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New Teacher Induction Programs: Effective Support Through Mentoring Programs and Coaching Practices

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Dissertation Title
NEW TEACHER INDUCTION PROGRAMS: EFFECTIVE SUPPORT THROUGH
MENTORING PROGRAMS AND COACHING PRACTICES

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NEW TEACHER INDUCTION PROGRAMS: EFFECTIVE SUPPORT THROUGH
MENTORING PROGRAMS AND COACHING PRACTICES

Katrina L. Morris

Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

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ABSTRACT

With the current teacher shortage and the numerous reported accounts of new teachers feeling stressed, overwhelmed, and ill prepared, the United States is in a dangerous situation that could result in even more of a teacher shortage if leaders do not find a way to better support new teachers and decrease the teacher attrition rate in the nation's schools. This study involved an analysis of first-year teachers' experiences with the new teacher induction program in District A (a pseudonym). Participants of this study were new teachers to District A, both novice and experienced teachers new to the district; building administrators; division chairs; and building mentors. I used a mixed methods approach to gather both qualitative and quantitative data from new teacher and building leadership surveys, induction meeting exit slips, and EvaluWise observation feedback. Surveys included Likert scale and open-ended questions. The proposed policy includes recommendations to improve the new teacher induction program in District A to better support teachers through applicable professional development, an effective mentor program, and frequent feedback from members of the building leadership team.

PREFACE

My career path as an educator began when I served as a high school English teacher in District A (a pseudonym). During that time, I completed a master's program in educational leadership. After 10 years, I moved into an administrative role, serving as a department chair, a role that required a balance of instructional leadership and organizational management. I also earned a second master's degree in English to cultivate my understanding of the English language and increase my literary cognizance. After spending 4 years as a department chair, I was given the opportunity to serve as an associate principal overseeing curriculum and instruction in District A. During my transition from department chair to associate principal, I was fortunate to be guided by my building administrative team and fellow associate principals from other high schools in District A. While serving as department chair, I began to feel the effects of the high teacher turnover rate in District A, as many of my responsibilities included hiring new teachers and mentoring teachers in my department. When I became an associate principal, the struggle to find teachers to fill positions and remain in those positions increased. In my current role as high school director of curriculum and instruction, my goal is to grow and retain effective teachers within District A.

Through my work as associate principal, I was part of the Probationary Teacher Committee (PTC), which is the committee that developed District A's new teacher induction program. I also facilitated the new teacher induction meetings and managed the program in my building. In my current role, I work on a team that plans new teacher induction week, which occurs prior to the first week of student attendance. Based on these experiences, my efforts to help create and facilitate a beneficial, effective new

teacher induction program inspired my interest in researching new teacher induction programs in other school districts and evaluating the current program used in District A.

In this study, newly hired high school teachers, both novice and experienced teachers new to the district (ETND), served as participants, alongside high school administrators, division chairs, and building mentors. Participating parties completed surveys that provided both qualitative and quantitative feedback regarding the current new teacher induction program for high school teachers in District A. I used an even-scale survey with no midpoint. According to Patton (2012), this type of survey forces respondents to lean in one direction (disagree) or another (agree; p. 270). The combination of survey data and literary research provided me with information I then used to make recommendations after analyzing the current state of District A's new teacher induction program.

As both an educator and a district leader, I have seen new teachers leave the profession because of stress and isolation. I have watched them struggle to wear the many hats expected of a teacher. I have also witnessed the negative effects of the high teacher attrition rate in District A. Through this study, I am advocating for leaders of District A to improve their new teacher induction program to better support new high school teachers and provide them the skills they need to build confidence, strengthen their skill sets associated with classroom instruction and management, and continue their careers, not only in education but as teachers in District A.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The focus of this study is on new teacher induction programs, an area that is of great interest to me professionally and personally. Professionally, I want to support new teachers as much as possible with their transition into the teaching profession in order to help with teacher retention and effective teaching in District A. Personally, my veteran educator self remembers what it was like being a new teacher—the fear and confusion mingled with the excitement and optimism. I want to be sure new teachers feel more excitement and optimism than fear and confusion with the help of the induction program.

I would first like to thank the related professionals in my life who have assisted me with this important work and been an emotional support along the way. A special thanks to Dr. Christine Nelson for her ongoing encouragement, insight, and responsiveness regarding the refinement of my study and work. I am beyond grateful for the amount of time and effort she dedicated to me through my study; Dr. Nelson has become not only a mentor to me through this work but also a friend. I also need to thank Dr. James Fitzpatrick for reminding me that “I will dissertate.” His belief in me and this process kept me going.

I also would like to thank District A for their overwhelming support with this work. The district-level administration invited me to sit with the PTC to gather data and information regarding the program and provided me with historical district data. This committee has done important work for many years, and it was a privilege to not only get to know them but to work alongside them to continue to improve the new teacher induction program. Many administrators, division chairs, and mentors completed my

survey to help me collect data that provided insight into the induction program. Their responses helped shape my study.

Last, I want to thank the new teachers at the high school level who are at the heart of my study. They agreed to participate in this work through the completion of my survey and their participation in the monthly induction program meetings, mentor meetings, and content coach meetings. I want to acknowledge them for the time, work, and energy they put into their first few years of teaching and their willingness to work with me to help provide upcoming new teachers a positive experience. They are the future of this profession that I love, and they will continue to inspire me through this journey.

DEDICATION

There are so many people in my life who I need to thank, for without them, this dissertation would not have been possible.

First, I need to thank my family of five. My husband, who took on so many additional responsibilities at home while I was dissecting data or rewriting section after section—thank you. He supported me through the valley of emotions that accompanied this work and made it possible for me to carve out the required time in our life to accomplish this goal. I am forever grateful. My three boys, who understood and supported me through missed baseball, basketball, and football games. Although I had to sacrifice time with them throughout this process, they never sacrificed time with me. Their hugs, snuggles, and late-night conversations reminded me every day why I was doing this. I hope someday they remember the craziness of the last 3 years and know that they can do anything they set their minds to do. I am in awe of the three of them every day, and I am lucky to have them call me Mom.

Our family and friends, who helped with the boys and provided moral support throughout this work. Life threw us curveballs, but we accomplished this together. Whether it was morning runs, evening walks, coffee breaks, carpools, or phone calls, they were there to share this with me, and that made all the difference. They listened as I worked through this process and didn't let me give up. There were times they believed in me more than I believed in me. I am beyond grateful for the people in my life, and I know how blessed I am to have them.

Most of all, I dedicate this to my mom and dad. From as far back as I can remember, they have always encouraged me to go after my dreams. They never let me

say or think I couldn't do something I aspired to do. Their unwavering support and love toward me continue to overwhelm me every day. They always believed in me and helped me believe in myself. I am proud of our family and all we have overcome. I love them both beyond measure.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

School District A (a pseudonym) encompasses a variety of diverse communities in Southwest Illinois. According to the Illinois School Report Card, District A has a population of 24,904 students, including 50.4% White students, 12.5% Black students, 25.1% Hispanic students, and 7.3% Asian students. Adversely, the staff is 91.4% White, 1.2% Black, 4.9% Hispanic, and 1.6% Asian. Additionally, 26% of its students are low-income, 17% have an Individualized Education Program (IEP), and 11% are English language learners (ELLs; Illinois State Board of Education [ISBE], 2022, District A section). At the high school level, District A's administrative team consists of one principal, one associate principal, two assistant principals, one athletic director, and one special education administrator. One duty of the associate principal is implementing and overseeing the district's new teacher induction program. According to district records, by the first day of school in August 2023, District A had hired a total of 181 new teachers—40 new teachers were hired at the high school level, and there were still positions needing to be filled in September 2023.

In 2002, the importance of highly qualified teachers resurfaced with the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Recently, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) replaced NCLB. In 2017, when the ISBE revealed its plan under the ESSA, it stated “supporting the development of educators from pre-service work through the sharing of experience to mentor and teach other professional educators as a more seasoned teacher is the responsibility of the schools, professional organizations, and the ISBE” (U.S. Department of Education, 2017, p. 91). The high school new teacher induction program in District A

is rooted in the *Illinois Professional Teaching Standards*. The program begins with an orientation 1 week before the beginning of the school year and covers Human Resources information and district-wide programs and policies. New teachers then spend 1 day of this orientation with their building administration in their home school. Principals and administrators present building-specific information related to curriculum and instruction, student services, operations, special education, and athletics. Teachers are given a plethora of information during this week, which serves as an introduction to the district and building. The induction program that follows is a direct extension of this district orientation.

The new teacher induction monthly building meetings occur eight times a year and are focused on the following topics: lesson design/classroom management, record keeping and communication with families, expectations for learning/student behavior, classroom collaboration, assessment, professionalism, moving forward, and end of the year. The district provides a Google Slide presentation each month and gives building leaders the autonomy to supplement the material as they see fit for their teachers. Because District A is a K–12 district, information is often adapted so the examples and resources are more appropriate for the high school setting.

District A's mission focuses on preparing learners for the future. According to teacher Sydney Jensen (2019), education has changed. Jensen echoed Wagner's sentiments regarding essential skills: "We're sending our kids out into a workforce where they need to be able to communicate, collaborate, and problem solve" (3:20). To prepare learners for the future, we need to teach them these necessary skills. Thus, we need to help our teachers develop tools for teaching these skills. In order to meet the goal of

helping teachers to develop these skills, I evaluated the effectiveness of the new teacher induction program in District A and how it directly relates to teacher practices and teacher retention.

Throughout my study, I use specific terminology when discussing the high school new teacher induction program in District A. These terms and definitions are as follows:

- Novice teachers – Teachers new to the profession.
- Experienced teachers new to District A (ETND) – Teachers with at least 1 year of experience in the profession but who are new teachers in District A.
- District induction program – Monthly program for experienced teachers new to District A, created by leaders of District A.
- State induction program – Program for novice teachers created by educational leaders in the State of Illinois.
- District mentor program – Mentor program for novice teachers created by leaders of District A.
- State mentor program – Mentor program for new teachers created by educational leaders in the State of Illinois.
- 4 Cs evaluation: Contexts, culture, conditions, and competencies – Framework

I used to define and analyze the current circumstances in District A.

Purpose

I evaluated District A's first-year teacher induction program by examining teacher, administrator, and mentor perspectives on and experiences with the program. According to Smith and Smith (2015), "Leading teacher learning and development is clearly one of the most impactful of leadership strategies" (p. 79). The purpose of this

study was to evaluate various components of the program, such as the impact of formal and informal mentors, formal and informal observations, and professional development (PD) regarding elements such as organization and lesson planning, classroom management, instructional strategies, and professionalism. Because the district is so large and has a high teacher turnover rate, I focused my study on high school participants. New teachers have reported feeling extremely stressed, overwhelmed, and even unprepared for some aspects of teaching. According to Mizell (2010), “The complexity of teaching is so great that one-third of teachers leave the profession within three years and 50% leave within five years” (p. 9). Consequently, we had noticed an increased number of new teachers leaving District A to pursue careers in other districts or professions in entirely different fields.

Through my work with new teachers, I was able to build my capacity surrounding the new teacher induction program in District A (Patton, 2012, p. 164). I was also able to work with the Probationary Teacher Committee (PTC), which is the committee that created and has continually evaluated the new teacher induction program in the district. Learning about the history of the program helped me to understand the continued adaptability that is required of a successful new teacher induction program (Patton, 2012, p. 164).

I wanted to examine why teachers were leaving the district and whether there were components of our new teacher induction program that could be improved upon or modified to help new teachers feel supported, knowledgeable, and capable enough to stay in the district. The new teacher induction program is directly related to student learning through the components focused on each month through the program. Much of the

program is related to the Danielson Framework, which is District A's teacher evaluation system. The district breaks down the different components of The Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument for teachers and provides insight into how one becomes an "excellent" teacher. The purpose of my study was to explore and introduce a new program that focuses more on mentoring and coaching practices to not only share how to be successful inside the classroom but to show teachers how to implement successful teaching strategies. Through a more hands-on mentoring program and coaching-type approach, teachers will be able to apply what they studied about quality teaching within their classrooms with a mentor's support and consistent feedback. It will also be helpful to receive funding for our new teacher induction program based on this examination. However, funding is not necessary to implement a quality, beneficial program for new teachers.

According to Patton (2012), a program evaluation includes organizational surveys (p. 157). I chose to use a mixed methods design, including both qualitative and quantitative research, using evidence from new teacher, administrator, and mentor surveys from the high schools in District A. Qualitative data collected from new teachers, administrators, and mentors through the surveys included short narratives, quotations, detailed descriptions of situations, interactions, beliefs, and thoughts that were provided as responses to open-ended questions (Patton, 2012, p. 289). The quantitative data were the responses from Likert scale questions that served as the primary form of data collection (Patton, 2012, p. 293).

Rationale

According to Wagner (2014), “Nearly one in two teachers who start out in the classroom leave after just five years” (p. 146). My reason for selecting this particular program to evaluate was because I saw new teachers struggling to succeed in the classroom. I wanted to help create a plan with practical PD opportunities for new teachers, beneficial mentoring, and opportunities for new teachers to observe high-performing teachers within the district. If someone were to ask me to describe my first year of teaching in one word, I would choose “survival.” Rather than words like enlightening, positive, and exciting, my mind immediately goes back to a time of stress, ignorance, and exhaustion. The first year of teaching is a whirlwind. It often takes a few years for teachers to master the content, learn to navigate the environment, and gain confidence in managing a classroom and effectively using teaching strategies. I want to provide new teachers more support and development opportunities so they will feel more at ease and less stressed, more lively and less exhausted, more secure and less anxious.

The critical issues I focused on that make up this program are the content of the monthly meetings and how that information can be put into practice with mentoring and coaching support. The components vary from difficult parent phone calls to teaching a culturally diverse student population. The program covers a wide variety of topics, but I wanted to analyze the program curriculum and its effectiveness in terms of these topics. This study is necessary to stakeholders, the district, and the educational community because we need to find a way to support and grow first-year teachers to develop into high-performing teachers for our students. It is also crucial for teachers to build relationships with students and colleagues and become part of the school culture.

According to Riehl and Sipple (1996), “Teacher commitment is greater in schools characterized by high levels of administrative support and teacher collegiality” (p. 893). Although this takes time, an effective first-year induction program can foster the sense of belonging needed to help new teachers encourage positive relationships and connectedness.

Goals

My program evaluation’s intended goals were to define the current new teacher induction program for high school teachers in District A and to evaluate its effectiveness in providing teachers the tools to create a positive and safe learning environment, effective and inclusive instructional strategies, and well-structured lesson plans that align with the district curriculum. I surveyed new teachers to gauge what the program did well and what they felt was missing from the program. I looked at the teacher evaluation data for our newer teachers and where they struggled. Results revealed missing components of the new teacher induction program and identified elements to add to improve the program; thus, I used the results to inform the audience of current practices and recommend modifications to enhance the new teacher induction program in District A.

This program’s evaluation relates explicitly to improved student learning because I believe I developed an effective new teacher induction program for first-year teachers through this research. I used the Danielson Framework to drive the program’s curriculum but presented it with a hands-on approach, including mentors and coaching. According to Murphy (2016), role modeling provides the “appropriate model of best practice and beliefs considered fundamental to the organization” (p. 59). Part of this program would include new teachers informally observing veteran, exemplary teachers as well as

engaging in reflection. Hopefully, with this new induction program, fewer of our first-year teachers will feel overwhelmed with their many responsibilities, and they will perform at higher levels in the classroom. Additionally, teachers will gain confidence and recognize their professional growth with the added support of this program.

Research Questions

Through this study, I documented the changes I would like to make to the new teacher induction program after analyzing effective elements and elements I believe are lacking. Between new teacher district orientation, monthly induction meetings, reciprocal informal observations, mentoring, and coaching, I tried to create a new teacher induction program that would prove beneficial in improving student learning.

My primary research question was: What elements are necessary for a new teacher induction program to meet new teachers' needs and support effective life-long teaching at the high school level?

My secondary research questions were:

1. What induction program components are most beneficial for new teachers at the high school level?
2. What elements do new teachers believe would improve their professional practice that are not part of the high school program?
3. How do new high school teachers feel about the induction program?
4. Do high school teachers feel supported through the current mentoring program; if not, how can this be improved?
5. Did high school teachers improve throughout the year or in the next year in Danielson components related to classroom environment and instruction?

Conclusion

It is becoming evident that new teachers need many different layers of support to best help their students. With the constant changes in district initiatives, technology, and curriculum, teachers must be given the tools to not only manage these changes but thrive with these changes. Results of this study can serve as an agent for change within our school community to help our teachers help our students.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

As new, excited graduates complete their teacher certification programs and enter the field of education, as many as 16% of teachers report they are “grossly underprepared to support students in real-world classroom situations” (Neal & Freeman, 2023, p. 6). The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in approximately 600,000 teachers in the United States leaving the teaching profession, which created a teacher shortage in all areas of education (Neal & Freeman, 2023). According to NEA President Becky Pringle, the shortage of educators is a “five-alarm crisis” (Flannery, 2023, p. 40) as it has left new, inexperienced teachers with fewer supports in their districts as they begin their careers. Due to the teacher shortage in the United States and the lack of new teacher readiness when entering the teaching world, it has become more vital than ever to provide new teachers with an induction program that trains and prepares them for the classroom.

According to Bickmore and Bickmore (2010), supporting new teachers through their transition from novice to experienced teachers emerged as a concern in the educational literature as early as the mid-1900s. Breaux and Wong (2003) stated induction is a “structured training program that begins before the first day of school and continues for two or more years” (p. 5). The main purpose of the program is to provide training in effective teaching practices and classroom management techniques, create a smooth transition for new teachers, and maximize teacher retention (Breaux & Wong, 2003, p. 5). Additionally, over the last 30 years there has been more of an emphasis on the importance of one-on-one mentoring (Bickmore & Bickmore, 2010, p. 1007). A mentor is an experienced teacher who acts as a support to a novice teacher. As an

experienced mentor in one study stated, new teachers “come in with so much energy – they want to save the world! But, they can’t do it without support” (Flannery, 2023, p. 40). Though new teacher induction programs still focus on training in effective teaching practices, programs have shifted to include collaborative partnerships among new teachers, mentors, and other building leaders that are viewed as “integral to continuous improvement” (Helmke, 2022, p. 27). New teacher induction programs have evolved over time and look different depending on the state and district, but the recognition that new teachers need support through this transition has remained constant.

Teacher induction programs are not only seen in the United States; countries such as Switzerland, China, New Zealand, Japan, and France provide new teacher induction programs for novice teachers though they look very different from those in the United States. For example, in Japan, new teachers teach public lessons that are observed and critiqued by their colleagues. In China, there are organized instruction competitions between new teachers in which lessons are videotaped for future use and shared with the community (Wong et al., 2005). Wong et al. (2005) discussed how such programs in Switzerland focus on the development of the whole person as well as the teacher through practice groups of three teachers who work closely together during their student teaching experience. New Zealand gives every new teacher 20% release time to participate in its version of a new teacher induction program, which is titled the Advice and Guidance (AG) program. Before teachers receive a permanent teaching certificate, they must document the support they received through the AG program. Globally, the components of teacher induction programs are different than in the United States, but the goal is the same—to support and retain new teachers.

The Danielson Framework for professional practice was developed by Charlotte Danielson in 1996. To date, the Danielson Group has worked with 1,500 organizations in 49 states in the United States and 15 other countries (The Danielson Group, n.d.). The original purpose of the framework was to foster clear and significant conversations about valuable teaching practices; however, in 2007 the framework was expanded to include updated components and rubrics. In 2013, the framework evolved into an evaluation instrument that is used in school districts across the United States, including District A, which adopted the framework evaluation instrument in 2014.

In October 2021, the ISBE reported there were 1,703.6 unfilled teaching positions, meaning thousands of students were in classrooms without a certified educator. According to Ingersoll and Strong (2011), “40%-50% of new teachers leave within the first five years of entry into teaching” (p. 202). Furthermore, according to Hong (2010), the Alliance for Excellent Education, in 2004, broke this alarming statistic down further: “14% of new teachers leave by the end of their first year, 33% leave within three years, and 50% leave within five years” (p. 1530). Because of the teacher shortage in the last 2 decades, district leaders have come to realize they need to support new teachers in an attempt to slow the teacher attrition rate. In 2016, a total of 29 different states required some type of support for new teachers (Goldrick, 2016) and in 2023, a total of 31 states require induction and mentoring support for all new teachers (Education Commission of the States, 2023). As the teacher shortage increases, the number of states that are requiring support and mentoring for new teachers is also increasing.

Social media has become part of many new teacher induction programs as a way to help new teachers and mentors alike with various strategies and best practices to

implement in the classroom. There are podcasts, such as Elaina Aguilar's "The Bright Morning Podcast," that are completely dedicated to developing mentoring/coaching programs to help new teachers. The Instructional Coaching Group, led by Jim Knight, has a YouTube channel dedicated to helping mentors and instructional coaches best help new teachers. There are also a wide variety of YouTube channels that focus on classroom management and instructional strategies, such as Edtopia, Ted-Ed, and Khan Academy. YouTube even offers channels that provide lessons for various topics, such as math and science, that teachers can incorporate into their lesson plans. Even sites like X (formerly known as Twitter) can be used to research current events and teach students about the credibility of sources related to research. The resources for new teachers that are available through social media are endless.

Between the virtual and in-person supports available to new teachers, school district leaders are hoping to reduce their teacher attrition rates and begin to rebuild the expertise of their staff. This chapter includes a review of the characteristics and purposes of induction programs, and the effects of induction and mentoring programs on instructional practices and teacher retention. The purpose of this literature review is to explore the published research and theory regarding the effectiveness of existing new teacher induction programs on both instructional practice and teacher retention, the different components of new teacher induction programs, and feedback from those currently involved with new teacher induction programs regarding the effectiveness of the programs and suggestions for improvement.

Characteristics and Purposes of Induction Programs

Teaching is complex work for which incoming teachers are not sufficiently prepared through their college coursework (Neal & Freeman, 2023). Induction is “the process of systematically training and supporting new teachers” (Wong, 2001, p. 48). According to Ingersoll and Strong (2011), the majority of the skills and training required to be a successful teacher can only be acquired while on the job. Field experience is essential to understanding the requirements of being a successful teacher. Induction programs are designed to improve the retention and performance of new teachers—to prevent the loss of teachers and to increase growth and learning for students. According to Mizell (2010), new teachers are exposed to a tremendous number of unfamiliar issues, such as “classroom management, instruction, curriculum, school culture and operations, test preparation and administration, state standards, parent relations, and interactions with other teachers” (p. 9).

By offering the additional help of an induction program, a district can retain more teachers and provide them with the tools they need to become successful educators. Overall, it has been shown that teachers who have some type of induction program have “higher job satisfaction, commitment, or retention” (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011, p. 211). According to a study evaluating the Texas Beginning Educator Support System, teachers who participated in the new teacher induction program left the school system “at statistically significantly lower rates” compared to the rate for all beginning teachers across the state (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011, p. 212). In another quantitative study conducted in 2010, a total of 8,838 teachers from North Carolina were surveyed after just 2 years of teaching. Results showed new teachers who were paired with mentors in the

same building, content area, or grade level were less likely to transfer to a different school (Maready et al., 2021). In 2013, a total of 1,000 teachers who participated in the Novice Teacher Induction Programme (NTIP), which was developed to investigate the overall effectiveness of teacher induction and programing, and identified mentors being a “key factor in their decision to remain in the profession” (Maready et al., 2021, p. 90). According to Ronfeldt and McQueen (2017), having a teacher mentor “reduced the odds of a new teacher leaving by 35%-50%” (p. 406).

New teacher induction programs often include a variety of activities for beginning teachers. Induction programs vary worldwide and include different activities and methods from country to country, and city to city. Although school districts all over the world adopt various types of new teacher induction programs, some of the more common activities include “socialization, adjustment, development, and assessment” (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011, p. 203). Some other supports provided to new teachers include new teacher meetings, workshops, seminars, and release time (Wilkins et al., 2012). Although programs vary, according to Wong et al. (2005), successful induction programs all have three things in common—“they are highly structured, they focus on professional learning, and they emphasize collaboration” (p. 383). Induction programs build communities for new teachers that are supportive in terms of PD and personal growth.

According to Breaux and Wong (2003), some important purposes of the teacher induction program include, but are not limited to, “easing the transition into teaching, improving teacher effectiveness through training in effective classroom management and teaching techniques, promoting a district’s culture – its philosophies, mission, policies, procedures and goals, [and] maximizing the retention rate of highly qualified teachers”

(p. 14). According to Mary Lyndes, experienced mentor through the National Education Association (NEA; Flannery, 2023), teaching today has become so much harder than it was years before. She stated, “We [teachers] used to just shut the door and figure it out. That’s just not possible for new teachers today” (p. 40). Lyndes went on to list some of the things new teachers need to know, such as how to set up classroom seating to include small group spaces, how to check email, how to locate extra supplies, and how to create a classroom website, not to mention planning lessons to reflect state and district standards and developing a classroom management plan to address behavior and procedures (Flannery, 2023, p. 40).

New teacher induction programs can address these issues and support teachers through a variety of resources. Murphy (2016) discussed the importance of adequate resources, including materials such as teacher guides, videos, and collaborative time (p. 95). According to Drago-Severson and Blum DeStefano (2018), “When it comes to professional growth, adults . . . feel *most* supported by tangible examples (e.g., models, best practices, rubrics, and step-by-step instructions)” (p. 28). Many districts provide resources to new teachers through tangible examples. For example, in Waterford School District in Michigan, the first year of new teacher induction focuses on the classroom environment. All teachers receive a notebook with local district information and curriculum guides. In year two, teachers focus on lesson planning and preparation and receive information regarding district expectations regarding curriculum, instruction, and assessment (Breaux & Wong, 2003).

Hong (2010) found that novice teachers voiced “concrete and practical concerns such as class control, conveying content knowledge, and relations with parents,

colleagues, and administrators” (p. 1539). With these concerns, if teachers are not confident in their ability to manage a classroom, they may see behavior as a threat and “doubt their ability to handle students’ misbehaviors,” and therefore struggle to develop into high-quality educators (Hong, 2010, p. 1541). Breaux and Wong (2003) stated classroom management should be the main focus of the first few days of induction because quality learning cannot take place if a classroom is not safe and effectively managed (p. 45). Induction programs in Massachusetts include release time for both the mentor and mentee to participate in regular classroom observations (Education Commission of the States, 2007). Providing this time allows for direct feedback regarding classroom management techniques and procedures with the goal being improvement. Some new teacher induction programs use demonstration classrooms where new teachers can observe the organization needed for an effective school year (Breaux & Wong, 2003, p. 75). This time also enables new teachers to observe experienced teachers who can model and provide resources to improve their practice. According to Ingersoll and Strong (2011), teachers who participate in induction programs perform better at certain components of teaching, such as “keeping students on task, developing workable lesson plans, using effective questioning practices, adjusting classroom activities to meet students’ interests, maintaining a positive classroom atmosphere, and demonstrating successful classroom management” (p. 225).

In addition to concrete strategies for effective classroom management, there are overarching cultural elements of a school and district that should be addressed during new teacher induction. Induction programs usually include a district day that “provides new teachers with district information such as the district vision, payroll, teacher

absences, and health benefits” (Bickmore & Bickmore, 2010, p. 1008). There are often PD opportunities that focus on educational issues the district values, such as technology, building relationships with students, and the use of restorative practices. According to Bickmore and Bickmore (2010), during induction, new teachers are also exposed to the “school’s vision and goals, school policies and procedures, and the introduction to school personnel, including novice teacher mentors” (p. 1008). According to Hellsten et al. (2009), induction programs are a socialization process and showcase how a teaching community acculturates its new teachers (p. 705). Learning, understanding, and eventually accepting the district and school culture are important purposes of new teacher induction programs.

Effects of Programs on Instructional Practices

According to Wong et al. (2005), comprehensive induction programs offered by districts for at least the first 2 years of teaching that are structured and provide training and support to help their teachers achieve result in “improved student learning through improved professional learning” (p. 384). Delisio (2003) also recognized that the better the teacher is trained, the better the student achievement in their classroom. According to Schwartz (2020), teachers who were interviewed noted concern for “teachers in city districts having to sit out these events. Big education conferences are dominated by teachers from suburban, majority-white districts” (p. 3). Unfortunately, the quality of PD available to new teachers is directly associated with the funds the district allocates for training. When new teachers are hired in a lower income district, some of the pricier PD opportunities are not an option for them. When teachers cannot attend these types of valuable development opportunities, low-income, minority, and ELL students are not

being highlighted; thus, these students may suffer because their teachers are not receiving PD to best help them learn. This coincides with Wilkins et al.'s (2012) report that 70% of the new teachers surveyed in their study were least confident in their ability to service ELL students (p. 7).

Breaux and Wong (2003) discussed how new teachers learn more in study groups and through teacher networks than they do through traditional classes or workshops because quality teaching shifts from an individual to a group responsibility. Additionally, they found through their research that students not only benefit when teachers share their ideas and strategies with each other, they also take ownership over their learning. Garet et al. (2001) found that PD focused around evaluating student work helps teachers to “gain an understanding of students’ assumptions, reasoning and solution strategies” (p. 926) and may help teachers develop skills to identify student struggles with the material and their own lesson design. Recent studies have also shown PD that focuses on specific content information, such as math or science, and the ways students learn that specific content is particularly helpful in induction programs that are focused on improving students’ understanding and performance in certain subjects (Garet et al., 2001, p. 918). According to Ingersoll and Strong (2011), novice teachers who participated in induction performed better at “keeping students on task, developing workable lesson plans, using effective student questioning, flexibility, fostering a positive classroom climate, and effective classroom management” (p. 25). Induction programs seem to improve teacher quality, which has been proven to be one of the best predictors of student success (Davis & Higdon, 2008).

Effects of Induction Programs on Teacher Retention

Induction programs play a role in building teacher self-efficacy; however, developing self-efficacy in new teachers is rarely considered in terms of teacher retention (Anderson & Schuh, 2021). Self-efficacy reflects an individual's confidence to exert control over their own motivation, behavior, and social environment. Additionally, Anderson and Schuh (2021) stated that fostering self-efficacy prepares teachers with the ability to navigate future adversity successfully. Part of self-efficacy is helping teachers recognize and understand their professional identity. Teacher induction programs that include opportunities for teachers to share their experiences in the teaching profession and collaborate develop teachers who have a higher level of professional identity awareness and are less likely to drop out of the teaching profession (Hong, 2010, p. 1531). Professional identity consists of an individual's alignment of roles, responsibilities, values, and ethical standards to be consistent with the practices accepted by their specific profession. According to Hong (2010), new teachers shape their professional identity by past experiences and current situations over time, which supports that induction programs should extend past the first year of teaching. New teacher induction programs bridge the essential gap between preservice teachers' notions of what teaching will be and the reality of their emotional experiences, developmental stages, and the "demanding reality" of the classroom (Hong, 2010, p. 1525, 1535, 1539, 1543). What preservice teachers see in films that depict educators or even remember about their past teachers may not equate to their experiences as a first-year teacher.

Delisio (2003) noted induction programs send new teachers a message that they are valued; district and school leaders want them to be successful and continue teaching

their students. Induction programs play a crucial role in helping teachers build their understanding of the practicality of teaching, increase their awareness of emotions, and provide opportunities for reflection; thus, induction programs help new teachers build their professional identities, increasing the likelihood that they will remain in the profession.

Similarly to how teacher induction programs vary across states and districts, new teachers' perceptions of programs also vary. According to McGeehan (2019), the majority of teachers in their study agreed that their assigned mentor through the induction program was trustworthy, helpful, qualified, accessible, and valuable (p. 59). Though these results were positive toward the program, new teachers also reported they needed more PD specifically focused on the challenges faced by new teachers (p. 60). Though general PD regarding teaching strategies is helpful for all teachers, novice teachers need pointed training specifically geared toward the struggles they face as a first-year teacher. Though the majority of novice teachers agreed that the mentoring and induction programs were beneficial and helped them grow as teachers, between 10%–15% stated the programs did not help them become a better teacher, nor did they help them feel more competent in the classroom (McGeehan, 2019, p. 64).

Mixed reviews aside, teacher induction programs have proven to have a positive effect on new teacher retention. Reportedly, 95% of new teachers who receive support during their first 3 years remain in teaching after the first 3 years, and 80% of those teachers remain in teaching after the first 5 years (Breux & Wong, 2003; Delisio, 2003; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Julie Sheldon, co-chair of the Greater Los Angeles Induction Leadership Committee, stated that if school district leaders want to retain effective new

teachers, support for a quality induction program must be a priority. According to a survey of new teachers in California after they completed the induction program, 96% responded that they wanted to continue their teaching career (Sheldon, 2022). In Massachusetts, induction programs are believed to lead to a higher rate of teacher retention because new teachers find themselves part of an environment that cultivates continued personal and professional growth and success (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2020).

Effects of Mentoring Programs on Instructional Practices

Many induction programs include mentors as a resource for new teachers. Strong mentor programs are rooted in effective teaching strategies and standards for student learning (Kelley, 2004). According to McCann (2013), mentors support the professional development of novice teachers to “advance students’ learning and to protect the quality of their experience in school” (p. 89). Mentors help their mentees improve upon their professional skills, enhance their understanding of their subject and content, locate and obtain resources, and expand their catalog of teaching strategies (Portner, 2003). The goal of mentoring is to take a proactive approach to implementing effective, new strategies (Gore, 2020). Neal and Freeman (2023) stated, “When teachers are prepared to enter their classrooms and educate their students, both teaching and learning can take place because of that preparation” (p. 6). They recognized the need for school district leaders to implement induction programs that “train, support, and retain new teachers” (p. 6). They discussed the New Educators Support and Training (NEST) program that was adopted by a school district in Northeast Louisiana.

The NEST program is a volunteer program for new teachers that includes opportunities for new teachers to communicate and collaborate with other teachers throughout the district. Through these communications, new teachers learn about district policies and procedures and build self-efficacy so they can instruct and manage their classrooms effectively and build the confidence to ask for help as needed. This is one example of one of the many different types of induction programs offered throughout the United States for new teachers. Wong and Wong (2014) believed “effective schools have a culture where they consistently invest in teacher capital” (para. 30).

In California, new teacher induction programs are organized around each new teacher’s Individual Learning Plan. The program is not a one-size-fits-all packaged curriculum; rather, it looks different for each new teacher. This format allows new teachers to choose their own areas of focus based on the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession* and strategies to help students succeed. New teachers work with their mentors to determine areas of focus, and mentors help guide new teachers to resources, PD, and research so the new teachers have access to effective instructional strategies (Sheldon, 2022). This model requires mentors to have dedicated time to meet and collaborate with their mentees to share their expertise regarding instructional practices.

Aguilar (2019) discussed that when schools implemented effective PD programs, which may include induction programs and mentoring, there was a clear connection between the PD and the outcomes leaders were hoping to achieve. For example, after new teachers received PD related to managing classroom behavior and the role of race, class, and gender in discipline, teachers saw a reduction in referrals and suspensions among

both Latino and African American boys (p. 28). By providing PD on discipline strategies accompanied with research and best practices regarding classroom management, teachers were able to change the narrative.

Sweeny (2008) discussed how new teacher mentor programs must include follow-up support in new teachers' classrooms for guided practice and correction, problem solving, adjustment, and the implementation of the training they receive through the induction program. Successful mentor programs are differentiated for each individual learner; the mentor has the autonomy to be flexible to meet the needs of the new teacher. Each new teacher comes into the profession with a different set of skills, knowledge, and experiences. Sweeny believed in individualizing induction programs to meet each new teacher's needs, providing new teachers with specific PD based on their strengths and areas for improvement.

Lipton and Wellman (2018) stated new teachers who are "supported early in their careers have increased effectiveness in their classrooms, higher satisfaction, and greater commitment than those that do not experience these supports" (p. xv). New teachers should be members of collaborative teams (Odden, 2012, p. 89). Furthermore, Odden (2012) stated,

When new teachers are members of such collaborative teams, they gain access to the analytic skills of more experienced teachers, to effective materials that have already been developed and used, to the expertise of fellow teachers, and to individuals who can mentor them on classroom management and expanding their instructional repertoire. (p. 89)

Lipton and Wellman (2018) suggested mentoring can happen through various platforms. Lipton and Wellman provided a practical framework for mentors they referred to as the 3Cs Mentorship Framework. In this framework, mentors act as consultants, offering support and providing resources to new teachers. Mentors also act as collaborators, creating challenges and encouraging growth, and mentors act as coaches, facilitating professional vision. Most often, mentors demonstrate flexibility in their role based on what their mentees need most from them (Oregon Department of Education, n.d.). A formal mentoring program is only one resource of support for new teachers—it should not be the only support system in place.

Effects of Mentoring Programs on Teacher Retention

A positive, helpful mentor may be the key to improving teacher retention in the nation's schools. When Ingersoll (2001) started breaking down the numbers, it was not only shocking but completely disappointing to learn that “about 190,000 teachers newly entered [teaching] for the 1990-1991 school year [and] in 12 months, about 180,000 teachers – equivalent to 91% of those hired – left the occupation altogether” (p. 514). Results showed 27% left because they were “dissatisfied” in their current position, whereas 38% left due to a lack of administrative support (p. 521). When administrators plan and prepare an effective mentoring program for new teachers, teachers feel valued and supported, which improves teacher retention. Elizabeth Heubeck (2021), a fourth-grade teacher in Los Angeles, found that 92% of first-year teachers who had a positive mentor returned to teaching for the second year. According to Sweeny (2008), a strong mentor program provides support and guidance to new teachers so they can learn how to

positively influence the success of students; this translates into teachers who continue teaching.

According to Polikoff et al. (2015), “Teachers with time during the day to meet with their mentors and were matched appropriately” (p. 91) reported stronger and more beneficial relationships with their mentors. Additionally, “thirty-six beginning teachers emphasized the importance of having formal mentors who were familiar with their school, particularly school policies and students” (p. 93). Teachers reported the location and convenience along with availability during the day had a positive impact on their mentoring experience (p. 94). According to Portner (2003), one of the reasons there is a high rate of attrition among new teachers is because school and district leaders are not using veteran teachers as a resource to help support new teachers. Furthermore, the lack of a supportive base upon entering the profession causes teachers to feel “isolated behind classroom doors with little feedback or help” (Portner, 2003, p. 4), ultimately learning to simply cope rather than becoming an effective teacher. Ronfeldt and McQueen (2017) found that first-year induction programs had positive effects on attrition between years two and five (p. 406). Over time, programs that included supports both emotionally and professionally showed promise in terms of teacher retention.

Mentoring is collaboration, the opposite of isolation. Lipton and Wellman (2018) discussed the benefits of teacher mentoring, stating new teachers who “participate in high quality induction programs that include a comprehensive mentoring component have consistently shown that they increase beginning teacher retention, improve student achievement, and reduce the use of financial and human resources associated with teacher turnover” (p. xv).

Additionally, Renard (2003) cited research stating that the major concerns of most new teachers include, but are not limited to, classroom management, lesson differentiation for individual students, assessment of student learning, and parent communication. These are issues teachers can discuss with their mentors, thus receiving guidance on how they can improve and handle issues rather than learning through trial and error.

According to Helmke (2022), school district leaders struggle with the teacher shortage and the influx of novice teachers. This trend can be viewed as a problem by district and school administration, or it can be seen as “an opportunity to cultivate the next generation of highly effective teachers and leaders and share a culture of job-embedded, instructional improvement” (p. 31). School district leaders recognize that new teachers have different needs than veteran teachers. Because of the teacher shortage, district leaders are forced to hire more and more inexperienced teachers who need training and support. School district leaders can develop a successful program to help new teachers that includes mentoring and PD that can help teachers improve their own practice and student outcomes (p. 32).

Conclusion

The research surrounding new teacher induction programs and mentoring programs for new teachers has shown they are effective in helping teachers be more effective in the classroom as well as stay in the classroom. No one is a master of their craft on day one. New teachers need guidance, training, and support before they can obtain all the skills and experience they need to be excellent teachers. Some of these skills they will learn on their own over time. However, having veteran, effective teachers

mentor them through planning, classroom management, instruction, and professionalism helps to provide these skills alongside the skills they acquire through their own experiences. Induction and mentoring programs also help new teachers collaborate and build connections with other teachers. Though there is no guarantee that providing an induction and mentoring program for new teachers will create excellent teachers who spend their entire careers as teachers, there is no research that indicates induction or mentoring programs are harmful to new teachers.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Research Design Overview

In this study, I assigned a pseudonym to the district I studied in relation to its new teacher induction program. I refer to this school district as District A. I evaluated District A's first-year teacher induction program by examining its components and their effectiveness in creating successful teachers who positively influence student learning and the program's role in teacher retention in the district. According to Smith and Smith (2015), "Leading teacher learning and development is clearly one of the most impactful of leadership strategies" (p. 79). The purpose of this study was to evaluate various components of the program, such as the impact of formal and informal mentors, formal and informal observations, and informal PD regarding elements such as organization and lesson planning, classroom management, instructional strategies, and professionalism. Since the 2020 pandemic, new teachers have reported feeling extremely stressed, overwhelmed, and even unprepared for some aspects of teaching. According to Mizell (2010), "The complexity of teaching is so great that one-third of teachers leave the profession within three years and 50% leave within five years" (p. 9). Consequently, district employees noticed an increase in the number of new teachers leaving the district to pursue careers in other higher-paying districts or leaving the profession entirely. Thus, I examined the new teacher induction program in District A, hoping to offer solutions and improve the teacher retention rate.

I used a mixed methods approach and gathered both quantitative and qualitative data. Though the majority of the data came from surveys completed by new teachers,

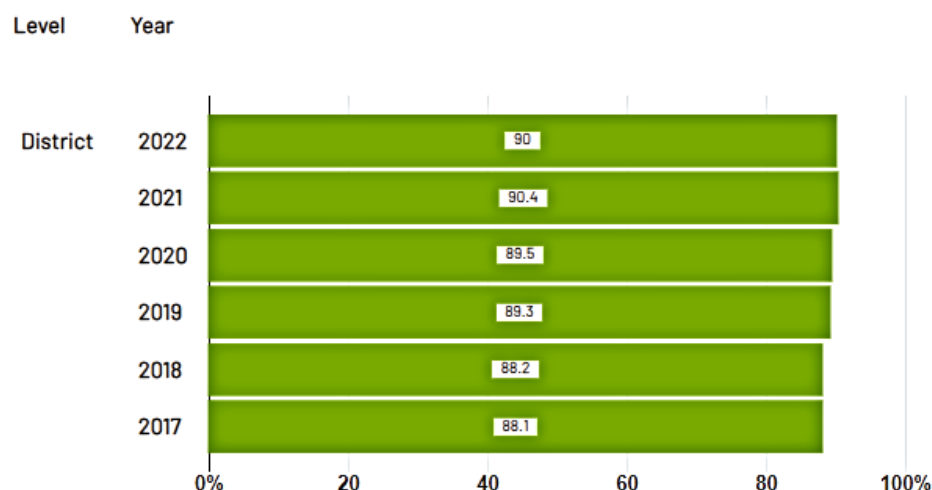
mentors, division chairs, and building administrators, there were open-ended questions in the surveys that allowed for qualitative data collection. When researching the effectiveness of new teacher induction programs, gathering information regarding the experiences of current first-year teachers is important in terms of understanding the success of the programs. In addition to these data, I gathered and used data from monthly induction meetings and evaluation ratings. According to Patton (2012), “Evaluators should be able to use a variety of tools if they are to be sophisticated and flexible in matching research methods to the nuances of particular evaluation questions and the idiosyncrasies of specific decision-maker needs” (p. 293). I gathered a variety of data from various sources and in different forms to evaluate the induction program in terms of its effectiveness and offer a change plan for improvement.

Gathering quantitative data through surveys regarding the current new teacher induction program provided multiple perspectives of the overall success of the program. I administered surveys to new teachers, school administrators, division chairs, and mentors. I compiled survey data that helped to provide descriptive information that indicated participants’ perspectives and experiences regarding the current program in terms of the Danielson Framework, which is the evaluation model used within the district. I also gathered and analyzed quantitative data regarding teacher retention and growth throughout their first year while participating in the new teacher induction program. The surveys included Likert scale questions, multiple-choice questions, and open-ended questions. According to Patton (2012), when evaluating programs, qualitative data are “aimed at letting people in programs express their reactions in their own terms rather than impose upon them a preconceived set of limited response categories” (p. 290).

This mixed methods research design enabled me to ask questions regarding the “how” and “why” with the purpose of providing an in-depth analysis and understanding of the school district’s new teacher induction program and its implementation. This research design allowed me to come to conclusions regarding my overarching research question: What elements are necessary for a new teacher induction program to meet new teachers’ needs and support effective life-long teaching at the high school level? According to the 2021–2022 *Illinois School Report Card*, District A had a 90% teacher retention rate, which had steadily increased in the last 5 years (see Figure 1). With the implementation of additional components in the current high school new teacher induction program in District A, trends should continue to rise.

Figure 1

Illinois School Report Card 2021–2022: Retention Trends



Participants

The key participants from whom I collected data were high school administrators, high school mentors, high school division chairs, and new high school teachers. In the district, division chairs observe new teachers both informally and formally. The

participants came from four different high schools in District A. Surveys went out to all new teachers, all building mentors, and all building administrators, and both surveys included open-ended questions, multiple-choice questions, and Likert scale questions and completion was voluntary. Of the 48 professionals who were sent the survey, a total of 25 (52%) administrators, division chairs, and mentors participated. I sent another survey to all new teachers in District A, both novice and ETND. Thirty-six of the 38 (95%) new teachers chose to participate. Of the 24 administrators, 15 participated in the survey. Of the 16 division chairs in the district, eight participated in the survey. Of the eight building mentors, two participated in the survey.

Because the district is so large and has a high rate of teacher turnover, I decided to limit my research to high school participants. It is important to understand the different needs of teachers for them to be successful and feel supported. High school administrators and division chairs have one perspective on what they believe new teachers need, and the mentors who work directly with new teachers have another perspective. It was also insightful to hear from new teachers regarding what they felt they need to be successful and feel supported. In addition to learning what all three parties believed teachers need, it was interesting to learn how the current induction program meets the needs of new teachers when comparing the results of the surveys with the curriculum in the new teacher induction program. The goal of the program in District A is to supply all new teachers with support and tools to increase their feelings of self-efficacy so they begin to build confidence and their ability to use resources to improve classroom management and instruction for their students (Anderson & Schuh, 2021).

The associate principal of curriculum and instruction oversees and facilitates the new teacher induction program in each building. However, the curriculum for the program is designed by the PTC, which consists of district-level administrators, building administrators, and veteran teachers. The building administrators introduce the material to new teachers and provide further explanation and application activities to accompany the material. Associate principals also field questions and offer opportunities for discussion related to the curriculum. Through my work with the PTC and this study, it was my hope to work with new teachers, administrators, and mentors to gain insight into District A's new teacher induction program and evaluate the effectiveness of the program in terms of fostering successful teachers who positively influence student learning and the program's role in teacher retention.

Data Gathering Techniques

There were two different surveys: one survey for new teachers and another survey for division chairs, administrators, and mentors. The survey for new teachers (see Appendix A) comprised 24 questions: seven open-ended questions, one Likert scale question, and 16 multiple-choice questions. The survey for administrators, division chairs, and mentors (see Appendix B) was made up of 15 questions that included four open-ended questions and 11 multiple-choice questions. I developed the surveys using Google Forms; none of the questions were required to answer, but it was recommended that all questions be answered. The questions in the surveys were different for each group. The survey for administrators, division chairs, and mentors included questions regarding the participants' involvement with the program and their interactions with new teachers. It included questions regarding their opinion on certain components of the

program. The new teacher survey was centered around the effectiveness of the program and what teachers would have liked to have been included that was not originally part of the induction program. Having the opportunity to compare data from both surveys allowed me to find commonalities within the results, supporting the need for change.

In addition to surveys, I collected anonymous performance data from EvaluWise, which is the program used within the district to document the evaluations of teachers. These data included an inventory of comments made by administrators on new teacher evaluations and a comparison of these comments to results on both surveys in terms of what new teachers need. I tracked individual teacher performance results from their first observation to their second observation and analyzed the administrative notes and teacher growth in terms of alignment to the new teacher induction program curriculum. Essentially, because the curriculum is Danielson-focused, teachers should be improving throughout their observation cycles in terms of meeting the requirements associated with the components in the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

I also gathered public data regarding new teacher induction programs across the nation. These data helped me understand the different programs and the meanings behind the varying program designs. This approach was best because it allowed me to not only gather data, but to understand the meanings behind the data. Additionally, it was important for me to be cognizant of the bias of both the participants and the researchers who gathered public data. Even if unintentional, inherent bias is unavoidable. As Patton (2012) stated, “Evaluators are no less susceptible to treating their perceptions as reality” (p. 11). I was careful to analyze participants’ responses and the data objectively before coming to any conclusions. Ultimately, data collection took place November 1, 2021–

November 1, 2022, as I administered surveys and monthly induction feedback forms throughout that time to complete the program evaluation.

Surveys were sent to the mentors, building administrators, and division chairs in the Winter of 2021. Surveys were sent to new teachers in May of 2022 at the culmination of the first year of the new teacher induction program. In the Summer of 2022, I collected anonymous data from EvaluWise regarding teacher performance and evaluated the monthly induction program feedback forms created by the PTC.

Ethical Considerations

It was vital to begin the research and data collection by introducing myself, the research I was conducting, and the goals of my research. I ensured participation was completely voluntary and reiterated participants' anonymity. Their names, titles, and work locations remained completely confidential and anonymous. All research was housed in a secure, password-protected folder on my computer; this included results from both of the surveys as well as the data from the monthly induction meeting surveys. All participants provided informed consent prior to completing any surveys (see Appendix C). There were no minors involved in this study; all participants were new teachers, building mentors, or building-level administrators. Responses shared from participants do not include any identifying information and were in no way to be part of any evaluation connected to their position. This was a low-risk study; participants' responses remained confidential and anonymous, and their responses did not result in any negative consequences. There were no benefits to the participants of the study besides intrinsic satisfaction in knowing they helped provide data to contribute to the research regarding new teacher induction programs.

Data Analysis Techniques

Having a wide range of data from various surveys required me to be efficient in terms of cataloging and organizing data. I collected the survey results from the building administrators and the mentors to try to make connections and find common themes within their responses. Because the surveys included open-ended questions, I went through and coded the responses by common words and themes. Based on the recommendations of Carroll and Carroll (2002), I color-coded each piece of evidence various ways, which helped when sorting text and allowed for a fresh perspective and a new way of looking at the data (p. 88). With regard to the New Teacher Survey, I followed the same process. I compared EvaluWise data from early observations to data from later observations and color-coded the results in terms of common themes in each of four domains. I was able to examine the data and find relationships between the new teacher induction program and teacher evaluations.

The data allowed me to analyze the current new teacher induction program in District A with the needs of new teachers and the wants of school administrators and measure its success in meeting the needs and wants of both new teachers and building leaders. I also used outside research to examine other new teacher induction programs to gain insight into program components that have been effective for new teachers in the past or in other locations.

Conclusion

To conclude, I used a mixed methods approach to collect and analyze both quantitative and qualitative data regarding District A's new teacher induction program. Collecting data from building administrators, division chairs, building mentors, and new

teachers provided me with a relatively large sample that provided different perspectives regarding the program. I kept all data confidential and provided anonymity to all participants. Once all data were collected, I coded and organized the data to come to conclusions regarding the new teacher induction program in District A and made recommendations for changes to enhance the current program in District A.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

The nation is facing a significant teacher shortage, as fewer college students are entering the field in conjunction with teachers leaving the field after years of teaching due to the increasing challenges teachers face. Teaching is different than it was 20 years ago, and teachers are feeling overwhelmed and burned out earlier in their careers. According to Mizell (2010), new teachers are exposed to a tremendous number of unfamiliar issues, such as “classroom management, instruction, curriculum, school culture and operations, test preparation and administration, state standards, parent relations, and interactions with other teachers” (p. 9). The demands of a new teacher require support from both building and district-level leadership, such as mentoring and induction programs. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) stated induction programs provide new teachers with the tools they need to become successful educators, ultimately leading to “higher job satisfaction, commitment, or retention” (p. 211).

During and after the pandemic, new teachers have reported feeling extremely stressed, overwhelmed, and even unprepared for some aspects of teaching. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) stated “teaching has a relatively high turnover rate compared to other occupations and professions” (p. 202); between 40% and 50% of new teachers leave within the first 5 years of beginning their teaching career. There has been an increased number of new teachers leaving District A to pursue careers in other districts or professions in entirely different fields. According to Wagner (2014), “nearly one in two teachers who start out in the classroom leave after just five years” (p. 146). Districts need

to have strong new teacher induction programs in order to retain new teachers and help them balance the many responsibilities of the job.

In this section, I report the findings using the results from the New Teacher Survey; the Administrator, Division Chair, and Mentor Survey; new teacher induction session exit slips; and EvaluWise performance data. I apply the 4Cs framework by reviewing the context, culture, conditions, and competencies and how each affects the new teacher experience in District A, as described in *Change Leadership: A Practical Guide to Transforming Our Schools* (Wagner et al., 2006). The guide states that if the results of a program no longer meet the needs of new teachers, the organization must adapt. “Adaptive challenges require analysis of the problem in order to develop solutions that do not yet exist” (Wagner et al., 2006, p. 10). The context section is focused on the current demographics in District A. In the culture section I discuss the current culture surrounding the new teacher induction program in District A. The conditions section focuses on the current conditions in District A that specifically relate to the new teacher induction program. In the competencies section, I discuss specific skills and aptitudes present in District A relating to the new teacher induction program.

For the purpose of this study, the following terminology is used:

- Novice teachers – Teachers new to the profession.
- Experienced teachers new to District A (ETND) – Teachers with at least 1 year of experience in the profession but who are new teachers in District A.
- District induction program – Monthly program for experienced teachers new to District A, created by leaders of District A.

- State induction program – Program for novice teachers created by educational leaders in the State of Illinois.
- District mentor program – Mentor program for novice teachers created by leaders of District A.
- State mentor program – Mentor program for new teachers created by educational leaders in the State of Illinois.
- 4 Cs evaluation: Contexts, culture, conditions, and competencies – Framework used to define and analyze current circumstances in District A.

Context

Context refers to the local community realities in terms of demands and expectations. District A is part of a growing community that boasts thriving recreational options and new businesses. The area's rich history of farmland with a small town feel has evolved to include five high schools that serve nearly 10,000 students. The school district is diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and student needs. The student population in District A continues to become more diverse each year, and district leaders continue to create and modify programs to best support all students.

The demands on teachers are shifting due to the changing student population in District A. According to Wagner (2014), "nearly one in two teachers who start out in the classroom leave after just five years" (p. 146). The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 made teacher retention more challenging. According to the 2021 Teacher Shortage Survey, 88% of Illinois school districts have a teacher shortage problem and 77% of those districts reported the problem is getting worse (Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools, 2023). The same survey showed 49% of superintendents

agreed that educator burnout caused by COVID-19-related issues led to an increase in teacher turnover. The ISBE has implemented a new teacher mentor program to address teacher shortages across the state, which leaders of District A have incorporated into their new teacher induction program.

According to the Illinois Education Association (IEA, 2023a), the state's new teacher induction program is open to all teachers whether they veteran or new to any district. All new teachers have access to a virtual coach through the IEA and have the opportunity to meet with their virtual coach for 30 minutes every week. The virtual coach is certified in the same area of instruction and trained to provide support in instructional practices, social-emotional learning, and trauma-informed practices (IEA, 2023a). State-assigned virtual coaches are expected to complete 12 hours of professional learning prior to serving in their role with a paid stipend and are also paid \$600 per month by the IEA to participate in the program. All teachers have the opportunity to receive support and feedback via one-on-one and small group virtual coaching sessions. All virtual coaches are teachers in Illinois, but they are not necessarily from the mentee's district or even region. Whether or not teachers choose to take advantage of the opportunity to meet with their virtual coach is up to the new teachers. However, not all new teachers take advantage of this opportunity. According to the IEA's (2023b) Illinois Virtual Instructional Coach and Building Mentor Program for New Teachers, of the 156 teachers in District A who took advantage of the virtual coach program, 37 were returning participants. Meaning, after their first year with a virtual coach, they chose to use this resource again in either their second or third year of teaching. The IEA asked participants

what they found most beneficial about the program. Some notable responses included the following:

- “Being able to talk to a veteran teacher whose knowledge and advice help to advance my teaching skills.”
- “It gives me a great place to share my ideas, check in with someone on how I’m doing, and learn great new examples on how to better my teaching.”
- “Having the professional yet personal support from my virtual coach. She gave great advice as a clinician but also cared deeply about my work-life balance” (IEA, 2023b).

Novice teachers in District A are also assigned a state-sponsored building mentor who checks in with them weekly (IEA, 2023a). This is a trained mentor whose only responsibility as a mentor is to make the novice teacher feel welcomed, supported, and connected to their building (IEA, 2023a). State-assigned building mentors are expected to spend 2 hours per week with their new teacher. State-assigned building mentors are paid \$300 to complete the required training modules prior to meeting with their new teachers, and they receive a \$200 stipend each month for working with the new teachers. Novice teachers receive a \$500 stipend for participating in the program. This program is at no cost to the district; Illinois pays both the new teacher and the mentor.

Experienced teachers new to District A (ETND) participate in the district’s monthly induction program and the virtual coach state program rather than the state-sponsored mentor program. The induction program focuses on the Danielson Model components and how to successfully use those components in the classroom. District

monthly induction sessions are led by the building principal and are discussion-based and designed to encourage community, collaboration, and support.

Figure 2 illustrates the components of the induction program for both novice and experienced teachers. District A has organized a support system that includes the state program virtual coach (IEA), district program building mentor, and the district new teacher induction program. District A's induction program is differentiated for those new to teaching and those new to the district. The reasoning behind this differentiation is that these groups of teachers have different needs. Leaders of District A also recognize that although all three components of the program are beneficial to new teachers, each component does require time of the new teacher. District A assigns different components to novice teachers and ETND to respect new teachers' time and provide them with the PD they believe to be most beneficial.

Figure 2

New Teacher Induction Program Components

| | State program virtual coach (IEA) | District program building mentor | District new teacher induction program |
|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Experienced teacher new to District A | X | | X |
| Novice teacher | X | X | |

Culture

Culture refers to the perception of the new teacher induction program at the high school level, including those regarding the value of the program reported by new teachers, building leadership teams, and district administrators. District A's mission statement for supporting new teachers is to "develop and maintain an induction program

that creates self-reflective leaders who value their role and continuously work to move their practice forward based on what is best for students” (see Figure 3). This mission statement is directly related to the culture in District A. According to its website, District A is committed to building an equitable and inclusive educational community for all students, family, and staff. The district has had varying types of structured mentor programs over the last 20 years, recognizing the need for new teacher mentors; they recently adopted the state program that includes the virtual coach and building mentor. However, how much these programs are valued is unclear because neither of these programs are monitored by a building or district administrator, nor are the programs required for new teachers. The only responsibility of the district regarding the building mentor is to provide the IEA with the name and contact information of the person who will be serving as the building mentor.

Past Practice

In the past, district leaders recognized the need for mentor programs and organized an in-house program for both novice teachers and ETND. The program included teacher mentors and building advisors who went through extensive training and received a variety of resources, including a curriculum to work through with new teachers. The PTC also differentiated between the need for a mentor for all novice teachers and a building advisor for ETND.

According to district historical documents relating to the mentor program, in the 2009–2010 school year, district mentors were full-release teachers who traveled from building to building to observe and work with novice teachers to provide constructive feedback. District mentors earned \$500 per teacher and were required to attend a full 2-

day training during the summer and two 1-hour trainings in the fall and spring semesters, with compensation. District mentors were paid the per diem rate for attending one full day of induction with their novice teacher. District mentors had to complete the 2-day mentor training, which included instruction in using the online Danielson observation tool. District mentors were also required to attend two 1-hour trainings, have completed 3 years in the district, and be recommended by the principal.

In the 2009–2010 school year, building advisors could earn up to \$50.00 per ETND. Building advisors were paid the per diem rate for attending one full day of induction with their ETND. Building advisors were required to have served for at least 3 years in the district or to have completed 1 year in the district and earned tenure in a previous district and be recommended by the principal. Building advisors completed the 2-day mentor training, which included the online Danielson observation tool, and attended two 1-hour trainings before they began supporting their new teachers.

In 2007, the PTC proposed full-release mentors at each level with the plan to fully adopt a full-release mentor program for the 2011–2012 school year. Full-release mentors served both novice teachers and ETND until budget cuts forced the district to abandon the state-funded program.

Current Practice

Experienced Teachers New to the District (ETND). The PTC meets prior to each monthly session to go through exit slip responses and discuss potential changes moving forward. The PTC is led by the assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction and includes building administrators, veteran teachers, and the school district union president. These meetings are held once a month during school hours, and agenda

items include upcoming monthly induction program curriculum and necessary changes to the curriculum content and resources. Teachers on the PTC are not compensated for their time or work but are provided a substitute teacher so they can attend the meetings.

Building administrators gain access to the district's new teacher induction program monthly curriculum 1 week in advance. Building administrators are directed to facilitate the meeting using the structured curriculum created, which includes suggested videos, handouts, and activities. Building administrators are not provided a time or place to go through the curriculum to voice questions or concerns. The building administrators are not part of the development process but there is one elementary and one high school administrator represented on the PTC.

ETND are required to attend the monthly meetings after school, but they are not compensated for their time to attend. These meetings are scheduled for 2 hours after the school day. Building administrators who facilitate the monthly meetings are not compensated for their time or effort associated with the meetings. At the end of each session, experienced new teachers are asked to complete an exit slip survey, asking what they learned from the session and how they can apply it in their classroom. New teachers are also asked what additional resources or guidance would be helpful to them in order to apply the session's curriculum to their classrooms. Building administrators receive a list of teachers who were unable to attend the monthly session. Because district leaders believe the monthly sessions to be valuable, teachers who miss meetings are required to make up the missed session at the district office with a member of the PTC.

Novice Teachers. The state induction program for novice teachers relies heavily on the state-appointed mentor to provide training to teachers who are new to the

profession. They do go through training, but there are no follow-up meetings with IEA members or district administrators regarding the progress of new teachers and the induction curriculum. All training for building mentors is front-loaded and occurs prior to meeting with mentees. There is no ongoing training or opportunity for building mentors to ask questions or express concerns.

There is no validation process offered for novice teachers or building administrators to communicate questions or concerns with the IEA regarding the state's new teacher induction program. If a teacher is hired after the first quarter, they are not required to participate in the program. There is no new teacher induction requirement for teachers covering FMLA positions. Teachers hired late or as 1-year only positions are not required to participate in the program. Check-ins can be as frequent and as extensive as the building mentor or new teacher feel is needed. The IEA does not require a specific amount of time for building mentors or virtual coaches to meet with their new teachers.

According to the results from the Administrator, Division Chair, and Mentor Survey, administrators feel there needs to be better communication between the IEA and the district regarding the state induction program. One administrator commented, "It would be great to have some feedback or input into the induction program and the information that is expected to be shared with new teachers." One building mentor commented on communication, stating they were not paired with a mentee until at least 6 weeks into the school year and were unclear on which topics to cover with the mentee until topics were shared in November.

Building mentors can be assigned up to five teachers to mentor at a time. Though building mentors log the hours spent with new teachers, there is not a required amount of

time mentors and new teachers spend together, nor are there scheduled times and days for meetings to take place. Novice teachers are also expected to meet with their building principals to cover some of the topics included in the monthly induction meetings, but there is no set date or time for these meetings to occur, nor is there accountability for the building principals to meet with the new teachers to discuss said topics. State-appointed mentors submit their time sheets for compensation, but they do not submit evidence of their meetings.

There is somewhat of a monitoring process with the district new teacher induction program through the exit slips completed by the teachers, but there is no validation process offered to or communicated with building administrators to view and consider teacher feedback. Teachers who are hired after the first quarter or are covering FMLA positions are not required to attend the district first-year induction program.

During the mandatory 1-week induction before the first day of school, novice teachers are told they are not required to participate in monthly sessions but will receive a building mentor and virtual coach. Novice teachers are not connected with their mentor until late September or early October.

Due to financial and staffing limitations, both novice teachers and experienced new teachers have little to no time provided to meet with their building-assigned informal mentor during the school day. The informal mentor is a veteran teacher who has volunteered their time and effort to be a sounding board, provide advice when needed, and answer questions regarding building processes and procedures. The informal mentor is a veteran teacher who has volunteered to serve in this role, but this does not necessarily mean they are the best person to serve as a mentor. Because the program is completely

voluntary, mentors and mentees are not held accountable for their participation in the program.

Competencies

Competencies refer to the skills and abilities of all stakeholders involved with the new teacher induction program in District A. The district program for ETND relies on building administrators to facilitate monthly meetings based on curriculum created by the PTC. The state program for novice teachers relies on strong communication between the IEA building mentors and virtual coaches, and between district administrators and teachers. Though IEA building mentors and coaches are trained, they are not experts in all of the areas covered during induction. Although it is suggested that the building mentor teaches the same subject as the mentee, this is not always the case.

The state induction program mentors provided to teachers new to the profession are trained through the IEA/IFT/ISBE partnership program (IEA, 2023). These mentors are provided with suggested topics to discuss with new teachers. These topics include lesson design, classroom management, record keeping, communicating with families, expectations for learning, student behavior, classroom collaboration, assessment, professionalism, reflecting and moving forward, and end of the year. Mentors check in with novice teachers and have the option of discussing these topics but are not required to discuss these topics. According to the IEA (2023), virtual coaches will have access to the following:

- A robust platform with a comprehensive online library of instructional resources, including effective-practice videos and software tools that help

teachers analyze examples of each other's teaching and provide feedback and support to one another.

- A personal workspace for uploading and editing documents.
- Learning groups for resource sharing.
- Training modules.

The district's new teacher induction program for new teachers with experience is based on the six clusters in Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching. According to Danielson (2020),

If (1) Clarity of Instructional Purpose and Accuracy of Content, (2) A Safe, Respectful, Supportive, and Challenging Learning Environment, (3) Classroom Management, and (6) Professionalism are in place, then the conditions exist for (4) Student Intellectual Engagement with important content to occur, which is necessary to reach the ultimate goal of (5) Successful Learning by All Students.
(p. 2)

The program gives teachers the tools to recognize what Charlotte Danielson considered *excellent* teaching.

Though all evaluating administrators and division chairs complete training in the Danielson Model to become certified administrators, there is little to no training on EvaluWise (the program used by the district to complete the evaluation cycle), nor is there training on how to provide meaningful feedback within the program. New teachers are not trained on how to use EvaluWise, and there are no exemplars shared with evaluating administrators or new teachers. A review of EvaluWise data from all four high schools revealed the amount of feedback evaluators provide varies greatly between

schools. Some evaluators include robust constructive feedback whereas other evaluators provide a very minimal amount of feedback. Many comment sections are left blank for new teachers or are focused on positive feedback rather than constructive feedback with the goal being to move toward improved practice.

Building administrators facilitate the monthly meetings for ETND. They receive the curriculum 1 week in advance so they have access ahead of time, but there is no formal training or collaborative time offered to building administrators to go through the curriculum. At the high school level, the associate principal of curriculum and instruction facilitates these meetings. According to results of the Administrator, Division Chair, and Mentor Survey, building leaders would like more clarity on specific discussion topics in the program. The associate principals facilitating these meetings have little to no follow-up with the building principal or district administrator to provide feedback or suggestions to enhance the induction program curriculum.

All new teachers (experienced and novice) attend a 1-week induction training prior to the first day of school. The 1-week induction includes PD regarding teaching strategies, important district information, guest speakers, and time to work in their own buildings (see Figure 3).

Figure 3*Artifact: District A New Teacher Induction Schedule*

| Curriculum and Instruction 2022-2023 New Teacher Induction Requirements <i>Induction Dates for 2022-2023</i> | |
|--|--|
| <i>Dates</i> | <i>1st-year Teachers</i> |
| August 8, 9, 10, 11 | (Orientation for all) |
| August 12 - Makeup Date 8am - 5pm | If you miss any of the dates Aug 8-11 |
| 9/1/22 (1st Year) EL- 4:30 pm – 6:30 pm MS- 3:45 pm – 5:45 pm HS- 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm | Lesson Design/Classroom Management |
| 10/6/22 (1st Year) | Record Keeping & Communication with Families |
| 11/10/22 (1st Year) | Expectations for Learning/Student Behavior |
| 1/12/23 (1st Year) | Classroom Collaboration |
| 2/9/23 (1st Year) | Assessment |
| 3/9/23 (1st Year) | Professionalism |
| 4/20/23 (1st Year) | Reflection & Moving Forward |
| 5/11/23 (1st Year & 2nd Year) | End of the Year |

Conditions

Conditions reflect the current environment and supports in District A as they relate to new teachers. There are multiple conditions that affect the current practices regarding new teacher induction and the mentoring program. In District A, these conditions are either absent/lacking or present and serving as a barrier.

Class Size

One condition is class size for new teachers. According to the *Illinois School Report Card*, in 2022, the average class size in Illinois was smaller than the average class size in District A for Grades 9–12 (see Table 1).

Table 1

Class Size

| Grade | Average class size – State | Average class size - District A |
|----------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Grade 9 | 21.8 | 23.3 |
| Grade 10 | 21.4 | 24.7 |
| Grade 11 | 20.8 | 25 |
| Grade 12 | 20.1 | 24.4 |

Being a new teacher is challenging, and one way to alleviate some of the workload, amount of parent contact, individualized instruction, and other factors is to limit the number of students in a teacher’s class. Teaching has evolved over time; it is no longer as basic as delivering or presenting a lecture or lesson to a class (Blatchford & Russell, 2020, p. 91). According to Blatchford and Russell (2020), teaching should involve components that go far beyond the delivery of information, such as working with groups and supporting collaborative group work and individuals who need help. Teachers also monitor learning, provide feedback, and assess work both orally and through writing. Teachers also put forth effort to engage and challenge all students, drawing on students’ contributions and probing and expanding their understanding. Teachers also set up all equipment, resources, and learning activities to meet the learning objectives and support learning for students. In a smaller class size, students are also more likely to be open to trying new things, enabling a growth mindset (Blatchford & Russell, 2020, p. 92).

Teachers may feel they are able to build more positive relationships with students when they have fewer students in the class, leading to an improved classroom environment with more interactions among students and between students and teacher.

Courseload

With a five-course load, new teachers may have more than two different preps. District A does provide either a duty-free lunch period or a \$500 stipend to core subject teachers who have more than two preps, but core subjects include only math, science, English, and social studies. New teachers who teach any other subject may have more than two preps and are not compensated through time or money. According to Pettegrew and Wolf (1982), two of the biggest causes of anxiety for new teachers are subject mastery and making lesson plans (p. 375). The more preps a teacher has, the more time they need to spend mastering the different content and creating daily lesson plans. For example, if a teacher teaches four different courses, the workload doubles. Thus, having teachers teach more than two preps a semester can lead to increased anxiety, something a new teacher does not need.

Mentor Shortage

Another condition that is a factor for District A in terms of its new teacher induction program is the number of new teachers. With teacher retention at a low, districts are hiring more and more new teachers every year, which means there are fewer veteran teachers to serve as both formal and informal mentors to new teachers. This causes a potential problem for the district hiring multiple new teachers across subject areas to replace experienced teachers who leave the district. Breaux and Wong (2003)

stated assigning a new teacher a mentor who is available to answer questions or ask for help is not enough. According to Breaux and Wong,

As part of the process, they are assigned a trained mentor, who has also been through the same induction program and may even be part of the training staff of the induction program . . . there is a consistent culture throughout the school and the district. (p. 12)

Research shows the most common mentoring activity is “discussing instructional issues and problems” (Wilkins et al., 2012, p. 4). Because new teachers need help with specific instructional strategies, having a mentor from the same subject area (e.g., a math teacher mentoring another math teacher) is beneficial. However, from year to year, there are different needs in different subjects due to teacher attrition rates, which can make it difficult to find the right mentor fit for each new teacher. The current teacher shortage also affects the effective mentors available for both the district and state induction programs.

Ultimately, the new teacher induction program in District A has a strong foundation based on a supportive philosophy with the intent of helping new teachers; however, the culture, competencies, and conditions that are present in District A do not necessarily support the ideology of the induction program being put into action. By prioritizing new teachers and the induction program, leaders of District A will benefit not only by lowering their teacher attrition, but by empowering veteran teachers to become building leaders and feel valued through their service to the district as mentors to new teachers.

Findings

Findings are reported through the Administrator, Division Chair, and Mentor Survey; the New Teacher Survey; monthly induction session exit slips; and anecdotal evaluation data through EvaluWise. High school administrators, division chairs, and mentors were surveyed regarding their experience with and knowledge of the new teacher induction program. These questions were more general and related to the overall program and their participation. New teachers at the high school level were also surveyed regarding the new teacher induction program. New teachers were asked both Likert scale and open-ended questions regarding their experience with both the new teacher induction and mentor programs. These questions were directed at specific components of the program, mostly the Danielson components around which the induction program is created, and new teachers' struggles throughout their first year.

Themes were identified in the new teacher induction program in District A, which includes two components: mentoring and monthly sessions. Because the program is different for novice teachers and ETND, findings are separated and organized by the two groups of new teachers. The following themes emerged from an analysis of the data collected: the effectiveness of the current mentoring program (both formal through the state and informal through the building) and the effectiveness of the current new teacher induction program. Using open coding, themes emerged from an analysis of the data. After the initial open coding, I used axial coding to find patterns, relationships, and explanations of the data (Patton, 2012). I color-coded the descriptive data to help determine percentages for the quantitative research. For the qualitative data, I color-coded responses based on the inclusion of evidence related to each Danielson domain.

Then, I created figures and organized the results by Domains 1–4 using the collected responses that were previously color-coded. The domains are planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professionalism. I used EvaluWise to identify similarities and differences between the mentoring and induction program and evaluative performance data.

The primary question in this study related to how schools provide support to new teachers through the new teacher induction program to meet new teachers' needs and support teacher retention. My primary research question was: What elements are necessary for a new teacher induction program to meet new teachers' needs and support effective life-long teaching at the high school level?

My secondary research questions were:

1. What induction program components are most beneficial for new teachers at the high school level?
2. What elements do new teachers believe would improve their professional practice that are not part of the high school program?
3. How do new high school teachers feel about the induction program?
4. Do high school teachers feel supported through the current mentoring program; if not, how can this be improved?
5. Did high school teachers improve throughout the year or in the next year in Danielson components related to classroom environment and instruction?

Surveys that included both Likert scale questions and open-ended questions were sent to the administrator, division chair, and mentor group and the new teachers. The questions were centered around the Danielson Framework components, mentoring, and

creating a sense of belonging for new teachers. Findings are presented collectively for both novice and experienced new teachers. The majority of findings are related to Domain 2: Classroom Environment and Domain 3: Instruction of the Danielson Framework.

Mentor and Virtual Coach Program Findings: Current Program Components

The findings are presented for each of the participant groups using data from the two surveys and a review of exit slip data from the monthly induction meetings from teachers with experience.

State Mentor and Virtual Coach Program: Novice Teachers. Currently, the state provides a mentor for novice teachers through a formal building mentor and a virtual coach. This program is a partnership between the IEA, the school district, and the local union to support novice teachers and increase teacher retention. This program is available to support novice teachers in their first, second, and third years and comes at no cost to the school district.

State Program: Formal Building Mentor. The formal building mentor program offers a suggested curriculum and a vast number of resources to be used with novice teachers, but there is no required curriculum for formal mentors through the IEA. Though there is no required curriculum for formal mentors to discuss with novice teachers, they complete training to teach them how to best help novice teachers. They are expected to assist in acclimating novice teachers to the district and ensure they feel welcomed, supported, and connected. The formal building mentors through the IEA are expected to introduce novice teachers to the district culture, both organizational and operational

norms. They are also tasked with building rapport with novice teachers so they can recognize any signs of teacher trauma due to potential teacher burnout.

State Program: Virtual Coach. The virtual coach is from the same content area but not from the same building or district as the novice teacher. The virtual coaches are vetted by the IEA and work statewide. They support new teachers to the profession with effective instructional practices. Through the virtual coach, novice teachers have the opportunity to receive both one-on-one feedback and support in small groups.

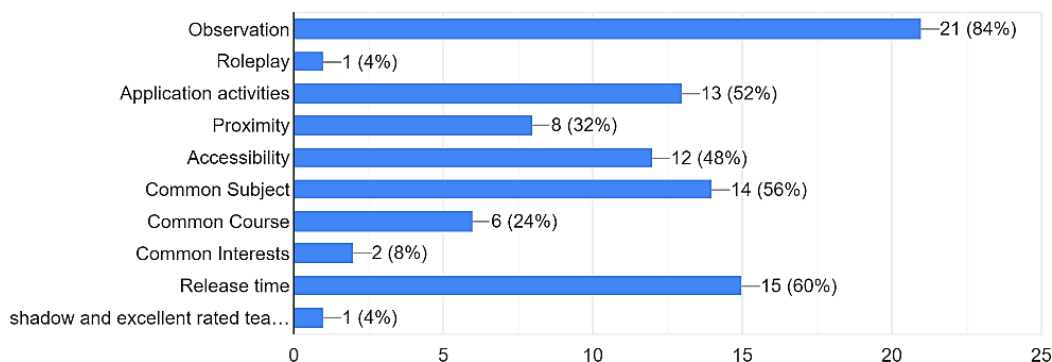
Administrator, Division Chair, and Mentor Perceptions of Informal Mentor Program Components. Survey responses indicated novice teachers and ETND need a mentor who shares a common plan period and a common lunch period with the new teacher. The results also showed the accessibility of the mentor to the new teacher, teaching a common subject area, teaching common courses, and physical proximity within the building between the new teacher and the mentor would help new teachers be successful. Figure 4 includes responses from the survey regarding what elements are needed in a mentoring program to best help new teachers be successful.

Figure 4

Administrator, Division Chair, and Mentor Survey Results Regarding Mentor Program Needs

What elements need to be included in a mentoring program to best help teachers be successful (choose all that apply).

25 responses



Survey responses supported that the lack of common available time was an issue, as 60% of administrators, division chairs, and mentors stated release time needs to be included in the mentor program. Additionally, 84% of administrators, division chairs, and mentors stated it would be beneficial for mentors to informally observe their mentees and provide constructive feedback; this could occur during the suggested release time reported.

Administrators, division chairs, and mentors also commented that the best ways to build capacity for new teachers include weekly meetings with mentors, time for mentees to observe their mentor and other expert teachers, and a more formal mentoring program in general. One administrator stated there is a need for “more local control and access to first-year teachers.” More local control would allow for differentiation of PD based on each individual new teacher’s needs.

Though administrators were aware of the veteran teachers assigned as informal and formal mentors (organized through the ISBE), of the 25 administrators, division chairs, and building mentors surveyed, results showed they were not meeting with mentors regularly (see Table 2).

Table 2

Frequency of Meetings Between New Teachers and Administrators, Division Chairs, and Mentors

| Frequency of meetings | % |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Never meet with mentors | 4% |
| Meet with mentors once per semester | 16% |
| Meet with mentors once per quarter | 16% |
| Meet with mentors once per month | 48% |
| Meet with mentors once per week | 16% |

The results showed 36% of administrators, division chairs, and mentors stated they met with mentors no more than once per quarter and 48% reported they met monthly.

Program Components Desired by Novice Teachers and ETND. Through the open-ended question portion of the survey, when new teachers were asked what elements of the mentoring program were most helpful, they reported the proximity of the mentor was beneficial. Participants stated it was nice having an “in-building sound board” and a “go-to person right next door.” One respondent reported that the informal mentor was primarily how they learned specific school procedures. New teachers also reported it was nice to connect with another teacher in the building, talk with teachers about resolving issues in the classroom, and discuss school policy. It seems that if a new teacher is lucky enough to be paired with a mentor within close proximity, in the same department, or

who has the same planning period as them, they tend to have a better experience. One new teacher reported that because they shared a plan period with their mentor, they were “able to ask her questions daily. She was also very helpful with being able to tell me where or who to go to for things.” New teachers recognized their mentors were spending precious, personal time to help them, reporting that the informal mentor was “able to help me tremendously this year, especially with the amount of work they already have to do.” Another new teacher reported the

entire school year was made manageable by the fact that my mentor was so helpful to me. Truly, will be forever grateful. My mentor met with me after school multiple times a week to help . . . I think I won the mentor lottery.

Though this one respondent articulated their luck with the informal mentor, others may not have been as fortunate because the current informal mentoring program is just that—a lottery. Some new teachers responded that they had worse experiences than others, possibly due to the lack of funding, specific curriculum, and guidelines for the informal district mentoring program. For those new teachers who were not so lucky, the informal mentor experience was less beneficial. Through the survey, administrators, division chairs, and mentors noted the “majority of interactions [between new teachers and building leaders] are through the evaluation process (formal and informal).” According to the survey, new teachers struggled with the lack of availability and proximity of their mentors. When asked what elements of the mentoring program were most challenging, one new teacher reported they felt their “mentor didn’t have very much time to meet” with them. Another new teacher responded they were not “aware [I] even had a mentor until January . . . oftentimes, I forget I have one. She hasn’t really reached out to me, and

I forget I can use her as a resource.” One new teacher reported they were only able to meet with their mentor a few times. Another new teacher stated, “it was helpful in the beginning of the year, but it was hard because I felt my mentor didn’t have very much time to meet with me.” Without providing a common plan period for the new teacher and the informal mentor, district leaders are depending on both teachers to either come in before or stay after working hours to meet. Because this is a completely volunteer program, once the school year is in full swing, both teachers may forget they are part of this program. New teachers are sometimes hesitant to ask their mentors for the help they need. Some new teachers reported they did not even receive an informal building mentor, and they took it upon themselves to find an informal mentor they felt comfortable asking for help. In these situations, new teachers did not receive the intended support from their mentor.

Judgements. According to administrators, division chairs, and mentors, one of the ways the district can best help new teachers is through “structuring a mentor program that is sustainable and uniform.” Administrators, division chairs, and mentors even suggested allowing time for new teachers to meet with their mentors weekly. One new teacher echoed this sentiment when noting that pairing new teachers with “a single mentor who can answer any questions we have and give us information on things we need” would be more beneficial than the monthly induction meetings led by the building administrator. The current mentoring program is informal and based strictly on volunteers, so teachers acting as mentors are not able to give the time and effort needed to be as effective in their mentor role as they would be if their daily schedules included time to meet with their mentee. Developing the potential of new teachers is most

important, so mentors need to work one-on-one with new teachers to best help them improve their current practices. According to Breaux and Wong (2003), mentor teachers should be chosen for their excellence in teaching and receive training from curriculum coordinators prior to meeting with their mentees and throughout the year. They should “remain classroom teachers but receive release time to work with new teachers” and conduct informal observations with the intent of providing supportive feedback and developing individualized plans to “enhance each new teacher’s present skills” (pp. 82–83).

The mentoring program is only part of the induction program. The second part of District A’s induction program are the monthly meetings for ETND that focus on the four components of the Danielson Framework. District A uses the Danielson Framework as the formal observation tool for all teachers and roots its induction program in the Danielson Framework components.

Domain 2: The Classroom Environment

In Charlotte Danielson’s Framework for Teaching, Domain 2 is focused on the classroom environment. Domain 2 contains the components listed in Figure 5.

Figure 5

Domain 2 of Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching (Danielson, 2020).

| | | |
|--|--|--------------------------|
| Domain 2: The Classroom Environment | | |
| 2a Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport | | |
| •Teacher interaction with students | •Student interaction with students | |
| 2b Establishing a Culture for Learning | | |
| •Importance of content | •Expectations for learning and achievement | |
| •Student Pride in work | | |
| 2c Managing Classroom Procedures | | |
| •Instructional groups | •Transitions | •Materials and supplies |
| •Non-instructional duties | •Supervision of volunteers and paraprofessionals | |
| 2d Managing Student Behavior | | |
| •Expectations | •Monitoring behavior | •Response to misbehavior |
| 2e Organizing Physical Space | | |
| •Safety and accessibility | •Arrangement of furniture and resources | |

Within each component there are specific tangible attributes that teachers should demonstrate in the classroom with their students. In the new teacher induction program, the five components in Domain 2 are covered in September and November.

Administrator, Division Chair, and Mentor Findings. According to the Administrator, Division Chair, and Mentor Survey, building administrators would like more support or training on presenting some of the topics with which they were not as familiar or comfortable presenting during the monthly meetings. Because administrators, division chairs, and mentors see the program as valuable, they would support and appreciate reallocating some of their other responsibilities so they can dedicate the necessary time to helping both novice and ETND.

When administrators, division chairs, and mentors were asked in which Danielson component new teachers score the lowest, 64% responded Domain 2: The Classroom Environment. One noted,

The biggest obstacle our teachers face is managing classrooms full of students who have been in a non-traditional learning environment [due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic] for the past two years, trying to navigate TAC [Teacher Access Center], and other building level procedures that aren't necessarily difficult but definitely make the first year of teaching harder for teachers that don't know it yet.

Administrators, division chairs, and mentors recognized that new teachers are overwhelmed with all four domains of teaching: planning and preparation, the classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities (see Table 3).

Table 3

Administrator, Division Chair, and Mentor Survey Results

| Question | Result |
|---|--|
| In which domain in the Danielson Model do new teachers score the lowest rating? | Domain 2 – Classroom environment: 64% Domain 3 – Instruction: 32% Domain 1 – Planning and preparation: 4% Domain 4 – Professionalism: 0% |
| What topics need to be included in a new teacher induction program to best help teachers be successful? (Choose all that apply) | Parent communication (Domain 4): 84% Grading (Domain 4): 68% Technology (Domain 1): 56% Student data systems (Domain 4): 48% Email (Domain 4): 40% Daily/Classroom checklist and protocols (Domain 2): 4% Behavior management, interventions (Domain 2): 4% Building rapport with students (Domain 2): 4% |

Although the administrators, division chairs, and mentors overwhelmingly chose Domain 2 as an area of weakness, when asked what topics need to be included in a new teacher induction program to best help teachers be successful, only 4% chose elements from Domain 2: daily/classroom checklist/protocols, behavior management/

interventions, classroom management, and behavior management strategies. The respondents noted new teachers need the most support with components from Domain 1: Planning and Preparation, such as technology and student data systems, and components from Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities, such as grading, email, and parent communication.

In addition to the survey for administrators, division chairs, and mentors, evaluation data analyzed through EvaluWise transcripts showed a variety of feedback regarding Domain 2: Classroom Environment. When administrators and division chairs completed evaluations for new teachers, comments included future focus points for improvement regarding policies surrounding technology use and discipline during instruction, response to behavior issues, transitions from one activity to the next, creating a culture for learning, discussing the importance of content, opportunities for students to feel pride in their work, distributing materials to maximize instructional time, student seating arrangements, and student work displayed in the classroom. The documentation in EvaluWise regarding Domain 2: Classroom Environment was abundant compared to the comments from the Administrator, Division Chair, and Mentor Survey, which were minimal. However, administrators, division chairs, and mentors reported components of Domain 2: Classroom Environment as struggles for new teachers and these concerns are being documented in new teacher evaluations.

New Teacher Findings. Based on the open-ended survey questions, new teachers agreed that focusing on Domain 2: Classroom Environment as part of the new teacher induction program would help them with students in the classroom (see Table 4).

Table 4

New Teacher Survey Likert and Multiple-Choice Questions Related to Domain 2

| Question | Disagree/ Strongly disagree | Agree/ Strongly agree |
|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Monthly induction meetings increased my knowledge in creating an environment of respect and rapport in my classroom. | 16% | 84% |
| Monthly induction meetings increased my knowledge in establishing a culture for learning in my classroom. | 13% | 87% |
| Monthly induction meetings increased my knowledge in managing classroom procedures, such as instructional groups, transitions, materials and supplies, supervision of paraprofessionals, and management of non-instructional duties. | 29% | 71% |
| Monthly induction meetings increased my knowledge in organizing my physical space in the classroom. | 43% | 57% |
| Monthly induction meetings increased my knowledge in managing student behavior in the classroom. | 27% | 73% |

2d: Managing Student Behavior. Results showed 73% of the new teachers noted they felt the monthly induction meetings increased their knowledge in 2d: Managing Student Behavior. When the new teachers were asked about the most difficult issues they encountered in their first year, responses included struggling to set up classroom management techniques, enforcing rules, and handling student behavior and discipline. Some of the specific student behavior issues mentioned were dress code, air-pods, cellphones, hoods, and lack of attendance. New teachers reported multiple struggles related to Domain 2 throughout their first year of teaching, including the following:

- Providing a consistent response to student disciplinary incidents.

- Creating a positive learning community in their classrooms, noting that they read about how to create this environment, but they struggled to see what procedures to put in place to create this environment.
- New teachers remarked that they would have benefited from sharing procedures and methods at the beginning of the year to establish strong classroom management techniques.
- New teachers noted sessions would have been helpful to have with both veteran teachers as well as other new teachers to discuss methods that have worked regarding classroom management and student behavior as well as procedures that have failed.

One new teacher commented that the “administrative team helped by showing me steps for discipline and following through” with those steps. Some new teachers received specific feedback regarding classroom management from administrators or mentors. General feedback for classroom management that is shared during the monthly induction meetings is leaving new teachers struggling to find solutions for managing student behavior.

2c: Managing Classroom Procedures. The results showed 71% of the new teachers stated the monthly induction meetings increased their knowledge of managing classroom procedures; they also discussed struggling with teaching components that align with 2c: Managing Classroom Procedures when answering the open-ended questions in the survey. New teachers responded they would like more training in how to use district programs, such as the Teacher Access Center (TAC), and other programs, such as Google Classroom. When asked in which area new teachers most struggle, administrators,

division chairs, and mentors responded that some new teachers “fail to establish effective classroom procedures,” noting specifically components as simple as “not starting class when the bell rings.” New teachers mentioned the need to observe veteran, excellent teachers, as they felt sitting in their classrooms would allow them to observe the management of certain procedures such as how to use provided programs and using bell-to-bell instruction.

2b: Establishing a Culture for Learning. The results showed 87% of the new teachers stated the induction program helped increase their knowledge in 2b: Establishing a Culture for Learning in their classroom, but when asked what elements of teaching were difficult for them in their first year, the new teachers responded with concerns in this Danielson component (see Table D1 and D2). New teachers noted difficulty setting expectations for students, work completion, motivating students, and students taking accountability for their learning. New teachers noted students were struggling with motivation due to, in their opinion, “still using remote learning as a scapegoat to not get things done accordingly.” For the last 2 years, students have not learned in a traditional setting due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many students, “especially freshman,” struggle with accountability, deadlines, and expectations as the district has shifted back to full in-person learning. In 2021, as noted in the *Illinois School Report Card*, 26.6% of students in District A were chronically absent. Chronic absenteeism is identified as students who miss 10% or more of school days in a year (ISBE, 2022). The decrease in attendance is due to students being kept out of school for 5–14 days for a COVID-19 diagnosis for themselves or a family member, newly implemented excused mental health days, and excused college visit days. Students who are excused from school essentially complete

assignments online through Google Classroom and are given full credit for these assignments. For some students, this is a newly realized preferred form of education. One new teacher stated the most difficult issue they encountered in their first year was “reteaching due to student absences,” and said they would like more resources on how to navigate that issue. Teachers are being asked to implement collaborative and engaging learning strategies for students, but struggle to replicate those practices with students who are chronically absent. New teachers noted they were struggling with finding ways for students to understand the importance of learning both the content and the critical thinking that come from in-person learning through discussions, problem solving, and the ability to ask both their teachers and peers questions for better understanding and analysis.

Regarding Domain 2, a total of 44 novice high school teachers completed the exit slip at the end of the September 2022 induction meeting (see Figure 6). According to these data, novice teachers reported they would like further information or strategies regarding classroom management, different positive behavior systems, and transitions between learning activities.

Figure 6

September New Teacher Induction Meeting Exit Slip Data Related to Domain 2

| What other information/strategies would you like to learn more about? | |
|---|---|
| Grouping strategies | Discipline in specific situations |
| Classroom management | Balancing classroom management and discipline |
| Tools available to help with classroom management | Using computer programs for classroom management purposes |
| Bathroom punch cards | Transitions to create better flow between teaching and student work |
| Effective classroom management for unmotivated students | |

Judgements. According to the survey responses, the current new teacher induction program is not providing new teachers with enough support. New teachers are reporting that they need more time with a formal mentor or a veteran teacher, as well as more specific strategies for addressing student issues in the classroom. New teachers are interested in seeing how different teachers implement different strategies in their classrooms, specifically regarding behavior management. The new teacher induction program time is all outside of the school day, requiring novice teachers to meet with their mentors before or after school hours. Based on the new teacher feedback, induction programs should include some observations of veteran teachers or mentors in their classrooms during the day so teachers can visualize different strategies they can implement to improve the learning environment in their classrooms.

Participants in the Administrator, Division Chair, and Mentor Survey noted Domain 2: Classroom Environment as the domain in which new teachers received the lowest rating. However, when asked to discuss specific topics that need to be included in the induction program to best help new teachers be successful, only 4% of participants

noted components in Domain 2: Classroom Environment, such as behavior management, classroom protocols, and building rapport with students. Rather, participants focused on components of Domain 4: Professionalism that dealt with parent communication (84%), grading (68%), and student data systems (48%). Administrators, division chairs, and mentors recognized that new teachers need help creating a positive learning environment for students, but they did not identify exactly which strategies will help new teachers create this environment. Because these specific strategies were not noted in the Administrator, Division Chair, and Mentor Survey but new teachers were asking for help regarding specific strategies through the New Teacher Survey, it is likely that there is a disconnect between building leadership and new teachers regarding beneficial feedback related to Domain 2: Classroom Environment.

Domain 3: Instruction

In Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching, Domain 3 is focused on instruction. Domain 3 contains the components shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7

Domain 3 of Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching (Danielson, 2020).

| | | |
|--|---|------------------------|
| Domain 3: Instruction | | |
| 3a Communicating with Students | | |
| •Expectations for learning | •Directions and procedures | |
| •Explanations of content | •Use of oral and written language | |
| 3b Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques | | |
| •Quality of questions | •Discussion techniques | •Student participation |
| 3c Engaging Student in Learning | | |
| •Activities and assignments | •Student groups | |
| •Instructional materials and resources | •Structure and pacing | |
| 3d Using Assessment in Instruction | | |
| •Assessment Criteria | •Monitoring of student learning | |
| •Feedback to students | •Student self-assessment and monitoring | |
| 3e Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness | | |
| •Lesson adjustment | •Response to students | •Persistence |

Within each component there are specific tangible attributes that teachers should demonstrate in the classroom with their students. In the new teacher induction program, the five components in Domain 3 are covered in January and February (see Figure 3).

Administrator, Division Chair, and Mentor Findings. When administrators, division chairs, and mentors were asked in which domain new teachers score the lowest, 32% responded with Domain 3: Instruction. Results from the open-ended questions on the Administration, Division Chair, and Mentor Survey indicated new teachers are struggling with engaging students, questioning students, and assessing students (see Table 5).

Table 5

Administrator, Division Chair, Mentor Survey Results: Open-Ended Questions

| Question | Responses |
|---|---|
| Based on your response to question 4 (In which domain in the Danielson Model do new teachers score the lowest rating?), what observations have you made that support your response? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating lessons to sustain engagement for the period is a struggle, incorporating higher-level questioning needs work, communication to students . . . what to say, how to say it, expectations, explaining the content . . . this takes time and practice. • Teachers struggle with students becoming off-task and remaining on task throughout class. • New teachers struggle with questioning, obtaining, and using formative feedback, and engaging all students in learning. Many rely on too much direct instruction and not enough student led instruction. • Domain 3 is virtually impossible to meet the expectations . . . not to say that teachers don't do a great job (because they do) but in terms of the components, Domain 3 is the most difficult to make visible on a consistent basis. • It takes time to bring instruction into line with the other three domains. • It tends to be the most difficult for new teachers simply because they lack the experience to rate excellent in their first few years of teaching. Experience typically will allow new teachers to hone their skills in the most effective instructional practices (communication, delivery, question/discussion techniques). Also, I tend to find the more familiar teachers are with the curriculum, they can shift focus from Domain 1 to Domain 3 to really establish high-level instruction. • New teachers struggle to implement the planned lesson based on a lack of experience or other related factors. They do not always use formative assessments properly to adjust lessons based on student feedback. Collaborative student work is also not effectively implemented. These are areas that can be corrected easily with training. |

| Question | Responses |
|----------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing the lesson plan and learning better strategies and techniques takes time. Also, new teachers struggle with letting students lead lessons/activities as they feel they need to be in control. |

3a: Communication With Students. Regarding communication with students, administrators, division chairs, and mentors reported new teachers need guidance with “communication [with] students . . . what to say, how to say it, expectations, explaining content; this takes time and practice.”

3b: Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques. When responding to the question regarding new teachers using questioning and discussion techniques with students, participants shared that “incorporating higher-level questioning needs work.” Administrators, division chairs, and mentors also reported that “new teachers struggle at questioning” in general.

3c: Student Engagement. In the area of student engagement, participants reported that “creating lesson to sustain engagement for the period is a struggle . . . New teachers struggle at engaging all students in learning.” Responses also indicated “collaborative student work is also not effectively implemented.” Feedback also included that “many rely on too much direct instruction and not enough student led instruction.”

3d: Using Assessment in Instruction. When responding to the question regarding new teachers using assessment in instruction, participants shared that “they [new teachers] do not always use formative assessments properly to adjust lessons based on student feedback.”

3e: Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness. Administrators, division chairs, and mentors reported that “new teachers struggle to implement the planned lesson

based on a lack of experience.” They also stated that “new teachers struggle with letting student led lesson/activities as they feel they need to be in control.” Additionally, they noted new teachers struggle with “obtaining and using formative feedback.”

Domain 3: General Feedback. Administrators, division chairs, and mentors recognized the challenges faced by new teachers regarding Domain 3: Instruction as evident through responses indicating “it takes time” and “the more familiar teachers are with the curriculum, they can shift focus from Domain 1 to Domain 3” to really “establish high-level instruction.”

When administrators, division chairs, and mentors were asked Likert scale questions in the survey regarding which topics should be included in the new teacher induction program to best help teachers be successful, only 4% chose components relating to Domain 3: Instruction even though 32% reported that new teachers struggle most in this domain. One of the 25 surveyed noted time management and instructional strategies need to be included in the program. One of the 25 surveyed stated proper lesson planning to fit building expectations needs to be included in the program, and one of the 25 surveyed declared that providing relevant supports within the classroom for students needs to be included in the induction program.

In addition to the survey for administrators, division chairs, and mentors, evaluation data through EvaluWise showed a variety of feedback regarding Domain 3: Instruction. When administrators and division chairs completed evaluations for new teachers, comments included future focus points for improvement regarding incorporating assessment into instruction; modeling; communication of expectations for learning, directions, and procedures; questioning and discussion techniques to increase

student participation; engaging students in learning; and flexibility and responsiveness. The documentation in EvaluWise regarding Domain 3: Instruction mirrored the responses through the survey for administrators, division chairs, and mentors. What administrators, division chairs, and mentors reported as struggles for new teachers were being documented in new teacher evaluations.

New Teacher Findings. As shown in Table 6, the majority of the new teachers stated they found the current induction program helpful in terms of Domain 3: Instruction.

When the new teachers completed the New Teacher Survey, 76.6%, on average, agreed that the new teacher induction program was useful regarding Domain 3: Instruction. The lowest number of teachers (67.5%) agreed that the new teacher induction program was useful regarding 3d: Using Assessment in Instruction. The highest number of teachers (86.5%) agreed that the new teacher induction program was useful regarding 3e: Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness. Overall, the majority of the new teachers found the program useful regarding Domain 3 (see Table 6).

Table 6

New Teacher Likert Questions and Multiple-Choice Questions: Domain 3

| Question | Disagree/ Strongly disagree | Agree/ Strongly agree |
|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Monthly induction meetings increased my knowledge in using questioning and discussion techniques with students in my classroom. | 22% | 78% |
| Monthly induction meetings increased my knowledge in communicating with students in the classroom | 28% | 72% |
| Monthly induction meetings increased my knowledge in engaging students in learning. | 23% | 77% |
| Monthly induction meetings increased my knowledge in using assessment in instruction. | 32% | 68% |
| Monthly induction meetings increased my knowledge in demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness with my students in the classroom. | 14% | 86% |

Through the open-ended section of the survey, the new teachers discussed missing elements of the induction program pertaining to Domain 3: Instruction. Teachers indicated they wanted training on strategies to incorporate more collaborative learning for students. One teacher noted,

It would be nice if first year teachers were able to take a day to just observe . . . I would love to have gone to a veteran teacher's classroom who has received an excellent in creating a learning community.

Another teacher stated, "[I] would like to learn more strategies regarding collaborative learning." New teachers also discussed being paired with other new teachers who teach the same subject so they can discuss specific ways of teaching different topics and certain outcomes and curriculum pertaining to their course curriculum. One teacher stated, "I

would have liked to work with other CTE [Career and Technical Education] teachers to talk about how we can improve the curriculum.” New teachers in the special education department being with other special education teachers would help with “the actual process of writing an IEP.” New teachers also noted they would like more resources to provide to students during instruction. One needed resource during instructional time is the use of the co-teacher. One teacher mentioned how it would have been beneficial to have “clear co-teaching strategies and time to discuss co-teaching.” Another teacher mentioned certain programs and resources, such as Jamboard, and asked for more training on “resources provided to students.”

When new teachers were asked about the most difficult issue they encountered in their first year, some responses included components directly related to Domain 3: Instruction. Again, teachers discussed their struggle to engage students in instruction. They also discussed struggling with specific subject curriculum and needing specific breakdowns of benchmarks and outcomes with a timeline. They noted they struggled to find time to collaborate with common subject teachers to discuss their issues regarding the timing of lessons within the curriculum. New teachers also discussed struggling with reteaching strategies and finding a balance between academic expectations and rigor and empathy for students who were struggling due to absences.

The exit slips that novice teachers completed for the September 2022 monthly induction meeting indicated they would like further information or strategies regarding instructional groups, work for early finishers, differentiation, closing activities, interactive learning activities, and student-led learning activities. Novice teachers were asked what types of PD they would like to see around assessment. Of the 61 novice

teachers who completed the exit slip from September 2022, there were 22 different responses. These responses included the following:

- Different types of engaging review activities
- Testing through different platforms
- Time to develop a variety of assessments
- Grading and providing feedback
- Formal assessment development
- Project-based learning (PBL)
- Time to brainstorm with teachers
- Virtual types of assessment
- Danielson Framework
- Creating assessments that go beyond surface-level learning
- Activities for student reflection
- Implementing standardized test scores into our teaching
- Time to observe strong teachers and see assessment in action
- Kahoot
- Jamboard
- Quizlet
- Nearpod
- Early childhood assessment
- How to track assessment data
- Assessment for lower levels that is engaging
- In-depth, content-specific examples of differentiation

- Instructional groupings

Through both the monthly exit slips and the New Teacher Survey, new teachers expressed the need and want for PD in all instructional areas that fall into Domain 3: Instruction (see Table 7).

Table 7

New Teacher Survey Results: Open-Ended Questions

| Question | Responses |
|---|---|
| What elements were missing from the induction meetings that you would have appreciated or found beneficial? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More specific to teacher field area. Separate new teachers from new hires that aren't new teachers. • We did go over some, but I would like to learn more strategies regarding collaborative learning. • Virtual meets turned into a 30 second check in very quickly. I think it would be more beneficial to hear more tips from the teachers about how they work through certain topics rather than have the virtual meetings rely on us having questions for them. • How to use certain types of computer programs. • I think it would be great to have even more guest speakers. Similarly, it could be good to have more resources provided to students (understanding that making it to meetings and presenting is a major time commitment and responsibility). A variety of sharing aloud could benefit teachers with different personality types. For example, allowing a Jamboard or written submissions response (anonymously) could encourage more introverted teachers to share. It also may allow some to be more open about specific instances and concerns. • I would of liked to pair with other CTE teachers and talk about how we can improve the curriculum for certain classes. |
| What is the most difficult issue you encountered this year, and how could your administrative | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reteaching due to student absences. • How to balance academic rigor with being empathetic with students returning to school. • Student engagement in the classroom. |

| Question | Responses |
|-----------------------|--|
| team have helped you? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not having any curriculum or materials to use and having to create everything on my own for the entire school year for my classroom was very difficult. Then being expected to have an amazing hands-on classroom yet being given nothing and then being marked down for that was very disappointing. • Learning the curriculum and not feeling like I am taking someone's time if I am asking questions. A half hour or 1 hour pop-in where the first year teach prepares pre-determined questions and a veteran teacher coming in to answer those questions would be very helpful (maybe once a week for the first month?). I would have loved a breakdown of all of the benchmarks from the first quarter to the fourth quarter. I was given links but printing that material for me would have been nice for the first week. I would have loved to meet my co teacher and have a shared collaboration time so we could better support our students. |

Judgements. New teachers and administrators, division chairs, and mentors agreed that new teachers need further training regarding Domain 3: Instruction. New teachers noted they need specified training on how to teach concepts within their content area. New teachers also noted they need strategies to improve collaborative learning in the classroom, co-teaching strategies, using the available technology programs, reteaching, grading, providing feedback, assessment, maintaining rigor while building relationships, and increasing student engagement.

Administrators, division chairs, and mentors stated new teachers need assistance in creating engaging lesson plans, incorporating high-level questioning for students, and communicating with students. They also noted new teachers struggle with obtaining and using formative feedback to improve learning for students. Administrators, division chairs, and mentors also noted that new teachers struggle with providing students collaborative learning opportunities and student-led activities.

Administrators, division chairs, and mentors observed the same issues in new teachers' classrooms with which the new teachers feel they are struggling related to their own teaching. In terms of Domain 3: Instruction, the issues teachers are facing in the classroom are clear and agreed upon between the new teachers and their evaluators/mentors.

Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities

Administrator, Division Chair, and Mentor Findings. When administrators, division chairs, and mentors were asked in which domain in the Danielson Model new teachers scored the highest rating, 40% responded with Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities. Regarding Domain 4, administrators, mentors, and division chairs had few concerns noted in new teachers' evaluations. The concerns that were noted included communication with parents, IEP paperwork, content knowledge, and pedagogical skills. These concerns noted by administrators were also identified as concerns/deficits by the new teachers. One administrator stated, "We assume teachers know . . . and new teachers have less and less practical knowledge coming in." For many new teachers, this may be their first professional job, so they do not know some of the skills teachers are expected to exhibit. Professionalism, just like lesson planning or classroom management, needs to be taught and addressed during the new teacher induction program; this was reflected in the Administrator, Division Chair, and Mentor Survey responses.

Component 4e: Growing and Developing Professionally was also a concern for both administrators and new teachers. When asked what elements need to be included in the induction program to best help new teachers be successful, 84% of administrators, division chairs, and mentors identified observations of veteran, excellent teachers.

Additionally, one administrator noted the district needs to “allow additional time (contractual) for new teachers to observe master educators.”

New Teacher Findings. When the new teachers were asked what elements were missing from the induction program that would have been beneficial, many responded with components that fall into Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities. New teachers commented that they would have benefited from “extra information related to district procedures.” New teachers also commented on needing help with parent communication, co-teaching strategies, and understanding evaluations. Additionally, new teachers discussed wanting guidance regarding the IEP process and using required data, such as grades, progress reports, and student evaluations, to write the actual IEP.

When novice teachers completed the exit slip for the February 2022 monthly induction meeting, they were asked what other information or strategies they would like to learn more about regarding Domain 4. Their responses included teacher evaluations and student growth, Google Classroom, and IEP writing.

Judgements. Components related to Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities need attention. Teachers reported they need help with 4b: Maintaining Accurate Records, especially with regard to IEPs. Special education teachers need education regarding the district’s expectations related to IEP writing, model IEPs to understand what a well-written IEP includes, and workshop time to construct IEPs and receive feedback. New teachers and administrators noted special education teachers should be separated into different levels (elementary, middle, and high school) in order to have a more direct, applicable training in terms of IEP writing. Also, new teachers expressed a need for help in terms of communicating with parents/families, which is part of Component 4c.

Other Important Findings

Although the surveys for both new teachers and administrators, division chairs, and mentors focused on Domain 2: Classroom Environment, Domain 3: Instruction, and Domain 4: Professionalism, there were comments noted through the open-ended responses that referred to Domain 1: Planning and Preparation. There were also responses to the open-ended questions that reflected the character traits required to be a successful teacher; these are not covered in any of the four domains.

Administrator, Division Chair, and Mentor Findings. When asked what topics need to be included in a new teacher induction program to best help teachers be successful, one participant responded with “grit, determination, and perseverance.” These character traits noted to be important as part of the induction program are not covered in the current program, as they do not relate directly to one of the four Danielson domains. One participant responded with “proper lesson planning,” which is directly associated with Domain 1: Planning and Preparation. Results showed 56% of the participants responded that new teacher induction meetings should include information about technology. Though this is general and could fall into Domain 3a: Engaging Students in Instruction if they are referring to technology as far as a tool for engagement through materials or resources, it could also be suggesting training with technology as related to Domain 1d: Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources for the classroom, to extend content knowledge, and for students.

New Teacher Findings. When asked what elements were missing from the induction meetings that new teachers would have appreciated or found beneficial, one teacher responded with, “I think we TALK a lot about what to do, but it would be

beneficial to SEE it being done.” The current induction program is discussion and content delivery heavy; guest speakers, how-to videos, and observation are not components that are currently included in the program. Another new teacher noted they were not familiar with the Danielson Model prior to teaching; thus, they were requesting an overview of the Danielson Framework in order to better understand the induction program and expectations. Another teacher discussed PLCs. Currently, new special education teachers attend PLCs for the courses they co-teach. One teacher responded through the open-ended question regarding difficult issues they encountered this year that “meeting with other fundamental teachers to share strategies” rather than meeting with the PLC for the subject(s) they co-teach.

Judgements. According to feedback from the Administrator, Division Chair, and Mentor Survey, PD regarding lesson planning and the incorporation of technology into lesson plans should be added to the induction program. Demonstrating how to use specific technological programs to help engage or assess students would be helpful. Building time into the induction program to go through various programs and allow teachers time to use the programs would be helpful for new teachers.

Administrators, division chairs, and mentors also discussed new teachers lacking grit, determination, and perseverance. According to Breaux and Wong (2003), some of the most prominent reasons new teachers leave the profession are “difficulty balancing personal and professional demands and high stress” (p. 3). The abilities to multitask and manage professional stress are survival skills that are directly connected to the lack of grit and perseverance reflected in the survey results. They are also directly connected to Tony Wagner’s (2014) seven survival skills discussed in *The Global Achievement Gap*.

According to Wagner, these skills are not “taught or tested even in our best school systems,” which is causing new teachers to have an “increased risk of not being able to get and keep a good job, grow as learners, and make positive contributions to their community” (p. 14). Thus, colleges need to focus on teaching these survival skills in students’ education courses so they are prepared to thrive rather than simply survive when they acquire their first teaching job. Additionally, new teachers agreed that they receive information about what to do, but they asked for more concrete demonstrations of how to apply the information they learn in the induction program. New teachers also expressed wanting to have more choice when it comes to the meetings they attend.

Summary

Through the New Teacher Survey, the Administrator, Division Chair, and Mentor Survey, and EvaluWise data, stakeholders noted the need for changes to the new teacher induction program that include a formal mentoring program, opportunities for new teachers to observe classroom strategies through their mentor and other excellent teachers, and frequent feedback regarding practices in their own classrooms. The findings allowed me to provide a vision for a new teacher induction program that will more greatly benefit teachers with strategies to be successful in the classroom. My recommendations include a formal, more accessible mentoring program; more building administrator involvement; and the inclusion of instructional best practices and specific teaching strategies for new teachers to use in the classroom.

CHAPTER FIVE

Change Plan

My vision for implementing a successful new teacher induction program in the district involves all stakeholders, including novice teachers, ETND, mentor teachers, building administration, and district administration. By increasing the capacity of the induction program for building administration and building mentors, District A will have a more significant, more positive impact on creating a supportive environment for novice teachers and ETND, which will increase teacher retention in the district. Due to the teaching shortage that has been building over the last few decades, school district leaders have realized they need to support new teachers better to reduce the teacher attrition rate and create a program that provides teachers with the tools they need to be successful in the classroom. According to research, more than half of all states in the United States currently have some form of an induction program as a result of leaders of states, districts, and schools actively trying to combat the teacher shortage (Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017).

In this section, I provide a vision of a new teacher induction program that incorporates a formal mentoring program, provides strategies to increase student learning, and assumes the responsibility to best work together to help new teachers with every facet of teaching. I also provide specific recommendations regarding District A's induction program to make it more beneficial for new teachers and increase teacher retention. According to Ingersoll and Strong (2011), teachers can only obtain most of the skills and training required to be successful through practical, hands-on experience. Because this type of experience is so limited for new teachers before accepting their first

teaching position, induction programs must allow new teachers to practice their craft and observe other veteran teachers. The mentoring received during new teacher induction programs is often the first form of professional learning a novice teacher receives (Helmke, 2022). Mizell (2010) also pointed out that teachers experience a variety of issues they are not prepared to handle within their first year of teaching, such as classroom management issues and students' social-emotional needs; thus, induction programs need to include training on a variety of topics in addition to teaching strategies.

Envisioning Success Through Context

Current New Teacher Induction Program in District A

District A's current new teacher induction program includes two layers. The first layer is a district-level, district-created curriculum facilitated by building administrators during monthly meetings and rooted in the Danielson Framework. The second layer is a mentoring program the ISBE provides. This mentoring program includes a building-level mentor and a content coach from a different district. The building mentors are compensated through the ISBE but chosen by the building principals. Building mentors are assigned five new teachers and paid a maximum of 8 hours per month to spend with their new teachers. Neither the district nor the state provides building mentors with a curriculum to work through with new teachers, nor are they provided a list of topics to address. Leaders of District A expect building mentors to help with new teachers' daily concerns. The ISBE content coach is available remotely to new teachers to discuss new teachers' questions or concerns regarding the specific subject content. Although the district provides two different types of mentors for new teachers, teachers are not offered

a one-on-one mentor in their content area and building with whom they have a common plan period during the workday.

The PTC designs District A's new teacher induction district program. The committee includes district-level administrators, veteran teachers, building-level administrators, and the teacher's union president. With the needs of new teachers constantly changing, it is crucial to continue to evaluate the program and its effectiveness. Obtaining new teacher feedback regarding the induction program and then evaluating the feedback on an annual basis will help guide necessary changes to the program that are rooted in research.

Teaching as a Skilled and Essential Profession

We currently live in a world where teaching is becoming less of a respected career. Some states no longer require teachers to have a teaching license to teach in the classroom. Arizona PBS (2022) stated that Arizona Governor Doug Ducey signed a new, controversial bill in 2022 that allows anyone enrolled in college to teach in a school without a teaching degree or license. In Arizona, the underlying message is that there is no skill or expertise needed to be an educator. Even if a teacher holds a master's degree in education or their content area, the belief is that teaching is something anyone can do.

Currently, there is a push in District A to increase community outreach through podcasts with district administrators, newsletters, and meet-and-greets with the superintendent. The hope is to build a relationship between district staff and the community that will result in the utmost respect for district staff. What society does not realize is that teaching is a skill that requires training and education to be successful. Some required skills are short-term and long-term lesson planning, instructional unit

development, understanding the curriculum, developing aligned assessments, and managing classroom behaviors and routines (Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017). For the community to understand the skills needed to be a teacher, district leaders need to educate people. One way to do this is to provide opportunities for the community to interact with teachers, ask questions, listen to their stories, and learn about their journey to becoming a teacher.

Teacher Retention

The community also needs to understand that there is a teacher shortage and the reasons behind the shortage. Although the community may not agree on the importance of teachers, most people agree on the importance of education for their children. If the teacher shortage continues, this country will not have enough qualified teachers to teach our children. School district leaders need to find ways to connect teachers with the community to build a relationship of respect and understanding, ultimately leading to further support of teachers.

One way leaders of District A are trying to combat the current teacher retention problem is by providing current students an opportunity to engage in coursework related to the teaching profession in high school through an educational pathway program. The educational pathway program includes courses in child development, child psychology, and teaching the preschool child; field experience in elementary and middle schools; and two dual credit college courses that serve as capstone courses and include internship hours, collaborative work, and service projects. If students complete the educational pathway, they will graduate high school with six college credits from the education department at a nearby university. Students who complete the educational pathway

program in District A and earn a college degree in education are guaranteed an interview in District A if they apply for a teaching position after college graduation.

Recommendations Related to Context

Building a Positive Relationship With the Community

One way for high school leaders to build a positive relationship with the community is to invite elementary and middle school students and their families into the high schools as often as possible for events. Invitations from the schools to the community act as an important motivator of involvement because they show the parents that their involvement is valued (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Hosting middle school nights at highly attended events, such as basketball and football games, enables families to begin coming into the high school, meeting staff, and feeling connected to the school. Though there are district-level podcasts, it would be beneficial for high schools to host podcasts and make these available to their feeder schools so families can begin to learn about the building and the staff who work within the building. Frequent newsletters that go out to feeder schools and parents would also enable the community to feel connected to what is happening at the high school and even become involved. Often, trust comes from transparency.

According to Wagner et al. (2006), trust is essential if school districts are going to disrupt the extreme isolation of educators (p. 157). Most high schools have a college and career center. This is a space available to students during their study hall or lunch periods. It is usually staffed with a guidance counselor and includes a variety of resources to help students navigate the college application process and career exploration. Leaders of high schools should consider building a program with members of the community to

come into the schools and work with students in the college and career centers.

Community members can serve as mentors for students who are interested in exploring specific careers, and this would encourage service for the community to give back to the schools.

Increasing Involvement in the Education Pathway

The Education Pathway, which prepares high school students for a career in education, has very low participation. Leaders of high schools need to develop a program for counselors and teachers to talk directly with students who are interested in working with children, providing a service, or who know they want to be teachers and enroll them in the pathway program. Teachers could visit study halls to talk about the benefits of teaching with students. Many students are still exploring career options in high school, but many have not even begun to think about their future career plans. Students who have not thought about teaching but demonstrate interest in various components that relate to teaching may want to enter into the Educational Pathway to see if it is a fit for them. Guidance from counselors regarding future career options for students is essential to increasing enrollment in the Education Pathway.

New Teacher Induction Program Components

Mentees should be assigned a one-on-one mentor who teaches the same subject. Assigning a mentor one mentee rather than several would allow the mentor to focus their attention and time on one new teacher. According to Schwan et al. (2020), mentors and mentees should be close in proximity and teach the same subject or grade level. The mentor and the mentee should also have the same planning time throughout the day so they have more opportunities to meet during contractual time. When new teachers are

hired and mentors are determined, administrators need to adjust the master schedule to provide common plan time for new teachers and their mentors. If this is not possible, they should at least have the same lunch period so they can have informal conversations regarding induction coursework, best practices, concerns, or simple check-ins.

The PTC should include the voices of newer teachers, such as second- and third-year teachers, which would provide feedback to committee members regarding the current program and what it might be missing. The committee should include a few non-tenured teachers who recently went through the induction program to provide insight on current practices and suggestions for possible change. Additionally, the agenda for PTC meetings should include an overview of the analysis obtained from the feedback forms completed by new teachers at the previous induction meeting. Once the data are discussed, they can serve as a catalyst for needed change or revision.

Exploring Success Through Culture

Mandatory Monthly Induction Meetings

Both the induction and mentoring program are vital to growing and supporting new teachers. District A's current induction program for ETND includes one monthly meeting that is facilitated by the building-level administrator. Prior to 2022, if a teacher missed a meeting, they were simply encouraged to have a conversation with the building-level administrator to discuss the missed information. After reflection and discussion, that was changed for the 2022–2023 school year. If teachers miss a meeting, they are required to attend a 2-hour make-up session held by their building administrator. Requiring a make-up session communicates the importance of these meetings to both the building administrator and the new teachers, thereby creating a culture that supports and values the

induction program for new teachers. Because the induction program was built to support new teachers, requiring ETND to attend either the initial meeting or a make-up meeting shows new teachers that the information presented during these sessions is important and district leaders not only believe in the importance of the induction program, but believe supporting ETND is important.

Mentoring Program: Proximity and Time

Because the current mentoring program does not include a specific curriculum or specific requirements, it is seen as extremely informal. Mentors meet with teachers upon the request of the mentee and they discuss current issues happening in their classrooms. According to Helmke (2022), mentors and mentees need designated, protected time to meet in order to collaborate and engage in learning-focused activities, including observation, data discussion, modeling, planning, and reflection (p. 29). Most mentors do not visit mentees' rooms to conduct informal observations to drive discussions of instructional practices. Mentors and mentees might meet for quick, infrequent check-ins as time allows, but there are no scheduled meetings and no agendas regarding meeting content. As Wagner (2014) stated, "The problem of getting real support for teachers is that no one in school has time. It's a systemic problem, not a case of neglect" (p. 144). It is not that mentors do not want to help their mentees, it is that they have not been given the time in their workday to meet with their mentees. A more structured and systematic approach is needed for the mentor program to be successful.

Recommendations Related to Culture

Monthly Induction Meetings

Currently, ETND attend monthly induction meetings, but novice teachers do not. The monthly induction meetings include elements rooted in the Danielson Framework on instructional best practices. All new teachers should attend these meetings, both novice and ETND. For teachers who miss meetings, there should be a date set in advance by the building administrator who facilitates the meetings so new teachers are aware of the make-up date. If after school is a problem due to coaching or extracurricular responsibilities, the make-up date can also be offered in the morning prior to the start of school.

Mentoring Program

Based on an analysis of novice teacher feedback, this program would ideally include a vast curriculum of reading, reflection, observation, and discussion. Helmke (2022) stated new teachers need a “web of support” to cope with all the challenges they face. These supports include, but are not limited to, providing emotional support, instructional strategies, content and subject matter, classroom management, social-emotional learning, family relationships and communication, grading processes and policies, maintenance and housekeeping, and technology (Helmke, 2022). There would be time built into the school day for the mentor and mentee to connect in order for the mentor to provide these needed supports. Mentors would be compensated for their mentorship. There would also be regular check-ins with mentors, mentees, and building administration. It is important for building administration to be involved with new teachers and mentors, not only to show support but to provide guidance as needed.

Regular meetings including all parties creates a culture of trust and positive working relationships. Before mentees can work with their mentors and other leaders in the building, they need to feel safe, comfortable, and seen teaching (Aguilar, 2022). New teachers need an open environment in which they can ask questions and engage in constructive conversation about their practices. Regularly scheduled meetings will create a supportive culture of trust within in the building related to administrators, mentors, and novice teachers.

The mentoring program needs to include frequent, productive observations of novice teachers. Wagner (2014) stressed the need to make classrooms transparent. He went on to discuss how we need to talk about elements of good practice and then specific strategies to help novice teachers improve every year (pp. 129–130). Mentors and administrators should be frequent guests in novice teachers' classrooms. Breaux and Wong (2003) acknowledged that a skilled mentor is one form of support, but the mentor is only part of a support team within the building that helps novice teachers (p. 63). Breaux and Wong continued to define the team as administrators, staff developers, and effective, experienced classroom teachers. These teams should be engaging in learning walks and “instructionally focused reflection conversations” regarding the classroom visits (Helmke, 2022, p. 29). Engaging in regularly scheduled discussions about observed practice and teaching strategies will create a culture of support, trust, and teamwork in District A.

Having a strong mentoring program can have a positive effect on school culture by increasing teacher retention. According to Ingersoll and Strong (2011), the strongest factors in improving teacher retention are having a mentor from the same field, having

common planning time with other teachers in the same area, and having regular scheduled collaboration time with other teachers (p. 214). Knight stated making data available to new teachers helps to make the invisible visible (Edthena, 2023). Teachers cannot observe themselves teaching, but one way they can evaluate their own teaching is through video. Teachers can record themselves in the classroom and watch the playback, which will enable them to view their teaching through an external lens and note their strengths and area of growth. Transparency of what is happening in the classroom should include teacher self-reflection and a component of constructive response.

By creating a culture of transparent communication and collaboration among mentors, mentees, and a team of additional supports through both staff and induction activities, the probability of departure at the end of the first year is less than half compared to that of those who did not have additional supports in place (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011, p. 215). When teachers are able to participate in self-evaluation, they build their confidence and ability to recognize areas in need of improvement. Teachers can then use the skills they learn through the induction and mentoring program to improve their own teaching. According to Knight (Edthena, 2023), when teachers are able to see the reality of their classroom and teaching, they can begin to address feelings of burnout and stress; they can address issues in the classroom and begin to remedy those issues. Furthermore, Aguilar focused on transformational coaching that focused on the “3 Bs” that explore three domains of educators, which are behaviors, beliefs, and ways of being. When new teachers are given the ability to honestly witness and evaluate their behaviors in the classroom and beliefs about their practice, they can begin to understand and improve their own practice (Aguilar, 2023). This aligns with Sweeny’s (2008) thoughts

on induction programs and the need to individualize components in order to not only recognize but celebrate teacher differences and individual growth.

Exploring Success Through Competencies

Currently, there is no formal training program for mentors in District A. Mentors are chosen by building administrators but there are no criteria provided by the district regarding the necessary competencies of the building mentor. Novice teachers are provided the name and contact information of their mentor in a welcome letter they receive upon being board approved for hire. Mentors and mentees are encouraged to contact one another prior to the first day of school.

The curriculum for the monthly induction program meetings is made available to facilitating building administrators and new teachers a few days prior to the meeting taking place. Building administrators are asked to facilitate the meeting with previously created material that they had little to no insight or input in creating for their new teachers.

The district program does not include new teachers who are covering FMLA positions. This is problematic because many of these FMLA positions are for an extended period of time, a semester or entire school year even, and the teachers are receiving no training or support through this program.

Recommendations Related to Competencies

Mentoring Program

Mentors should be selected for their excellence in teaching and receive training in the summer prior to the beginning of the new school year. Ronfeldt and McQueen (2017) discussed how the quality of support matters just as much, if not more, than the number

of supports. To state the obvious, a high-quality mentor will have a greater impact on a new teacher than the simple act of being assigned a mentor. According to Breaux and Wong (2003), mentor training should be intensive and led by curriculum coordinators. Mentors should engage in continuous trainings throughout the year. This would be a required training that would include strategies and tools for working with mentees. Polikoff et al. (2015) discussed the importance of mentor knowledge and ability. For example, it is important that mentors have pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, and the ability to mentor adults.

Pedagogical knowledge helps lead mentees to adopt best practices and content knowledge helps address specific questions from mentees regarding how to teach content. Polikoff et al. (2015) stated teaching adults is a skill, and mentors need to gain the skills to work with adult learners in order to influence mentoring success (p. 80). With this training, mentors would receive a variety of resources, such as books, articles, and information regarding how to successfully mentor new teachers. There also needs to be some type of evaluation process for the mentor and mentee to determine whether or not the mentoring program was successful. This would be in the form of a survey at the end of the semester or year that would result in data for review and analysis.

Monthly Induction Program

In terms of the induction program and the curriculum, the agenda with all materials should be available to new teachers and the facilitating administrator at least 1 week in advance so the building administrator has time to review the material and the new teachers can prepare for the meeting. These agendas and materials should also be shared with the building mentors so they are aware of what is being discussed at the

meetings and can be expected to follow-up with their mentees regarding the content and resources. Mentors and building leadership teams should focus on instructional and classroom management elements from the induction program meetings when completing their leadership walks and casual observations of novice teachers. This will anchor discussions between the entire support team in best practices and help novice teachers improve their practice.

I would like to see any extended FMLA teacher who is either an ETND or novice teacher go through the induction program and receive a mentor. The new teacher induction program is required only for ETND but should also be required for novice teachers. If an ETND was tenured in a previous district and gained “excellent” teaching status, the building administrator can decide whether or not they need to participate in the new teacher induction program. However, because every district has different expectations regarding teaching, this decision should be made only after frequent observations to validate that the ETND no longer needs to participate in the induction and mentoring program.

The induction program should include specific strategies for improving practice in the Danielson domains, especially Domains 2–4. One of the best ways to do this is to have veteran, excellent teachers speak with new teachers to answer specific questions regarding the classroom environment. The monthly induction meetings include identifying Danielson Framework components, but there is no modeling of the successful implementation of these components. Teachers should observe other teachers who incorporate strategies effectively and have discussions around what they saw, whether they viewed strategies through videos or live observation. New teachers can participate in

role play exercises to help them think through their reactions to certain situations and discuss potential alternative reactions. The self-reflection and discussion associated with these activities allow new teachers opportunities for professional growth.

Regarding day-to-day procedures (Component 2c), new teachers need to see options for organizing and managing systems from exemplary teachers. For example, a veteran teacher can go through their procedures for late work and missing work, sharing with new teachers how to manage the organization and implementation of the system they are using. Best practices would include the new and novice teachers meeting to discuss different strategies for managing classroom procedures preceding an observation of the exemplary teacher by the new teacher to view the practices in use. Following the observation, the novice and veteran teacher would follow up regarding what the new teacher saw in the classroom regarding classroom procedures and then formulate a plan of implementation for the new teacher to begin using specific strategies in their classroom. This is one form of active learning between mentor and mentee that has proven beneficial (Polikoff et al., 2015, p. 81).

Additionally, the classroom environment is directly connected to building relationships with students (Component 2a). Without positive, supportive relationships, students will not feel safe enough to be vulnerable enough to learn. According to Kottler et al. (2005) in their book, *On Being a Teacher: The Human Dimension*, it is through relationships with students that teachers build trust. Most students could not care less what we teach, but they will be open to learning as long as they feel connected to us in some way (Kottler et al., 2005, p. 46). The induction program needs to provide specific strategies for creating an environment of respect and rapport (Component 2a). Including a

component of student feedback in the induction program that reflects the importance of student–teacher relationships for the student and how some teachers have built these relationships would allow teachers to hear about their positive impact directly from students. Incorporating programs such as “Good News Cards” or simply sending one or two positive emails to parents weekly would help to extend the positive relationships between students and teachers into their homes, which will help students to react positively.

New teachers should try to attend school activities outside of the school day in which their students are involved. Not only does this show students that the teacher supports and cares about their lives outside of school, it also helps the new teacher to become involved in the school community. In addition to the relationship the new teacher needs to build with students, students need to display positive interactions between one another during class. Students need to feel safe in order to become vulnerable enough to learn. Setting expectations for how students treat one another in the class and holding students accountable to meet those standards is imperative to a successful classroom environment. When students have a positive relationship with their teacher, they are more likely to learn from their teacher. Building relationships is a skill for the classroom that new teachers need training on in order to be successful.

Component 2b: Establishing a Culture for Learning revolves around expectations for students and a genuine passion for the subject and its importance. Murphy (2016) stated shared expectations are at the heart of learning (p. 33). Providing new teachers time during the day to visit veteran, excellent teachers to see how they successfully address these components in their classroom, visually experiencing a positive, supportive

classroom environment that encourages and establishes a culture for learning would benefit new teachers. The mentor or veteran teacher needs time to follow up with the new teacher through an observation and meeting to discuss how they have implemented what they saw being done in the classroom into their own classroom. The district should provide and support PD for all teachers in their content area to help cultivate the passion for the course content, supporting a continuous learning in the subject for teachers. Often, PD is focused on teaching strategies and techniques, which is important, but it is also important to nurture teachers' interests and passions in their content area of expertise. One way a mentor can do this is to model and then debrief with their mentee.

Component 2d: Managing Student Behavior is a concern for new teachers. What makes managing student behavior so challenging is that there is no “magic cure for poor student behavior,” and what works for one student may not work for another (Rogers, 2015, p. 68). The leaders of the induction program can invite deans who oversee discipline to come and present to new teachers, walk them through disciplinary expectations and procedures, and allow new teachers an opportunity to ask direct questions. Processing referrals and enforcing expectations regarding dress code and personal electronic devices would be best addressed through the dean's office itself. The monthly induction should include a workshop portion for new teachers on writing referrals through the TAC or writing some practice referrals with deans so they are prepared to write an accurate referral as needed. The workshop could also include potential scenarios that involve various student discipline issues that new teachers need to work through. There can be a collaborative or discussion component that is followed up by the deans and their suggestions. Having an in-depth review of the policies revolving

around individual technology, dress code, discipline, behavior expectations, and consequences should be part of the induction program to ensure new teachers are familiar with these policies. Additionally, having deans pop into new teachers' classrooms to provide feedback regarding these specific issues would be beneficial for new teachers. If student behavior is managed effectively, new teachers will start to see their classroom environment shift into a more positive place to learn for all students.

The induction program itself should model these strategies during meetings. For example, the presenters should model Component 3a: Communication With Students as they are communicating with staff. Effective communication does not usually just happen; it should be planned (Kottler et al., 2005, p. 64). During the meeting, they should clearly communicate the expectations for learning, directions, and procedures for each element of the meeting and the content of the meeting. The presenters should communicate these components both through written and oral language, using similar tactics they are expecting teachers to use in the classroom, whether it be a Google Slide-deck, Google Classroom, handouts, or other tool.

Meetings should model Component 3b: Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques, including higher-level thinking questions that encourage discussion and participation opportunities for teachers. According to Murphy (2016), student learning is more likely to occur when students are involved in the learning process and their voices have an opportunity to be heard (p. 111). Teachers should have opportunities to talk with one another and discuss possible responses to various questions, allowing all new teachers to participate in the discussions. New teachers should then have opportunities to

share with the larger group and expand upon peer responses to extend and enrich the large-group discussion.

Induction meetings should also model Component 3c: Engaging Students in Learning. Active engagement is more likely to occur once teachers stop worrying about disseminating information to students and start concentrating on how to make learning enjoyable for students to help motivate them to learn (Murphy, 2016, p. 107). Each activity and assignment included in the meeting should require the engagement of all participants, whether it is through writing, discussion, creating, groupings, materials, resources, or choice. Through modeling these expectations regarding engagement, new teachers will likely be more highly engaged in the induction curriculum, and presenters and meeting facilitators will also be providing them with strategies they can use in their own classrooms. Presenters should be sure to point these out to new teachers as they move from one activity to the next. There should also be some form of assessment, such as a short survey or exit slip, to gauge where new teachers are with the components discussed during the meeting.

Meeting facilitators can model Component 3d: Using Assessment in Instruction through providing goals for the meeting, monitoring learning throughout the activities during the meeting, providing feedback to new teachers throughout the meeting, and allowing opportunities for self-assessment and monitoring. This is a great start, but it can go one step further by asking teachers to submit a lesson plan incorporating specific strategies discussed during the meeting. They can work on this during the meeting, or it can be submitted at a later date. This submission would then include specific feedback from an administrator through an informal face-to-face meeting. New teachers should

also learn how to use student assessment data to improve instruction. According to Murphy (2016), the use of data for setting goals and evaluating learning is essential to student growth (p. 120). Administrators would also be encouraged to informally observe new teachers applying these specific strategies with their students and have follow-up conversations regarding the informal observation, including both strengths and areas for improvement.

Induction meetings should also model Component 3e: Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness. When necessary, meeting facilitators should adjust the meeting plan to enhance learning. According to Odden (2012), PD needs to be ongoing and fluid, continually changing, paralleling the changes we see in students, content, systems, and expectations (p. 87). Because meeting facilitators are administrators, they should share multiple approaches to engage students in instruction and offer opportunities for new teachers to share their own experiences. Administrators should invite exemplary teachers to come and share their experiences, which would introduce new teachers to more staff and offer them more opportunities for them to learn from their peers. Teaching is an art. The more examples and variety of activities that new teachers learn to best help students engage with the material and, ultimately, master the material, the more new teachers can develop their own teaching style and add to their toolbox of teacher resources.

The induction program should include an element of parent–teacher role play of difficult conversations regarding grades, attendance, and behavior. As new teachers participate in this activity, administrators and veteran teachers can talk through the scenario with new teachers and offer suggestions or various strategies for addressing student issues with families. Also, it should be common practice for the administrator or

division chair to be part of difficult parent phone calls or conferences in the first year. This way, new teachers can learn from working with the administrator or department chair while they model how to handle the conversation. As new teachers feel more confident, the administrator or division chair may no longer be needed. It should also be common practice for new teachers to include division chairs or administrators on difficult emails to parents. Part of the induction program should include constructing emails to parents addressing potential student issues such as grades, attendance, and behavior. New teachers would receive feedback from their peers, veteran teachers, and administrators during induction regarding their emails and, eventually, become more confident in constructing an effective, informative email to parents.

Educators are eager to develop children and help them grow; however, it is fairly recently that leaders in the field are realizing the importance of adult development and growth. According to Drago-Severson and Blum-DeStefano (2018), the field supports teacher PD for its own sake, and because of the promising link of teacher growth to student growth (p. 23). In terms of Component 4e: Growing and Developing Professionally, currently, if new teachers want to observe veteran, master teachers, they need to sacrifice their plan or lunch time unless their administrator agrees to acquire them a substitute teacher in order for them to observe; however, creating sub plans and preparing to miss their class is additional work on the new teacher. Ideally, new teachers would be scheduled with a full release period during their lunch time rather than half of the period being assigned a duty so they could observe veteran teachers during that time at least twice a week. The other 3 days of the week, they would meet with their mentor, division chair, or administrator to discuss various issues. One of the most effective ways

for new teachers to learn is through observation. Currently, the district does not allot time for this observation, thus hindering new teachers' ability to grow and develop professionally.

Exploring Success Through Conditions

Proximity/Common Subject

Currently, mentors and mentees are not necessarily in the same department, which means that, most likely, their classrooms are not near one another. Maready et al. (2021) suggested providing a new teacher with a mentor in the same subject area can help transition a novice teacher to an effective teacher (p. 96). Not being in close proximity to the mentee makes it more difficult for the mentor to have a pulse on what is going on and to be readily available to help the mentee as needed. The same issues arise due to the lack of common planning time between mentors and mentees.

Collaborative Time

Collaboration time is another important condition for all new teachers to gain expertise in their content and best practices for teaching specific content. Helmke (2022) suggested mentors and mentees need designated, protected time to engage in learning-focused activities (p. 29). Currently, District A does not have late-start or early-release days for teacher work time so all department and staff meetings are held after school, usually once a week. Because all teachers are already staying after school once a week for required meetings, mentors and mentees should be provided release time to meet to discuss topics, perform informal observations, and meet with administrators about concerns and progress. According to *State-Funded Illinois Induction and Mentoring Programs: 2011 Survey Research Results*, 66% of the responses determined that “time”

was one of the largest barriers or obstacles to becoming a successful mentor (Wilkins et al., 2012).

Financial Compensation

Currently, mentees are not compensated for the extra time they spend meeting with their mentor teacher. They are not provided with any release time to meet with their mentor during the day. Mentors are paid a stipend for working with their mentees, but they are not provided any release time to observe mentees or create resources for mentees to help with instructional practices.

New teachers currently teach an unlimited number of preparatory courses. If they teach a core subject, they are provided \$500 per semester or duty-free lunch if they exceed two preparatory courses on their schedule. If they are teaching a non-core subject, there is no compensation for teaching more than two preparatory courses. Depending on the elective courses, some new teachers have more than five preparatory courses in their schedules and co-teach multiple courses throughout the day.

Recommendations Related to Conditions

One condition that would help the mentor–mentee relationship be more beneficial for teachers is proximity during the day. If the mentor and mentee can have rooms located near each other, they are more likely to build a trusting relationship because they will see each other more often, and the mentor will be more readily available to the mentee to answer quick questions or provide help as needed. Wagner (2014) discussed how the problem with providing real support for new teachers is that no one has time (p. 144). By strategically placing the mentor near the mentee in the building, the possibility of them having a few minutes to answer questions or address immediate concerns greatly

increases. This helps new teachers avoid feeling alone and isolated in their work (Wagner 2014, p. 139).

Another condition that would provide the mentor and mentee opportunities to meet and discuss different topics or issues is common planning time. Currently, there is no policy regarding common planning time in District A. If mentors happen to have the same plan time as their mentee, it is pure coincidence. So, if mentors and mentees want to meet, they need to meet after school hours on days they do not already have scheduled meetings. If mentors and mentees had common plan time, they would not be expected to formally meet every day during their plan period, but there would be built in time during the day for conversations between the mentor and mentee to occur. This would make it more convenient for both parties to meet rather than trying to arrange for time after school. Schulle (2008) discovered that informal, “back and forth” interactions with novice teachers and mentors in between teaching time allowed for the mentee and mentor to share ideas, comments, and suggestions with each other whenever they had a few moments together. According to the mentors in her research, even brief interactions help and can add up to provide constructive mentoring moments (p. 149).

Leaders of District A need to provide collaboration time for mentors to meet with their mentees during the school day. New teachers need an opportunity to work with their PLCs during the school day. Leaders of District A need to develop an alternative schedule one day a week that includes a late start for students so teachers have collaboration time built into their contractual time. This also shows teachers the district values this time by prioritizing collaborative worktime for teachers within the schedule.

One way to compensate new teachers and mentors for their time is through release time, but district leaders may want to consider financial compensation for participating in the mentoring program as well. If mentors are putting in extra time to help new teachers, they are more likely to continue serving as mentors when they are compensated in some way. Many other countries that have effective induction programs compensate their mentors through additional pay. For example, mentors in Switzerland are relieved of some of their teaching duties to make time for their mentees and receive additional pay (Wong et al., 2005, p. 380). Kyle et al. (1999) believed mentors should be recognized and rewarded, not only through appreciation but in more tangible ways. Suggestions included tuition remission or paid stipends for coursework, district support for travel to professional conferences or PD opportunities, and release time for meetings with their mentee (p. 120).

New teachers should also teach a limited number of courses. Ideally, all new teachers would teach no more than two different courses. Limiting new teachers' courseload would help new teachers to focus on content and increase their ability to manage the planning and resources associated with each course. Pettegrew and Wolf (1982) found teacher burnout is caused in part by role overload, denoting the absence of sufficient resources to perform the role adequately (p. 379). When a teacher teaches three different courses in their schedule, they are reviewing materials and planning lesson for three different courses each day.

Conclusion

According to Delisio (2003), induction programs provide new teachers with the message that they are important. Investing time and money into helping new teachers

master their craft is money well spent. When teachers feel supported and build their confidence, they are more likely to return to their position in the future, continuing to gain experience and expertise in their craft. According to Zuspan (2013), teachers live in an ever-changing world of reform and accountability, and trying to keep up can be overwhelming (p. 161). New teachers need the support of a mentor, their colleagues, and their administration in order to tackle the challenges they will face in the classroom. District A has an induction program in place that includes a mentoring program, but the mentoring program is missing key components to maximize the benefits for new teachers. The current induction program does many things well, but there is an opportunity to help new teachers even more through some potential changes to the program.

CHAPTER SIX

Implications and Policy Recommendations

The findings from both the Administrator, Division Chair, and Mentor Survey and the New Teacher Survey combined with the analysis of EvaluWise performance data indicate new teacher induction programs at the high school level are a vital component to the retention and growth of new teachers in their first year. With a current teacher shortage, district leaders are wise to invest in the new teachers they have in order to retain them in future years as it is becoming harder and harder to find quality teachers. Through emotional support and a curriculum to help new teachers with planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professionalism, new teachers are more likely to feel connected to the school and confident in their abilities. Thus, new teachers are more likely to stay and continue to grow in the school district rather than seeking different job opportunities elsewhere.

The new teacher induction program in District A is a combination of the district induction program and the state induction program. The state induction program is for novice teachers. This program provides them with a virtual instructional coach through the IEA who is a veteran teacher outside of their district. The state induction program also provides them with a building mentor who is supposed to meet with novice teachers once a month to go through a suggested curriculum and be available to answer questions as needed. The district induction program is for teachers who are new to District A but have teaching experience. The district induction program includes monthly meetings that focus on Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching. These monthly meetings are facilitated by building administrators and the curriculum is provided by the PTC, which

comprises district administrators, building administrators, veteran teachers, and the union president. Teachers new to the district are usually provided an informal mentor within the building, but this is not required. Both teachers who are new to the profession and teachers who are new to the district participate in a 1-week new teacher induction program prior to the start of the school year.

In reviewing the district new teacher induction program and the state new teacher induction program and feedback provided by both building leaders and new teachers, there are positive elements to both programs that help teachers strengthen their performance in the classroom; however, both programs are lacking elements of consistency, accountability, and value. In order for the new teacher induction programs to be effective, teachers and leaders/mentors need information, time, and compensation in order to prioritize the program and, ultimately, prioritize new teachers.

Policy Statement

This proposed policy is intended to advance the knowledge about how district leaders can leverage feedback and induction curriculum to design one comprehensive new teacher induction program for all new teachers—those new to the profession and those new to the district with experience. This comprehensive program should support new teachers emotionally and professionally, help them build relationships with both their supervisors and colleagues, provide PD, and build a smaller community within the larger community of the building and district for both new teachers and the building administrators who oversee the program. New teacher induction programs have been put into place to help new teachers transition into a new teaching position, whether it is their first teaching position or they are coming from a previous position. According to Section

21A-10 of the Illinois School Code, the new teacher induction program should assist first- and second-year teachers in developing the skills and strategies required for instructional excellence, provided the state funds the program. School Code 21A-20 also states that all new teachers should be assigned a mentor for their first 2 years. The mentor will be trained, demonstrate best practices of teaching in their field, and will be available to the new teacher both virtually and in person (Illinois General Assembly, 2023).

Mentors should be compensated for their time. New teachers should also be compensated for their time. Mentors and new teachers should each receive either a duty-free lunch period or an extra plan period. Both options would allow the new teacher to observe their colleagues and collaborate with their mentor and building leaders, such as administrators and division chairs. In addition to this dedicated time, mentors should be financially compensated for their time and effort spent to help their mentee. Mentors are expected to prepare and facilitate a curriculum that focuses on instructional practices, classroom management, day-to-day occurrences, planning and preparation, and professionalism. In order to do this well, mentors need to do their research and work with other stakeholders. Because mentors are providing this service to the district, they should be compensated both with time and money.

These programs are built with the intention of supporting new teachers through some form of a mentor and curriculum to help them improve their teaching practice. Leaders of District A should extend their new teacher induction program to cover at least the first 2 years for each new teacher. Increased accountability of the new teachers, the mentors, and the building administrators through check-ins and time logs will give the program more validity. Enhancing the curriculum to include guest speakers, applicable

activities, discussion, and time allotment for mentoring will not only empower the building leaders who work with the new teachers, it will create a systemic support for all new teachers to help them be successful, grow, and find a home in District A.

Considerations for Decision Makers

Educational Analysis

In consideration of this policy, an educational analysis of needs will allow for a deeper understanding of what new teachers need so they can improve their practice according to Danielson's Framework. Schools are only as strong as their teachers. Thus, leaders of District A need to prioritize educating their new teachers so new teachers can best help students inside and outside of the classroom. Through the New Teacher Survey responses, new teachers shared what was helpful with the new teacher induction program and what they were missing that would have helped them in their first year in District A. In the Administrator, Division Chair, and Mentor Survey, building leaders shared their observations of new teachers and what they believe new teachers need to be successful in their first year in District A. Both groups stated new teachers need more time with and accessibility to a formal building mentor. McKee (2021) discussed building "contact chains" so new teachers can reach out quickly for help from colleagues, essentially someone who is available to help them when a problem arises. Through having a formal mentor program, new teachers are paired with a mentor with whom they meet on a regular basis and who is available to come into their classroom, provide informal feedback, answer questions, and be a resource however needed. Ideally, this mentor is someone who teaches the same subject and is located close in proximity to the new

teacher in the building. The new teacher and the mentor also should have common time during the day when they can meet and discuss questions or concerns.

Economic Analysis

Although there is a cost associated with running an effective new teacher induction program, the investment is well worth it. Because the curriculum for the new teacher induction program for ETND is built in house, the cost is minimal. District and building administrators who are part of this committee are not paid for this work; however, veteran teachers who are on this committee are paid for 2 hours of curriculum once a month in order to review the feedback surveys from new teachers and revise the curriculum as necessary. Additionally, I would recommend that 1 week prior to the date for the monthly induction session with *all* new teachers, the building administrators who facilitate the monthly meetings are pulled together with one member from the PTC and presented the curriculum for the upcoming meeting. This would allow building administrators time to ask questions for clarification, discuss strategies or activities they would like to use to enhance the material with their teachers, and simply have access to the curriculum in advance to prepare. There would be no cost to this addition.

The largest cost increase would be to provide a formal building mentor for each new teacher to the district. Odden (2012) recommended one instructional coach or mentor for every 500 students in a building (p. 67). So, in District A, this would equate to four or five mentors per high school for new teachers. Building mentors would be given a stipend for their work with the new teachers and for attending a mentor training prior to the beginning of the school year. Building mentors would also have a monthly curriculum to go through with new teachers and be expected to perform multiple informal

observations to provide informal feedback to new teachers. This would be done during their lunch or plan time at least once a month. Additionally, the new teachers would have two plan periods in the 7-day period rather than one. One of these plan periods would align with their building mentor so they are available to meet with their building mentor and have time in the day to ask questions, go through lesson plans, and engage in other activities. This would be a cost to the district because it would be factored into the district and building full time equivalent. Rather than teaching five classes throughout the day and having one plan period with a lunch/duty period, new teachers would teach four periods throughout the day, have two plan periods, and a lunch/duty period.

There will also be a cost to the mentor training that is provided at the beginning of the year, but this will be minimal, as it is run in house through district or building administrators. This would be an extensive 3-day training focusing on mentor strategies and instructional best practices.

Social Analysis

According to Wagner (2014), “Nearly one in two teachers who start out in the classroom leave after just five years” (p. 146). The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 has made teacher retention more challenging. According to the 2021 *Teacher Shortage Survey*, 88% of the school districts in Illinois reported they had a teacher shortage problem (Beilstein & Withee, 2021). With a teacher shortage and nearly half of teachers leaving the profession within the first 5 years, there is no better time than now to start supporting new teachers than now. Once a school district hires a new teacher, that person is an investment. There are fewer and fewer candidates to choose from when hiring teachers, which means there are even fewer replacements. If leaders of a school district

choose to hire a new teacher and that new teacher chooses to work for that district, the first year should be spent supporting the new teacher and helping them grow so they will be more likely to feel part of the school community and return the following year.

With the teacher shortage, teachers have more choices of where they want to work. District A is a lower-paying district and loses new teachers to higher-paying districts. Leaders of District A need to spend time and money to invest in their new teachers, support their new teachers, and build relationships with their new teachers in order to increase the chances that they can retain their new teachers. In 2022, the ISBE implemented a new teacher mentor program to address teacher shortages across the state. District A incorporated the ISBE program into their new teacher induction program for teachers who are new to the profession. Illinois recognizes the need to help new teachers as a way to retain new teachers. Leaders of District A need to follow suit and modify the district's new teacher induction program to meet the needs of new teachers as well.

Political Analysis

Based on the Administrator, Division Chair, and Mentor Survey, building leaders want to be more involved in the new teacher induction program offered in District A. They reported wanting to have influence on what is discussed in the monthly meetings and discussed the importance of a formal mentoring program for all new teachers to District A. Thus, the rollout of involving building administration more heavily in the induction program should be positive. Additionally, District A would offer veteran teachers an opportunity to not only be financially compensated for being a formal mentor but also to be recognized as being a strong, effective teacher who is asked to help guide new teachers. This should also be positive. Because there is currently no formal in-house

mentoring program for all new teachers and District A is currently only using the mentoring program provided by the IEA, the guidelines and curriculum created for mentors should also be positively received by mentors. Overall, the rollout of the program will be positively received by the building administrators who are continually having to fill positions of new teachers who leave after 1 year of teaching and fellow teachers who are continually welcoming new teachers into their PLC groups, working with them to learn the curriculum. Teachers and building administrators are ready for consistency with newer staff and a higher teacher retention rate.

Cons with the rollout may be the financial obligation associated with the new formal mentoring program. With providing a stipend to all mentors and an additional plan period for all new teachers, there will be a cost to District A. These funds can come from PD. The PTC will continue to receive feedback from those involved in the program, both new teachers and facilitators, and evaluate the cost of the program with teacher retention and teacher growth in the classroom.

Legal Analysis

According to 105 ILCS 5/21A-10, public schools are required have an induction program that includes mentoring for all novice teachers through their first 2 years (Illinois General Assembly, 2023). Section 21A-20 states that the program must align with the *Illinois Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards*, content standards, school improvement, and PD. Section 21A-20 also states that mentor compensation and new teacher compensation and professional learning for both parties should be provided by the State Board of Education. According to the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), to retain better teachers, legislators

have identified that districts need to address the “inadequate support for novices,” and this idea has caused mentoring programs to become increasingly popular (Halford, 1999). Additionally, the ASCD reported that it is speculated that Congress will be focusing on “the future of Title I [and] specifics of support for new teachers will be more common in state capitals” (Halford, 1999, The Federal Focus section, para. 1). Leaders of District A recognize there is an issue with their new teacher induction program, as does the rest of the country, so the idea of adding a formal mentoring program and updating induction curriculum aligns with what the rest of the state and country are doing in their schools as well.

Traditionally, the community of District A has addressed new teacher induction both as a district and a building through the monthly meetings and the week-long meeting prior to the beginning of the school year. However, the mentoring program has mostly been informal through building volunteers. Though I do not foresee this being a problem, there may be a shift in formalizing the mentoring program and the process of choosing mentors to work with new teachers and receive a stipend for their time and effort.

Moral and Ethical Analysis

Instituting the addition of a formal mentoring program and making necessary changes to the curriculum in the new teacher induction program is necessary for the good of the community, especially the students. The teacher attrition rate in District A is high, and these changes will help to retain new teachers rather than losing them to either other districts or career changes. According to Ingersoll and Strong (2011), one of the main factors leading to new teachers’ decisions to leave the profession is a lack of support from school administration. By more heavily including the building principals in the

induction program, new teachers will feel that school administrator support, not only through their principal, but through their formal mentor as well.

Making these changes to the induction program in District A is the right thing to do for the new teachers because it will provide them support and guidance inside and outside of the classroom; this also will benefit the volunteer mentors who have donated their time and effort year after year to work with new teachers. In District A, part of a veteran teacher's responsibilities is volunteering as a mentor, but it is only right to recognize the time these mentors put in to working with new teachers and compensate them accordingly. It is also what is best for students to try to keep new teachers in the building. Students build relationships with teachers inside and outside of the classroom, and when teachers continually leave year after year, this can put a strain on the emotions of students. Research also shows veteran teachers are more effective in the classroom than are new teachers.

Implications for Staff and Community Relationships

This program will only improve relationships between teachers in the building. New teachers will continue to have the strong support of one another and their associate principal who runs the monthly induction program. They will have additional support from the building principals who will be more heavily involved in the curriculum and meetings, and they will have a close relationship with their formal building mentors

This program should not have a large effect on District A's relationship with the public other than that it will increase teacher retention, which will bode well with the community. By focusing attention toward the new teacher induction program, leaders of District A are showing the community that they value the teaching profession as a

complex skill. They are also showing the community that they value the teachers who are working with their children and are determined to support them as much as possible.

According to Bryk and Schneider (2002), when parents trust the intentions of schools, many potentially contentious issues do not develop into conflicts (p. 7). If the community trusts that the commitment to new teacher development and retention will have a positive effect on their students, it should not be a problem.

The impact of these relationships can only be positive. The community will see the school board and district administration values their teachers, and the community will in turn respect and value the importance of supporting teachers. Hopefully, all stakeholders will be on the same page with this issue in order to help new teachers grow and remain in District A.

Conclusion

Nationwide, leaders of school districts have begun to discuss the high teacher attrition rate and look for ways to better support new teachers in an effort to retain them in the teaching profession. District A is no different. With a low teacher retention rate, District A needs to support new teachers through a formal mentoring program and an updated new teacher induction program that will help new teachers feel connected to administrators and colleagues and grow confidence with their skills in the classroom. With the support of the state, District A can use the virtual coaches through the IEA in addition to its own programs to better help new teachers, so new teachers can better help students.

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Appendix A

New Teacher Survey

Please complete the following survey that gathers information regarding our new teacher induction program and mentoring program with the ultimate goal of assuring we are meeting your needs. This survey should take between 15-20 minutes. Your responses will remain confidential.

Part I:

Survey regarding Monthly Induction Program Meetings

Please answer the questions below regarding the formal monthly induction program meetings that were led by either your building or district administrator.

1. How many years of teaching have you completed in your career?

For the following sections, please choose either strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

2. Monthly induction meetings with my building administration increased my knowledge in creating an environment of respect and rapport in my classroom.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
3. Monthly induction meetings with my building administration increased my knowledge in establishing a culture for learning in my classroom.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
4. Monthly induction meetings with my building administration increased my knowledge in managing classroom procedures, such as instructional groups, transitions, materials and supplies, supervision of paraprofessionals, and management of non-instructional duties.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. Monthly induction meetings with my building administration increased my knowledge in organizing my physical space in the classroom.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

6. Monthly induction meetings with my building administration increased my knowledge in managing student behavior in my classroom.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

7. Monthly induction meetings with my building administration increased my knowledge in using questioning and discussion techniques with students.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

8. Monthly induction meetings with my building administration increased my knowledge in communicating with students.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

9. Monthly induction meetings with my building administration increased my knowledge in communicating with parents/guardians of my students.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

10. Monthly induction meetings with my building administration increased my knowledge in engaging students in learning.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

11. Monthly induction meetings with my building administration increased my knowledge in using assessment in instruction.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

12. Monthly induction meetings with my building administration increased my knowledge in demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

13. Monthly induction meetings with my building administration increased my knowledge in reflective practices regarding my teaching.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

14. Monthly induction meetings with my building administration increased my knowledge in maintaining accurate records.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

15. What elements were missing from the induction meetings that you would have appreciated and found beneficial?

16. What is the most difficult issue you encountered this year, and how could your administrative team have helped you?

Survey regarding the Informal Mentoring Program

Please answer the following questions regarding the mentoring program whether it be with your formal building/district mentor, your virtual instructional coach, or your informal building mentor.

17. Please identify which mentoring program(s) you participated in. check all that apply.

- ☐ Formal Building Mentor and Virtual Coach
- ☐ Informal Building Mentor

18. The mentoring program was beneficial.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

19. In what areas was the mentor program most beneficial? Please check all that apply.

- Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport
- Establishing a Culture for Learning
- Managing Classroom Procedures
- Managing Student Behavior
- Organizing Physical Space
- Communicating with Students
- Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques
- Engaging Students in Learning
- Using Assessment in Instruction
- Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness
- Communicating with Families
- Showing Professionalism
- Maintaining Accurate Records

20. How often did you meet with your mentor?

Daily, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, less than once a month.

Please provide as much information as you can for the open-ended questions.

21. What components of the mentor program you participated in were most helpful?

22. Outside of the induction program and the informal mentor program, what helped you grow most as a successful teacher?

23. What is the most difficult issue you encountered this year?

24. How could your mentor have helped you with the issue discussed above?

25. Do you plan to return to District A in the fall of 2022-2023?

- Yes
- No

26. Why or why not are you planning to return to District A?

27. Please note your home school. (You will not be identified by your homeschool)

- School 1
- School 2
- School 3
- School 4
- School 5

Appendix B

Administrator, Division Chair, and Mentor Survey

Please complete the following survey that gathers information regarding our new teacher induction program and mentoring program with the ultimate goal of assuring we are meeting your needs. This survey should take between 10-20 minutes. Your responses will remain confidential.

1. In which domain in the Danielson Model do new teachers score the highest?
 - a) Domain 1: Planning and Preparation
 - b) Domain 2: Classroom Management
 - c) Domain 3: Instruction
 - d) Domain 4: Professionalism

2. Based on your answer to question 1, what observations have you made that support your response?

3. In which domain in the Danielson Model do new teachers score the lowest rating?
 - a) Domain 1: Planning and Preparation
 - b) Domain 2: Classroom Management
 - c) Domain 3: Instruction
 - d) Domain 4: Professionalism

4. Based on your answer to question 3, what observations have you made that support your response?

5. How familiar are you with the new teacher induction program?

| | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| 1. Not Familiar at all | 2. Somewhat Familiar | 3. Very Familiar |
|------------------------|----------------------|------------------|

6. How often do you attend new teacher induction meetings?

| | | |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Not at all | 2. Occasionally | 3. All the time |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|

7. How often do you meet with your new teachers?

| | | |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Not at all | 2. Occasionally | 3. All the time |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|

8. How often do new teachers meet with mentors in your building?

| | | | | |
|----------|-------------|--------------|------------|-----------|
| 1. Never | 2. Semester | 3. Quarterly | 4. Monthly | 5. Weekly |
|----------|-------------|--------------|------------|-----------|

9. How often are events organized for new teachers to interact with each other?

| | | | | |
|----------|-------------|--------------|------------|-----------|
| 1. Never | 2. Semester | 3. Quarterly | 4. Monthly | 5. Weekly |
|----------|-------------|--------------|------------|-----------|

10. Share some ways that you provide opportunities that encourage interaction between new teachers? (belonging, support, community-building)

11. How often are opportunities (professional or social) organized for new teachers to interact with veteran teachers?

1. Never 2. Semester 3. Quarterly 4. Monthly 5. Weekly

12. Share some ways that you provide opportunities that encourage interaction between new teachers and veteran teachers?

13. What topics need to be included in a new teacher induction program to best help teachers be successful? (choose all that apply)

- a) Technology training
- b) Grading
- c) Email
- d) Student Data System
- e) Parent Communication
- f) Other: _____

15. What elements need to be included in a mentoring program to best help new teachers be successful? (choose all that apply)

- a) Observation
- b) Roleplay
- c) Application activities
- d) Proximity
- e) Accessibility
- e) Common subject
- f) Common course
- g) Common Interests
- h) Release time
- i) Other: _____

14. What are some ways we can support you to develop capacity in order to best help new teachers?

15. What is your role in District A?

- a) Building/District Mentor
- b) Division Chair
- c) Building Administrator

How many years have you been evaluating teachers?

1. 0 years 2. 1-3years 3. 4-6 years 4. 7-10 years 5. 10+ years

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form

My name is Kate Morris, and I am a Doctoral Student at National Louis University. I am asking you to participate in the study, “**New Teacher Induction Programs: Current Program Evaluation and Program Improvements**,” occurring from **12-2021 to 12-2022**. The purpose of the study is to examine current new teacher induction practices, explore effective new teacher induction practices based on research and survey results, and to inform improvements to future induction practices. This study will help researchers develop a deeper understanding of induction programs that can guide ongoing professional development. This form outlines the purpose of the study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant.

By signing below, you are providing consent to participate in a research project conducted by Kate Morris, doctoral candidate, at National Louis University, Chicago.

Please understand that the purpose of the study is to explore the current first-year induction program and inform future improvements to the program. Participation in this study will include:

- Individual surveys to the following participants are to be completed between December 2021 and December 2022.
 High School building administrators (26)
 High School Division Chairs (16)
 High School Mentors (8)
 First-year High School Teachers (62)

*Participants may view anonymous results upon request.

Your participation is voluntary and can be discontinued at any time without penalty or bias. The results of this study may be published or otherwise reported at conferences and employed to inform induction practices, but participants’ identities will in no way be revealed (data will be reported anonymously and bear no identifiers that could connect data to individual participants). To ensure confidentiality, the researcher will secure all survey results and confidential data in a password-protected folder on her computer; only she will have access to data.

There are no anticipated risks or benefits, no greater than those encountered in daily life. Additionally, the information gained from this study could be useful to School District A and other schools and school districts looking to initiate or refine their first-year induction programs.

Upon request, you may receive summary results from this study and copies of any publications that may occur. Please email the researcher, Kate Morris, to request results from this study.

In the event that you have questions or require additional information, please contact the researcher, Kate Morris, through email (_____) or phone (_____).

If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that has not been addressed by the researcher, you may contact Dr. Christine Nelson, dissertation chair, at 847.658.5669 or by email at cnelson34@nl.edu. Or you may contact Shaunti Knauth, Ph.D., Director of Engaged Research, IRB Chair at National Louis, at shaunti.knauth@nl.edu or (312) 261-3526 National Louis University, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL, or Christopher Rector, Ph.D., Director of Clinical Training, College of Professional Studies and Advancement, IRB Co-Chair CRector@nl.edu, (312) 621- 9650

Thank you for your consideration.

Consent: I understand that by signing below, I am agreeing to participate in the study (*New Teacher Induction Programs*). My participation will consist of the activities below between December 2021 and December 2022.

- One survey with Likert scale, multiple-choice questions, and open-ended questions

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

Appendix D

Additional Tables

Table D1

New Teacher Survey Open-Ended Question Results

| Question | Responses |
|---|---|
| What is the most difficult issue you encountered this year, and how could your administrative team have helped you? | <p>Student cooperation and helping enforce rules like dress code and attendance.</p> <p>Lack of motivation from students, especially freshman. Sharing tips and tricks for first years could have been beneficial.</p> <p>The only major issue was adjusting expectations due to both a public school and the covid situation.</p> <p>Student work completion.</p> <p>Throughout the year I have dealt with horrible student comments and behavior, regardless of the establishment rules and expectations. I have gone to my division chair several times regarding these student issues, and I never felt that I was truly supported in those behavioral issues. It hasn't made it a welcoming work environment at times.</p> <p>Students taking accountability of their work and actions.</p> <p>cell phones. disengagement. I would appreciate a school wide plan on what the cell phone policy is and encourage teachers to implement it school wide.</p> <p>Classroom behavior, my admin team helped me by showing me steps for discipline and following through with them.</p> <p>The most difficult issue has been understanding how to effectively handle students' behaviors, especially with a class I did not co-teach. I think it would have been helpful to discuss strategies of how to communicate with students, even when it is extremely difficult.</p> <p>Constant battle with students. Air pods, cell phones, hoods, dress codes, etc. This could all have been prevented with deans/admin stopping students at the entrances and the hallways during passing periods. When one teacher enforces it and others do not, it is a constant battle.</p> |

| Question | Responses |
|----------|--|
| | <p>The most difficult thing to deal with would be student motivation, as they are all still using remote learning as a scapegoat to not get things done accordingly and aren't taking enough responsibility.</p> |
| | <p>Managing student behavior in all classes; providing a consistent response to student disciplinary incidents.</p> |

Table D2*New Teacher Survey Open-Ended Question Results Related to Domain 2*

| Question | Responses |
|---|---|
| What elements were missing from the induction meetings that you would have appreciated or found beneficial? | <p>How to use certain programs that we use like TC and Google Classroom.</p> <p>feel I benefitted more from the open discussion with peers about what has worked and doesn't work in the classroom, classroom management.</p> <p>I would have more ideas for new teachers at the beginning of the year to set up strong classroom management techniques.</p> <p>I appreciated the culturally responsive teaching material and discussion about being more adaptive to student differences when teaching the material.</p> <p>I think we TALK a lot about what to do, but it would be so beneficial to SEE it being done. It would be nice if first year teachers were able to take a day to just observe a few classes in and outside of our home buildings with the induction goal in mind. Ex: If we are discussing how to make a positive learning community in our classrooms, I would love to have gone to a veteran teacher's classroom who has received an excellent in creating a learning community. It would also be great to WORK with a veteran teacher on a lesson that we could teach the day after for the same class.</p> |