneficial   extremely beneficial

On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being not instrumental and 5 being extremely instrumental,

please rate whether you feel the mentoring program was instrumental in making you a

better teacher.

       1   2   3   4   5

not instrumental   extremely instrumental

On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being not likely and 5 being extremely likely, please rate

whether you feel you would choose teaching as a career if you had it to do over again.

       1   2   3   4   5

not likely   extremely likely

Based on your personal opinion, rate the following in numerical order to show which

items you believe are the most important factors contributing to teacher retention.

_____ Support from administrative staff

_____ Collaboration time with colleagues in same area/grade level

_____ Formal mentoring programs for new teachers

_____ Informal mentoring programs within your building

_____ Professional development activities within the district

_____ Professional development activities within your building

Appendix B

Cover Letter to School Superintendent

October 1, 2008

Title, First Name, Last Name
Job Title, Name of Building
Name of School District
Mailing Address
City, State, Zip

Dear (Superintendent),

I am conducting a descriptive survey for my dissertation, which is necessary to fulfill the degree requirements for my Doctorate in Educational Leadership at Lindenwood University. The survey was developed to poll both new and tenured teachers to determine the impact of mentoring programs on teacher retention.

Quality teachers are the most important contributing factor in our nation's schools. After the support received at home, teachers are the most significant determinant of a child's academic success, more significant than either classroom size or school facility (Warner 2005). In light of such empirical data, the greatest task facing school administrators is the hiring and retention of the best teachers that can be found. The problem lies in current statistics that show each year, three out of every ten new teachers move to a different school or quit teaching altogether after their first year (Educational Research 2005). Many researchers have sought to identify variables that increase the likelihood of teachers staying in the field past the first few years. At this time of critical need to retain quality teachers, mentoring programs are proving to be one of the most effective means of getting the job done.

I would like your permission to distribute a copy of the enclosed survey via district e-mail to teachers in the (Name of School District). I would be glad to share my research and survey results with you as soon as I have collected and tabulated the information from the surveys.
Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

Name

Title

School Affiliation

Appendix C

Cover Letter to School Administrators

October 1, 2008

Title, First Name, Last Name

Job Title, Name of Building

Name of School District

Mailing Address

City, State, Zip

Dear (Administrator),

I am conducting a descriptive survey for my dissertation, which is necessary to fulfill the degree requirements for my Doctorate in Educational Leadership at Lindenwood University. The survey was developed to poll both new and tenured teachers to determine the impact of mentoring programs on teacher retention. I believe it will be very beneficial to other educators and me in identifying the correlation between mentoring programs and teacher retention.

I would like your permission to distribute a copy of the enclosed survey via your district e-mail to the teachers in your building.

Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

Name
Title
School Affiliation

Appendix D

Survey Cover Letter

Name
Title – School Affiliation
School District
Address
Phone - Fax
E-mail Address

Dear Fellow Educator:

I am currently finishing my Doctorate in Educational Leadership at Lindenwood University. I have been asked to complete a research study in order to fulfill my graduation requirements. The purpose of this study was to help administrators and other educators determine those factors contributing to the high rate of teacher attrition and to identify a means for its reduction. The focus will be to determine whether teachers perceive that participation in a mentoring program within the first five years is important in teacher retention.

I am asking that you complete the enclosed survey to assist me in my data collection. The survey questions were written to address opinions and personal perceptions of various aspects of teaching during the first five years. Please return the survey in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided with one week of receipt.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. All information collected and used will remain confidential. I appreciate your time and ask that you contact me with any questions or concerns regarding this survey at 417-523-9613.

Sincerely,

Name
Title
School Affiliation

Appendix E

State Support for New Teachers

Legend:

A – State has a new teacher induction program

B – State requires and finances induction for ALL new teachers

C – Duration of mentoring required by state (years)

D – Amount of time required by state in which mentors and mentees meet

E – State requires mentors and mentees to be matched by school, subject, and/or

grade level

F – State requires release time for mentors

G – State requires mentors to be compensated for their work (induction, mentoring,

support)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Alabama							
Alaska							
Arizona							
Arkansas	Y	Y	1	1 hour/week	Y	Y	Y
California	Y	Y	2		Y		
Colorado	Y		1		Y		
Connecticut	Y	Y	1	1 meeting/week		Y	Y
Delaware	Y	Y	3				Y
District of Columbia	Y		1	1 meeting/week			Y
Florida							
Georgia							
Hawaii							
Idaho	Y	Y	1				
Illinois							
Indiana	Y	Y	1		Y		Y
Iowa	Y	Y	2			Y	Y
Kansas							
Kentucky	Y	Y	1	70 hours/year	Y	Y	Y

State							
Lousiana	Y	Y	2				
Maine	Y		2	6 meeting/year			
Maryland	Y*		1	40 minutes/week			
Massachusettes	Y	Y	1			Y	
Michigan	Y		3		Y		
Minnesota	Y						
Mississippi	Y		1	90 hours/year			
Missouri	Y		1				
Montana							
Nebraska							
Nevada							
New Hampshire							
New Jersey							
New Mexico	Y	Y	1				
New York							
North Carolina	Y	Y	3				Y
North Dakota							
Ohio	Y	Y	1				
Oklahoma	Y	Y	1	72 hours/year	Y		
Oregon							
Pennsylvania	Y		1				
Rhode Island							
South Carolina	Y	Y	1				
South Dakota							
Tennessee							
Texas	Y		1				
Utah	Y						
Vermont	Y		2				
Virginia	Y	Y	1		Y		
Washington	Y					Y	Y
West Virgnia	Y	Y	1	1 hour/week	Y	Y	
Wisconsin	Y						
Wyoming							
Utah							

*Maryland's induction program is provided for high-need schools as determined by teacher-experience levels, school status in meeting state standards, and percent of students receiving free or reduced lunch.

Both Louisiana and New Mexico provide funding that local education agencies may use for compensation, however; the states do not require compensation (Education Week, 2003).

Vitae

Lisa Anderson earned both her Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education –

English degree in 2001 and her Master of Science in Educational Administration

degree in 2005 from the Southwest Missouri State University (now Missouri State

University).

Currently serving as an assistant principal at Central High School in

Springfield, Missouri, Anderson taught English for four years in the Springfield

Public School District before her promotion. A Doctorate in Educational Leadership

from Lindenwood University is anticipated in 2011.