THE EFFECTS OF A SYSTEM-WIDE MENTORING PROGRAM ON BEGINNING
TEACHER RETENTION RATES

Jill L. Hastings

A Thesis Submitted to the
University of North Carolina Wilmington in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Education

Watson School of Education

University of North Carolina Wilmington

2007

Approved by

Advisory Committee

_____Diane Calhoun_____   _____Dawn Riddle_____

_____Karen Wetherill_____
Chair

Accepted by

_____
Dean, Graduate School

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this evaluation is to determine how a system-wide mentoring program affects new teacher retention rates. There are several different types of mentoring programs in the world of education that could be used to support growth in new teachers. The school system being evaluated has recently changed from having school-based mentors to having system-wide full-time mentors. These mentors work with new teachers sometimes as much as once a week in order to promote growth and provide support to the beginning teachers. In this transition year, the school system provides first year teachers with a full-time, system-wide mentor. The second year teachers continue to have school-based mentors. This study looks at the differences between the two types of programs and evaluates their effectiveness. This study also looks at how the two different types of mentoring programs affect new teacher retention rates. The results of the study show that system-wide mentors proved to be more effective and helpful to the beginning teachers. However, the study also shows that the preliminary results do not prove that system-wide mentoring programs increase the average retention rate. There are several other factors besides mentoring that leads to teacher turnover, many of which are discussed in this study.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

The face of education is changing, and the need for quality teachers is increasing. This is more apparent with the No Child Left Behind Act and the requirement of every teacher to be "Highly Qualified" (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). With the federal government requiring that there be highly-qualified teachers in every public school classroom by 2005, the need to retain quality teachers is of the up-most importance. The question is however, how do you not only recruit, but retain quality teachers?

There appears to be a teacher shortage in the United States, however, the shortage is only a symptom of the problem. It is not that there are not enough teachers; the fact is that there are more teachers leaving than are coming in. In fact, the number of students graduating with Bachelor's or Master's Degrees in Education is rapidly increasing. From 1984 to 1998, the annual number of graduates had increased over 50% (National Governors Association, 2001). Trying to find and prepare more teachers only focuses on the symptom of teacher shortage instead of the problem (NCTAF, 2002). The increase in student enrollment and teachers reaching retirement age are factors that lead to the teacher shortage, but teacher attrition is the main cause (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Many teachers in the United States are reaching retirement age. Over the next 10 years, about 700,000 are expected to retire. However, this number is only 28% of the hiring needs for that period (National Governor's Association, 2001). Instead of focusing on recruiting quality teachers, school districts need to focus on retaining the quality teachers that they already have.

More and more states are realizing the need to promote growth and retention of beginning teachers. All across the nation there are examples of quality induction programs for new teachers; programs that take teachers from being students to being in charge of their own

classrooms. The types of programs vary, but all of them consist of some type of mentoring for the novice teachers. The hope of all school systems is that if there is quality mentoring, the need to recruit new teachers will be lessened due to higher retention rates.

The purpose of this evaluation is to look at an example of an induction program that is being utilized, and determine its effectiveness on retaining teachers. The program being evaluated has changed from having school-based mentors to having several system-wide mentors who work full-time at assisting the beginning teachers through their first year(s) of teaching. The reasons for changing the induction program were that research said that teachers are more comfortable with mentors that are not in their school (Maxey, 2007). In the district being evaluated, Robert Maxey, head of the professional development department said that too many beginning teachers complained that the school mentors became a "snitch". System-wide mentors answer to the professional development department, not the principal which allows for teachers to feel more comfortable going to their mentors about issues. The mentors are there to support their mentees rather than evaluate them. The downfall of having system-wide mentors however is that many novice teachers have not found a "buddy" at their school that they can go to for immediate help with issues that arise. The intention was for principals to assign a "buddy" for the new teachers, but not all principals were informed of this need (Maxey, 2007).

This evaluation will compare BT 2s (Beginning Teachers in their second year of teaching) attitudes and retention with BT 1s (Beginning Teachers in their first year of teaching). The BT 2s still had school-based mentors, while the BT 1s were the first group to have system-wide mentors assigned to them. Both qualitative and quantitative data will be used to evaluate the new program. Qualitative data will be collected through a survey that asks questions dealing with how comfortable the teachers felt going to their mentor, as well has how helpful their

2

mentors have been. Quantitative data will be collected through the retention / attrition rates for those participating in the programs. Quantitative data will also be collected through the use of Likert Scale type survey questions. Two surveys will be used to evaluate the program. One survey was given by the professional development department and was mandatory for all Beginning Teachers to take. The other survey was developed and given by the evaluator and was completed by the Beginning Teachers on a voluntary basis. Evaluating the data from both surveys as well as the retention rates will help determine the effectiveness of having system-wide mentors on the retention rates in New Hanover County Schools.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Overview

For the past decade, there has been the threat of a teacher shortage. Student enrollment is increasing and many baby-boomer teachers are reaching retirement age. These are both factors that lead to a shortage; however, teacher attrition is the biggest reason   that principals have to scramble to find quality teachers. In fact, teachers leaving for non-retirement reasons outnumber those leaving for retirement three to one (NCTAF, 2000).   It is estimated that about 9.3% of teachers leave the profession after only one year of teaching. This statistic is even higher in rural areas and inner cities (NEA Foundation, 2001). This high turnover rate can cause many problems in schools by being detrimental to the overall school environment as well as student performance (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Ultimately, schools should be focused on student achievement. Having over 9% of the teachers leave the profession after only one year can only be harmful to student achievement.

With the requirement of schools to have only highly-qualified teachers, it is more important than ever to retain the best teachers. Education is overwhelmingly having trouble retaining good teachers. Ingersoll said it best when he said, "well respected, well supported, well paid professions never seem to have problems with retention" (Archer, 1999, p.5). What is it about education that is causing such an alarming number of teachers to leave the profession after such a short amount of time? One possibility is that schools have the inability to support high quality teaching in many schools. Without the proper support, more teachers are being driven out than are coming in (NCTAF, 2002).

Teachers are too often put into their first classroom and told to sink or swim. Kenneth Wilson gave the analogy comparing teaching to mountain climbing. He said, "You could take a

practice run with somebody who has lots of experience and the ability to share it. The other way is to be taken to the base of Everest, dropped off, told to get to the top or quit" (NEA Foundation, 2001, p.2). Expecting someone to climb Mt. Everest on their own for the very first time is as far-fetched as expecting a teacher to step into a classroom for the first time with no help or support at all. Nationwide, states and districts are realizing the importance of supporting teachers as they begin their careers. Policy makers are behind mentoring programs for many reasons. The first and most important reason is that it promotes student achievement. Mentoring programs also improve the school quality. There is also more evidence supporting how mentoring programs are cost effective. Finally, policy makers are backing mentoring programs as a way of reducing the teacher shortages that they are facing (Brewster and Railsback, 2001).

Because of all of the positive aspects of mentoring programs, over half of the states now require mentoring for new entry-level teachers (Feiman-Nemser, 1998). It is anticipated that over 2 million teachers will enter the profession in the next decade, so it is even more important to support them when they do (NEA Foundation, 2001). With the number of teachers increasing, the number of beginning teachers participating in some type of induction program is also increasing. The National Council for Education Statistics (NCES) found that in 1990-1991, 51% of beginning teachers participated in some type of induction program. That number rose slightly in 1993 – 1994 to 59%. By the year 1999 – 2000, there were 83% of beginning teachers receiving support through an induction program (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). With more teachers participating in induction programs, there will be more evidence available to determine if such programs are useful in retaining teachers.

Teacher Shortage and Retention Rates

       The teacher shortage that policy makers are concerned about could be avoided if districts could lower the attrition rates. As stated earlier about 9.3% of teachers don't make it past their first year of teaching. That statistic increases each year with 20 – 30% of teachers leaving after only 3 years of teaching (Brewster & Railsback, 2001). Even more alarming is that 40 – 50% leave after 5 years of teaching (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). The retention rates are the lowest with math, science, and special education teachers because of their ability to find higher paying jobs in their area of expertise (Brewster & Railsback, 2001). The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) found that attrition rates are approaching 20% in Special Education, Math, and Science for first year teachers, which is more than double the national average of 9.3% (NCTAF, 2000). It is also extremely important to retain teachers of color as minority enrollment is also increasing. A 1997 study by the National Council of Education Statistics found that minority enrollment will reach 22% by 2005, but there will only be about 8.6% of teacher who are minority (Brewster & Railsback, 2001). A more recent survey by the NCES in 2002 (Table 1) found that in the United States about 39% of the students enrolled are minority students. This percentage is the same for North Carolina schools (NCES, 2003).

State	Total students	Number of minority students	Percentage of minority students by community type		
			City, large and midsize	Urban fringe of city	Small town or rural
Reporting states[1]	**47,687,871**	**18,815,623**	**62.5**	**35.9**	**20.8**
Alabama	737,294	286,738	70.2	29.4	30.4
Alaska	134,358	53,147	38.2	0.0	41.3
Arizona	922,180	448,977	52.9	40.0	51.0
Arkansas	449,805	130,082	47.4	15.2	23.0
California	6,248,610	3,969,986	74.3	61.2	42.2
Colorado	742,145	245,957	46.1	30.6	21.6
Connecticut	570,228	175,347	69.1	20.8	8.4
Delaware	115,555	46,593	57.7	39.3	30.7
District of Columbia[2]	75,392	65,331	86.6	0.0	100.0
Florida	2,500,478	1,187,811	53.1	50.5	32.4
Georgia	1,470,634	679,379	80.3	50.6	33.7
Hawaii	184,546	147,055	81.8	80.0	78.0
Idaho	246,521	36,038	14.5	18.0	14.6
Illinois	2,071,391	850,215	75.4	31.4	8.5
Indiana	996,133	169,586	41.2	12.2	4.0
Iowa	485,932	50,460	22.1	7.6	5.0
Kansas	470,205	103,682	42.8	12.3	14.8
Kentucky	654,363	76,327	31.5	16.7	5.2
Louisiana	731,328	374,643	75.0	41.8	39.4
Maine	205,586	7,454	11.4	3.3	2.7
Maryland	860,640	409,252	77.0	49.7	20.6
Massachusetts	973,140	236,008	56.3	13.6	5.9
Michigan	1,730,668	457,160	71.2	18.3	7.3
Minnesota	851,384	153,277	53.6	12.9	8.2
Mississippi	493,507	260,273	75.5	28.7	53.0
Missouri	909,792	195,030	48.9	23.8	6.4
Montana	151,947	21,472	14.2	8.0	14.9
Nebraska	285,095	52,007	29.8	17.7	10.9
Nevada	356,814	162,454	52.4	47.7	25.7
New Hampshire	206,847	10,315	13.9	4.2	2.3
New Jersey	1,341,656	545,067	79.3	38.8	16.7
New Mexico	320,260	210,462	63.7	71.5	68.7
New York	2,872,132	1,296,450	80.2	23.5	6.9
North Carolina	1,315,363	525,730	54.4	33.0	34.0
North Dakota	106,047	12,028	9.1	7.6	13.0
Ohio	1,830,985	361,762	54.3	13.1	3.3
Oklahoma	622,139	225,558	48.7	26.4	35.0
Oregon	551,480	115,610	27.7	21.5	16.3
Pennsylvania	1,821,627	406,806	66.1	13.8	5.2
Rhode Island	158,046	42,113	54.4	13.4	4.6

Table 1 cont.

South Carolina	691,078	303,295	56.3	36.4	47.6
South Dakota	127,542	17,670	16.4	7.3	13.3
Tennessee	925,030	256,719	—	—	—
Texas	4,163,447	2,462,268	75.4	47.3	42.4
Utah	484,677	73,388	29.9	12.7	10.7
Vermont	101,179	4,259	14.1	5.5	3.6
Virginia	1,163,091	432,410	59.4	35.8	22.7
Washington	1,009,200	267,425	36.0	26.0	20.0
West Virginia	282,885	15,423	10.7	6.9	4.0
Wisconsin	879,361	174,894	45.4	10.3	6.4
Wyoming	88,128	11,192	15.3	18.4	11.3
Outlying areas, DoD Dependents Schools, and Bureau of Indian Affairs					
DoDDS: DoDs Overseas	73,212	21,756	—	—	—
DDESS: DoDs Domestic	32,847	13,430	40.9	35.4	34.9
Bureau of Indian Affairs	46,476	46,476	100.0	100.0	100.0
American Samoa	15,897	15,897	—	—	—
Guam	31,992	31,510	—	—	—
Northern Marianas	10,479	10,435	—	—	—
Puerto Rico	604,177	604,177	—	—	—
Virgin Islands	18,780	—	—	—	—

— Not available.

[1]Total of reporting states, does not include Tennessee.

[2]Racial/ethnic data were not reported for the 28 charter schools in the District of Columbia.

[3]Represents one school located in a small town locale outside the District of Columbia.

NOTE: Minority includes all groups except White, not Hispanic. Community types classify the location of a school relative to populous areas. See Key Terms for definitions of locale codes. Percentages are based on schools reporting. U.S. totals include the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2001–02, and "State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary/Secondary Education," 2001–02.

Table 1: Percent of minority students in each state

The number of minority students is increasing, but the number of minority teachers is not. The National Education Association found that in 2002, only 13% of teachers were minority (NEA, 2002). This gap between the number of minority students and minority teachers makes it important to retain teachers of color.

Before schools districts can work on increasing the retention rates, they must first look at the reasons teachers are leaving. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) conducted a survey in 1995 to determine the reasons teachers were leaving the profession. They found that 18.9% leave due to school staffing actions (position no longer available), 42% left for family or personal reasons, 38.8% left to pursue other jobs, and 28.9% left because they were dissatisfied with teaching (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Other reasons teachers are leaving the profession could be due to more demanding standards being enforced, student populations being more divers than ever, and teachers are entering the profession without having a strong background in their education courses (Archer, 1999). Teachers who received high quality four or five year education programs stay at much higher rates than emergency hires (NCTAF, 2000). Student behavior could be an underlying factor of attrition, but mis-management and lack of support from administration may also be causes for teachers leaving (Weiss, 1999). In Brewster and Railsback's guidebook on how to support beginning teachers, they stated that many teachers discover they aren't suited for the job; leave because of pay, or to raise their own children. However, the vast majority leaves due to "exhaustion, disillusionment, lack of confidence, and inadequate support" (Brewster & Railsback, 2001, p.4). Low salaries as well as workplace conditions are other reasons why teachers are leaving. Workplace conditions include student discipline, lack of support from administration, poor student motivation, and lack of teacher influence over school wide and classroom decision making (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Raising

salaries would be effective, but not necessarily realistic. It is best to focus on improving workplace conditions because new teacher are most vulnerable to un-supportive conditions. Too often new teachers are placed with the most challenging students because veteran teachers feel they have done their time. Taking brand new teachers and placing them in the most challenging classes runs the risk of losing committed people because of burnout (NEA Foundation, 2001). Workplace conditions are related to the morale, career choice, commitment level, and planned retention of beginning teachers (Weiss, 1999). Weiss also found that new middle school teachers had the lowest morale and were more likely to leave than other levels of teaching. High schools had the second highest attrition rate, followed by elementary schools (Weiss, 1999). Poor administrative support also contributes to teachers leaving the profession. When principals communicate support, provide guidance, enforce student rules, and teachers are evaluated fairly and are recognized when they are successful, there is a higher morale, and a higher retention rate (Weiss, 1999). Whatever the reason, the retention rates in United States public schools are decreasing.

The decrease in retention rates causes many other problems in our school systems. Principals are scrambling just to find replacements, and the quality of instruction declines. With the decline in quality instruction comes a decline in student achievement. In fact, one study found that children who had least effective teachers three years in a row had achievement gains that were 54% less than those that were in classrooms of effective teachers (NCTAF, 2000). Unfortunately, students that have had to face several bad teachers in a row face do not have as good an opportunity for success (Haycock, 1998). `The constant turnover of teachers also weakens the ability to build and sustain learning communities. Novice teachers lack the leadership to promote school reform, and the schools are just getting by (NCTAF, 2000).

Increasing the retention rates not only improves the morale of the school, but it is also cost effective. It is estimated that replacement costs range from 15 – 150% of the teachers' salary. In Tennessee for example, the retention rates are about 60%. Taking 20% of an average salary of $38000 would cause districts state wide to spend about $9.6 million replacing 1,260 of 3,000 teachers. If the retention rates were at 90%, a thousand fewer teachers would need to be replaced, saving an estimated $7.3 million (Morris, 2006). Another example of the cost-effectiveness of retaining teachers is in Texas. There the attrition rate is about 15.5%, which costs the state a conservative $329 million a year (NCTAF, 2000).

The federal government is working to help recruit and retain quality teachers in high poverty level schools. In 2003, the United States Congress passed the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act. The bill provides highly qualified teachers in Title I schools (40% or higher poverty levels) teaching math, science, or special education courses up to $17,500 as loan forgiveness each year. The bill "makes it possible for more disadvantaged students to be taught by more caring and competent teachers in subjects that will help shape not only the student, but the economic future of the country" (Boehner, 2003, p.6).

In order to have stable learning environments for today's students, it is important to keep quality teachers in the classroom by improving their workplace conditions. However, even the best working environment cannot keep beginning teachers in the classroom without the proper support.

Induction/Mentoring Programs

Throughout the United States, school districts have realized that one way to increase the retention rates of beginning teachers is to mandate and/or fund induction programs. Research in

1996 found that 27 states have programs, but only 7 states both mandated and financed them. However that number is on the rise (Archer, 1999). As stated earlier, 83% of beginning teachers in 2000 participated in some type of Induction Program (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Archer stated in his article on teacher attrition that "there is growing attention to induction as a strategy for reducing attrition, weeding out unfit teachers, and encouraging competent teachers to stay and thrive" (Archer, 1999, p.5). School districts are beginning to realize what new teachers need, and finding that some type of induction program is the best way to meet those needs. Needs such as setting up a classroom, learning procedures, developing lesson plans, developing classroom management skills, determining where to find resources, motivating students, assessing student performance, communicating with parents, and connecting theories learned in college to teaching methods used in the classroom can all be addressed through induction programs (Brewster & Railsback, 2001).

There are several different types of programs that help beginning teachers be successful. One type is an induction program that helps beginners make the transition of taking classes to teaching classes. Induction programs introduce teachers to the culture of teaching, and take place usually during the first three years. They could include school and district orientations, individualized plans for growth, monthly seminars, opportunities to observe other teachers, and be observed, and teacher mentors. A second type of program is specifically a teacher mentoring program. In mentoring programs, beginning teachers are paired with experienced teacher(s) who are available to answer questions, observe, problem solve, etc. The purpose of mentors is to not only support the new teacher, but to maximize their effectiveness. A third type of program is school-university collaboration. Collaborating with universities allows teachers to work with professors to develop the most effective teaching strategies. Faculty members of the universities

can help give seminars, serve as mentors, observe the beginning teachers, and support the development of curriculum. The most successful programs incorporates each of the three types discussed (Brewster & Railsback, 2001).

Mentoring programs are on the rise because of their benefits to all stakeholders. The administration benefits because mentoring aids in recruitment and retention. Higher education benefits because of the smooth transition from campus to the classroom. Teacher Associations benefit from having a new way to serve members and guarantee the quality of teaching. Mentoring programs can mean the difference between success and failure for teachers, and parents and students experience better teaching (NEA Foundation, 2001). Mentoring programs also promote higher student achievement and test scores. Along with mentoring programs come stronger collegiality among faculty members and a more cohesive learning environment. Less time and money is spent on recruiting and hiring teachers. Beginning teachers have a larger repertoire of teaching strategies, better classroom management skills, and can deal with behavior and discipline more effectively when participating in a mentor program (Brewster and Railsback, 2001). Overall, mentoring programs provide increased job satisfaction for both beginning teachers and veteran teachers serving as mentors. The beginning teachers have lower levels of stress and frustration, while the veteran teachers can revisit and reflect on their own practice (Brewster & Railsback, 2001).

While there are many benefits to having mentoring programs, there are some negative side effects. Mentors cannot be responsible for everything their mentees do. One or two years of mentoring doesn't provide a new teacher with all the subject knowledge needed. A mentor can't help a teacher grasp the content knowledge (NEA Foundation, 2001). There can also be complications of selecting mentors. There are a limited number of teachers available to be

mentors due to the increasing numbers of new teachers entering the field. It is difficult to place the mentee with a mentor that is knowledgeable in their content area and/or grade level due to supply and demand issues. Also finding mentors who aren't already involved in many other activities such as School Improvement Teams, club advisor, curriculum committees, etc. is extremely difficult. The teachers that would make the best mentors are sometimes so involved in other activities, that they might not have the time needed to devote to their protégé's (NEA Foundation, 2001). Another negative side effect could be that without properly trained mentors, the program runs the risk of reinforcing negative teaching styles. Mentors who do not use best practices themselves are unlikely to pass that on to their mentees. Finally, teachers who aren't serving as mentors may view the new teachers as someone that they don't need to invest time in because they already have a mentor who is supposed to help them (NEA Foundation, 2001).

The negative side effects of mentoring programs can be avoided with the proper selection and training of mentors. In past generations of education, mentors were determined by asking the teacher if they would like to be a mentor. However, now in what some are calling the 2nd generation mentoring programs, there are stricter criteria that identifies characteristics of effective mentors, and establishes priorities for placing mentors with mentees (NEA Foundation, 2001). Successful mentors possess several qualities that make effective such as positive attitude and character, professional competence and experience, communication skills, and interpersonal skills (NEA Foundation, 2001). It is also important to pair new teachers with veterans who are already promoting change in their schools and classrooms (Brewster & Railsback, 2001). In order to effectively help new teachers, mentors who are selected need training in facilitating reflective practice, understanding state requirements, how to establish collaborative relationships with their protégé's, developing classroom observation skills, creating long term professional

development plans, and understanding the social needs to adult learners. It is also very important for the training to be ongoing (NEA Foundation 2001).

Ideally, mentors would choose to be mentors in order to help their colleagues, however; incentives for mentors can be beneficial. It has been found that mentors achieve more when mentoring doesn't happen after hours and on weekends (NEA Foundation, 2001). Time must be allowed during the normal school day for mentors and mentees to meet and observe each other. Another incentive that could be helpful in recruiting mentors would be to offer credit for re-licensure for being a mentor. Stipends can also recruit mentors (NEA Foundation, 2001). Giving stipends could run into funding issues and do not guarantee that the mentor is doing his/her job. Another idea that was done in Glendale, Arizona was to devote funds that could have been used for stipends to train mentors during the summer and offer them per diem pay for their work in the training sessions (NEA Foundation, 2001).

Many school systems are going to full-time mentors due to the difficulty balancing classroom needs with the needs of the mentee. However, some mentors prefer to maintain their classroom activities and involvement (NEA Foundation, 2001). System-wide mentors are able to devote more time to the mentee, but may not be as familiar with the workings of that particular school.

There are several examples of quality mentoring and induction programs that can be used as examples. One example is the Kent School District in Kent, WA. In this school district there is a 2/1 mentee/mentor ratio in each school. There is also three full-time mentors (TOSA's) working for the system. The school based mentors are to meet weekly with mentees. Prior to becoming mentors, each received two hours of paid in-service. The TOSA's give a minimum of four observations each year, offer staff development, provide additional assistance, and resources

to the beginning teachers if needed. After implementing the mentoring program in Kent, beginning teachers have more effective classroom management skills, a better understanding of the curricula, experiment more with engaging lesson plans, and practice self-reflection. The programs keys to success are to meet weekly with the mentor at first, then plan accordingly, limit 12 – 15 mentees per TOSA, and to make sure mentors receive quality training (Brewster & Railsback, 2001). Another example of a successful induction program is in Memphis City Schools. There they are modeling themselves after the New Teacher Center at the University of California – Santa Cruz. Memphis City Schools is receiving the Tennessee Board of Regent's Academic Excellence Award. In their program, they offer intensive weekly support for the 75 first year teachers from 5 full time, well trained mentors (Morris, 2006). Another example is Connecticut's Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) which provides each new teacher with state trained mentors. This program has had consistently high proficiency levels in NAEP evaluations (NCTAF, 2000).

Quality mentoring programs result in quality teachers who are confident in the classroom and are able to reflect on their practice. Teachers who are confident are more likely to remain in education, which will increase student achievement.

Connections Between Mentoring and Retention

Quality mentoring and induction programs have many benefits, and teacher retention is most important. Investing in high-intensity induction and mentoring programs bring improved retention rates, increases in instructional skills, and increases in student achievement (Morris, 2006). Using the National Center for Education Statistics 2000-2001 Follow-up Survey, Ingersoll and Smith found that the retention rate for teachers participating in an induction

program nationwide was 88.1%, while the retention rate of those teachers who did not participate in some type of induction program was 82.4% (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Ingersoll and Smith's study not only looked at the fact that there was an induction program, but also at what type of induction program there was (Figure 1). In the study, they found that the more intensive the program, the less likely teachers were to leave the profession (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004).

Figure 1: Probability of turnover after first year of teaching by various induction "packages"
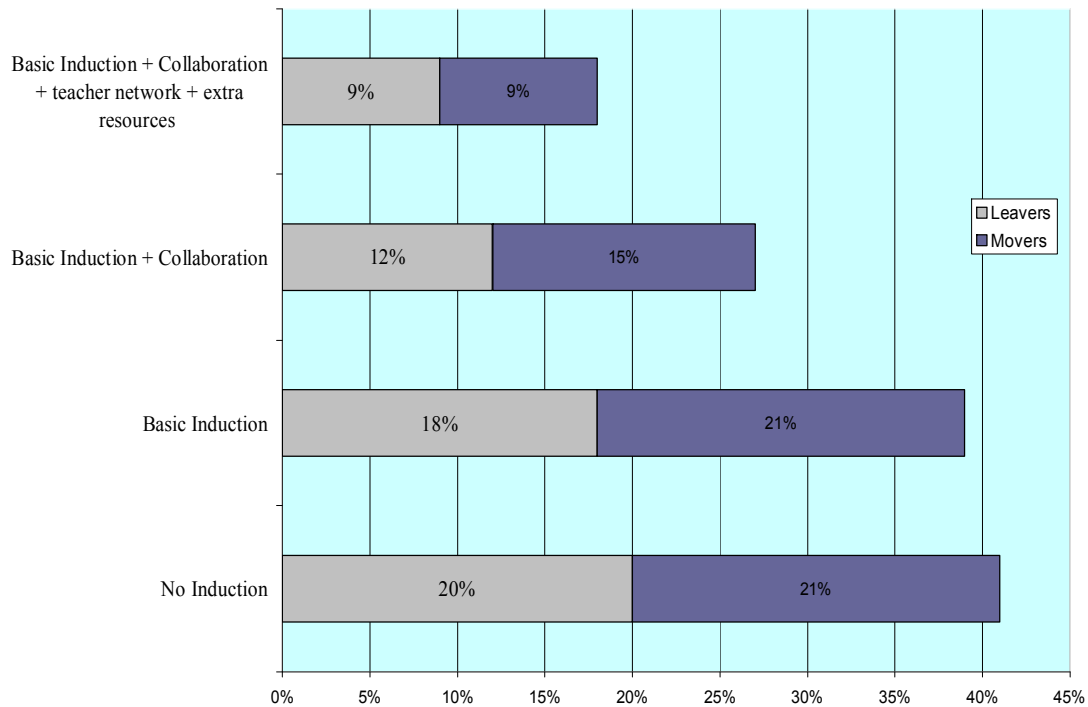
No Induction – None of the following activities: Mentor, seminars, common planning time or collaboration with other teachers, supportive communication with administrators, a reduced number of preparations

Basic Induction – mentor and supportive communication with administrators

Basic Induction + Collaboration – Mentor in field, supportive communication with administrators, seminars for beginning teachers, common planning time or collaboration with other teachers

Basic Induction + Collaboration + Teacher Network + Extra Resources – prior package plus participation in an external teacher network, a reduced number of preparations, and a teacher's aide.

The Memphis City School's example mentioned earlier has also had similar results to the study Ingersoll and Smith conducted. Using the intensive Induction Model had many positive effects on the school system. There were higher retention rates of those that participated in the model (86% vs. 76%). Teachers also used student centered (best practices) more frequently than non-participants. Finally students of teachers who participated in the model scored significantly higher on achievement tests (Morris, 2006).

Summary

In order to stop the teacher shortage that America's schools are facing, there must be an increase in new teacher retention rates. While there are many factors that lead to teachers deciding to lead the profession, participating in an intensive induction program can help new teachers make it through the first few years which are the toughest for any teacher. Induction programs that involve weekly mentoring for new teachers as well as quality professional development and opportunities for personal reflection can help lead to higher retention rates. The long-term benefit of retaining quality teachers is that they learn how to collaborate with each other on an adult to adult level with student achievement in mind. Mentoring as part of a school climate promotes life-long learning, which contributes to the overall school-climate (NEA Foundation, 2001).

METHODOLOGY

Sample Program Design

Chapter three outlines the program being evaluated, the participants, the instrumentation, and the design and procedure of data collection. The case study being evaluated was a particular school system which has recently undergone a major change in the type of Induction Program offered to beginning teachers. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine the effectiveness of system-wide mentors on new teacher retention rates. By comparing two groups of new teachers that have participated in two types of induction programs, a comparison will be made between the retention rates of those participating in a system – wide mentoring program and those participating in site – based mentors.

The school system being evaluated consists of 35 schools (22 Elementary, 7 Middle, 5 High, and one 6 – 12 Alternative School). (Table 2) The county served a total of 24,126 students in the 2006-2007 school year.

School Name	Total
BRADLEY CREEK ELEM	426
CAROLINA BEACH ELEM	623
CHARLES MURRAY MID	913
RACHEL FREEMAN ELEM	433
COLLEGE PARK ELEM	437
D C VIRGO MIDDLE	382
EDWIN A ALDERMAN EL	354
EMMA B TRASK MIDDLE	837
EMSLEY A LANEY HIGH	1,826
EUGENE ASHLEY HIGH	1,589
FOREST HILLS ELEM	361
GREGORY ELEMENTARY	581
HEYWARD C BELLAMY EL	522
HOLLY TREE ELEM	506
ISAAC M. BEAR HIGH	96
JOHN J BLAIR ELEM	646
JOHN T HOGGARD HIGH	1,858
MARY C WILLIAMS ELEM	480
MURRAYVILLE ELEM	749
M C S NOBLE MIDDLE	842
MYRTLE GROVE MIDDLE	884
NEW HANOVER HIGH	1,785
DR HUBERT EATON ELEM	588
LAKESIDE	191
OGDEN ELEMENTARY	380
DOROTHY B JOHNSON EL	264
PINE VALLEY ELEM	653
ROLAND-GRISE MIDDLE	827
DR JOHN CODINGTON EL	540
SUNSET PARK ELEM	395
WALTER L PARSLEY ELE	698
ANNIE H SNIPES ELEM	429
WILLISTON MIDDLE	872
WINTER PARK MODEL EL	299
WRIGHTSBORO ELEM	613
WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH E	247
Total	**24,126**

Table 2: Students in Each School in New Hanover County

According to Robert Maxey, Professional Development coordinator, New Hanover County Schools is not experiencing a teacher shortage overall. However, they do have difficulties finding science, math, and special education teachers. There is also a difficulty in hiring minority teachers. Because there is some shortage, the system has put into place a Beginning Teacher's Mentoring Program. The program works to offer support for the first 3 years of teaching. The 2006-2007 School year was a transition period for the program. In the past, each beginning teacher (BT) was assigned a mentor from their school. Beginning in 2006, BT 1s (first year teachers) were assigned one of five system-wide mentors. The BT 2s continued to have school-based mentors. The system-wide mentors worked full time for the county and met on average once a week their assigned mentees. More assistance could be given if needed. Along with the system-wide mentor, BT 1s were to be assigned a "buddy" in their school to assist them with day to day issues. (However, Mr. Maxey said that this did not always happen.) The school-based mentors were not regulated in how often they were to meet with their mentees. Each school-based mentor received a $100 stipend each month for their work as a mentor.

The reasons given for the change in the mentoring program were to increase mentor accountability. In the past teachers had complained of mentors who weren't performing their duties as well as they could have been. Because the mentors are full-time, they are able to spend more time with each beginning teacher conducting informal observations, modeling lessons, assisting in planning, providing support in behavior management, coaching in "best practices", and encouraging reflective practice. The focus of the system-wide mentors was to build the repertoire and confidence level of the BTs using the INTASC Standards for Beginning Teachers as guides. In each of the meetings with the mentee, mentors focused on Content Pedagogy, Student Development, Diverse Learners, Multiple Instructional Strategies, Motivation and

Management, Communication and Technology, Planning, Assessment, Reflective Practice:

Professional Growth, and School and Community Involvement

(http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/pbl/pblintasc.htm).

Because of the two different mentoring programs taking place in the system being

evaluated, it will be possible to compare teacher attitudes and retention rates in each of the

programs to determine the effectiveness of system-wide mentors.

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of teachers in elementary, middle, and high

school that were in their first or second year of teaching. Table 3 shows the breakdown of how

many teachers participated in each level and which year of teaching they were in. The two

groups being looked at were chosen because of their participation in the two types of mentoring

programs.

Targeted Population	BT 1s	BT 2s
Number of teachers supported through mentoring in NHC	112	77
Elementary School	52	42
Middle School	28	13
Secondary school	32	22
Average ratio of mentor/mentee	1/24	Varied by school

Table 3: Breakdown of participants in study

Data Collection

Participants in the study were given two surveys to fill out at the completion of the school year. The first survey was developed by the Professional Development Department and focused specifically on the mentoring program. Both groups (BT 1s and 2s) were given the same survey. The survey was completed online while the teachers were turning their final paperwork in for the year. The Mentoring Survey is found in Appendix A. The survey consisted of 17 questions, with questions 3 – 12 focusing on how their mentors helped the teacher achieve each of the ten INTASC Standards for Beginning Teachers.

Using the results of the mentoring survey allows a comparison to be made between BT 1s and BT 2s opinion of the helpfulness of their mentors. The survey used a Likert Scale type of responses, so data can be analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The final question of the survey allowed the new teachers to include any additional comments about their mentors and the mentoring program. All BT 1s and 2s were required by the professional development department to participate in this survey.

The second survey given was developed by the researcher and included both attitudinal free response questions, and multiple choice questions using a rating scale for responses. The Beginning Teachers Survey is found in Appendix B. The key questions to be answered by the Beginning Teachers Survey were how prepared the teachers felt beginning their teaching careers, how supportive the administration and fellow teachers were, availability of resources, the helpfulness of the professional development department, the helpfulness of their mentors, whether they would feel more comfortable with a system-wide mentor or school-based mentor, and if they would be returning to New Hanover County the following year. Each participant was given the opportunity to complete the Beginning Teacher's Survey, however participation was

not mandatory. There were a total of 46 BT 1s that participated, and 28 BT 2s that participated.

Of the 46 BT 1s that participated, 42% taught elementary, 28% taught middle, and 30% taught

secondary. The survey was given during the final week of school. BT 2s completed a paper

copy of the survey when they came to the professional development department to turn in their

final paperwork. Of the 28 that participated, 25% were elementary teachers, 17.9% were middle

school, 42.9% were secondary, and 14.2% gave no answer. BT 1s completed an online survey

containing the same questions as the paper survey.

In order to compare the effectiveness of the two types of mentoring programs on

retention rates, data also had to be collected on the retention/attrition rates. Actual retention data

from the 2005-2006 school year was obtained along with projected retention data from the 2006-

2007 school year. Data from the 2005-2006 school year was obtained through the county human

resources department. Projected retention rates for the 2006 – 2007 school year were obtained

from the Beginning Teacher's Survey.

There are several limitations in this study. One limitation is that the Beginning Teacher's

Survey was voluntary, and less than 50% of each of the groups participated. Not having full

participation does not accurately present retention rates. Also, the retention rates determined in

the survey are projected based on responses. The actual retention rates for the 2006 – 2007

school year cannot be determined until the start of the next school year. Another limitation is in

the difference in the number of participants from each group. Almost half as many BT 2s

participated as BT 1s, so a full picture of the effectiveness of the mentoring program on retention

rates cannot be given. Giving an online survey verses a paper survey was a factor to consider in

the difference in the number of participants from each group.   A final limitation was in time.

Because of the nature of the study, data had to be collected at the end of the school year. Due to

this, several questions that came about as a result of the survey responses could not be followed up with additional questionnaires. Retention rates are caused by more than just mentoring programs, and the study limited the ability to determine why teachers in New Hanover County were leaving or staying.

RESULTS

Professional Development Department Survey on Mentors

       The survey given by the professional development department will be analyzed first. For each of questions 3 – 16, participants rated the helpfulness of their mentors based on each of the ten INTASC standards. A five part scale was used where a score of 5 was given when the mentors were extremely helpful and a score of 1 was given when the mentors were not at all helpful. Table 4 gives a breakdown by question of what percentage of BT 1s scored their mentors in each of the five categories. The table also gives a mean score for each question on a scale of 1 to 5.

Question	Mean	Extremely Helpful (5)	Helpful (4)	Fairly Helpful (3)	Slightly Helpful (2)	Not at all helpful (1)
3. My mentor has been _____ to me with conten pedagogy through resources such as: review of SCOS or Blueprints, navigation of Learn NC, and networking with the Instructional Services Department	4.48	64.6%	25.7%	4.4%	3.5%	1.8%
4. My mentor has been _____ in discussing the importance of understanding student development to plan age appropriate learning activities	4.44	57.1%	34.8%	3.6%	3.6%	0.9%
5. My mentor has been _____ in encouraging me to look at the different needs and prior experiences of my students as I plan appropriate lessons to reach all students in my classroom.	4.47	61.1%	30.1%	4.4%	3.5%	0.9%
6. My mentor has been _____ in sharing a variety of instructional strategies to encourage student participation and the development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.	4.5	66.4%	23.0%	4.4%	6.2%	0.0%
7. My mentor has been _____ to me in the understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self motivation	4.42	61.1%	27.4%	5.3%	5.3%	0.9%
8. My mentor has been _____ to me as I use effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.	4.34	51.8%	33.9%	11.6%	1.8%	0.9%

	Mean					
9. My mentor has been _____ with planning my instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community and curriculum goals.	4.33	55.8%	29.2%	8.0%	6.2%	0.9%
10. My mentor has been _____ to me in my understanding and appropriate use of formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social, and physical development of the learner.	4.34	54.0%	31.0%	11.5%	1.8%	1.8%
11. My mentor has been _____ in my my development as a reflective practitioner who evaluate the effects on his or her choices and actions on others and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.	4.54	63.7%	29.2%	4.4%	2.7%	0.0%
12. My mentor has been _____ to me in my development as a teacher who fosters relationshis with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well-being.	4.38	55.8%	30.1%	10.6%	3.5%	0.0%
13. My mentor has been _____ in providing me with a relationship that I feel was comfortable, trustful, and confidential.	4.73	79.6%	15.0%	4.4%	0.9%	0.0%
14. Overall I feel my mentor has been _____ in my growth as a teacher this year.	4.48	63.7%	23.9%	8.8%	3.5%	0.0%
15. My mentor has been _____ to me with completing the paperwork requirements for the Beginning Teachers Program.	4.88	89.4%	9.7%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%
	Mean	Once a week or more (5)	About every other week (4)	About once a month (3)	About every other month (2)	Less than every other month, or not at all (1)
16. During the year, my mentor and I met on an average of:	4.51	61.9%	29.2%	7.1%	1.8%	0.0%
Grand Mean	**4.49**	**0.633**	**26.6%**	**6.4%**	**3.2%**	**0.6%**

Table 4: NHCS Mentor Survey BT 1s

For each of the questions, there was a small percentage of participants that scored their mentors a being less than helpful. The grand mean score of 4.49 demonstrates that overall, BT 1s felt that their mentors were either helpful or extremely helpful. In fact 63.3% of those surveyed felt that their mentor was extremely helpful, and 26.6% felt that they were helpful. About 10% of those surveyed felt that their mentors were only fairly helpful, slightly helpful, or not at all helpful. It is important to note the extremely high ratings for questions 11, 13, 14, and 15. The goal of any mentor is to promote growth in their mentee. 63.7% of those surveyed said that their mentor was extremely helpful with this aspect of teaching. Also a high number (76.9%) felt that their mentor was extremely helpful in providing a comfortable relationship. Finally, 89.4% believed that their mentor was extremely helpful in completing the requirements of the Beginning Teachers Program.

Table 5 shows the same results but for the BT 2s. Each question is analyzed based on the percentage of participants that scored their mentors in each of the five categories listed. Also there is a mean score for each question. The table shows that overall the grand mean was a rating of 4.27 for mentors of BT 2s. For BT 2s only 58.1% of those surveyed felt that their mentors were extremely helpful. Over 17% felt that their mentor was only fairly helpful, slightly helpful, or not at all helpful. The data shows that a high percentage (72.7%) felt that they had a comfortable, trusting, relationship with their mentor.

31

Question	Mean	Extremely Helpful (5)	Helpful (4)	Fairly Helpful (3)	Slightly Helpful (2)	Not at all helpful (1)
3. My mentor has been _____ to me with conten pedagogy through resources such as: review of SCOS or Blueprints, navigation of Learn NC, and networking with the Instructional Services Department	4.21	54.5%	23.7%	5.2%	10.4%	2.6%
4. My mentor has been _____ in discussing the importance of understanding student development to plan age appropriate learning activities	4.36	57.9%	30.3%	3.9%	5.3%	2.6%
5. My mentor has been _____ in encouraging me to look at the different needs and prior experiences of my students as I plan appropriate lessons to reach all students in my classroom.	4.23	53.2%	29.9%	7.8%	5.2%	3.9%
6. My mentor has been _____ in sharing a variety of instructional strategies to encourage student participation and the development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.	4.22	57.2%	22.1%	11.7%	3.9%	5.2%
7. My mentor has been _____ to me in the understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self motivation	4.22	54.5%	28.6%	6.5%	5.2%	5.2%
8. My mentor has been _____ to me as I use effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.	4.12	48.7%	30.3%	9.2%	7.9%	3.9%
9. My mentor has been _____ with planning my instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community and curriculum goals.	4.12	51.9%	28.6%	7.8%	2.6%	9.1%

	Mean	Once a week or more (5)	About every other week (4)	About once a month (3)	About every other month (2)	Less than every other month, or not at all (1)
10. My mentor has been _____ to me in my understanding and appropriate use of formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social, and physical development of the learner.	4.16	55.8%	22.1%	10.4%	5.2%	6.5%
11. My mentor has been _____ in my my development as a reflective practitioner who evaluate the effects on his or her choices and actions on others and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.	4.23	54.5%	27.3%	9.1%	5.2%	3.9%
12. My mentor has been _____ to me in my development as a teacher who fosters relationshis with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well-being.	4.35	66.2%	16.9%	6.5%	6.5%	3.9%
13. My mentor has been _____ in providing me with a relationship that I feel was comfortable, trustful, and confidential.	4.52	72.7%	14.3%	6.5%	5.2%	1.3%
14. Overall I feel my mentor has been _____ in my growth as a teacher this year.	4.3	60.5%	23.7%	6.6%	3.9%	5.3%
15. My mentor has been _____ to me with completing the paperwork requirements for the Beginning Teachers Program.	4.35	61.0%	24.7%	5.2%	6.5%	2.6%
	Mean	**Once a week or more (5)**	**About every other week (4)**	**About once a month (3)**	**About every other month (2)**	**Less than every other month, or not at all (1)**
16. During the year, my mentor and I met on an average of:	4.37	64.0%	22.7%	4.0%	5.3%	4.0%
Grand Mean	**4.27**	**58.1%**	**24.9%**	**7.2%**	**5.6%**	**4.3%**

Table 5: NHCS Mentor Survey BT 2s

Because each group was given the exact same survey, it is possible to do a side by side comparison of the overall perception of the mentoring program for each group. The results show that the BT 1s had a grand mean score of 4.49 and felt that their mentors were halfway between extremely helpful and helpful. The grand mean for BT 2s of 4.27 demonstrates that they feel that their mentors are helpful; however, their rating is not as high as those of BT 1s. Also, of the BT 1s, 63.3% felt that their mentors were extremely helpful while only 58.1% felt that their mentors were extremely helpful. Table 6 shows a side-by-side comparison of what percentage of each group answered each of the questions as "extremely helpful or helpful". For each question, there was a positive difference between the BT 1 responses and the BT 2 responses. Significant gains were made in the helpfulness of system wide mentors in relation to helping develop multiple instructional strategies, assisting with reflective practice, and support with licensure requirements. BT 1s that had system-wide mentors also scored their mentors significantly higher than BT 2s with school based mentors in the areas of content pedagogy, teaching to diverse learners, assessment, and building confidential and positive relationships. The areas of student development, motivation and management, planning, school and community involvement, and professional growth did show much difference between BT 1s and 2s. Overall, 7.1% more BT 1s felt that their mentors were extremely helpful or helpful than BT 2s.

INTASC Standards	BT 1s (%)	BT 2s (%)	Positive Difference With System-wide Mentors
1. Content Pedagogy	90.3	81.8	8.5
2. Student Development	91.9	88.2	3.7
3. Diverse Learners	91.2	83.1	8.1
4. Multiple Instructional Strategies	89.4	79.2	10.2
5. Motivation and Management	88.5	83.1	5.4
6. Communication and Technology	85.7	79	6.7
7. Planning	85	80.5	4.5
8. Assessment	85	77.9	7.1
9. Reflective Practice	92.9	81.8	11.1
10. School and Community Involvment	85.9	83.1	2.8

Additional Statistics	BT 1s (%)	BT 2s (%)	Positive Difference
Relationships (confidential and positive)	94.6	87	7.6
Professional Growth	94.6	84.2	3.4
Support with licensure requirements	99.1	85.7	13.4

AVERAGE POSITIVE DIFFERENCE: **7.1**

Table 6: NHCS Mentor Survey Side by Side Comparison of Percentage of BT 1s and BT 2s who responded "Extremely Helpful or Helpful" to each question

Independent Survey of Beginning Teachers

        The Independent Survey of Beginning Teachers given by the evaluator was used to answer several key questions. The key questions that were to be answers will be analyzed individually and comparisons will be made between the responses of BT 1s and BT 2s.

        The first key question was for the participants to rate their undergraduate institutions on how prepared they felt and what their overall perception of the education courses they took was. Table 7 displays the responses of each group to the question of rating their preparedness to begin teaching. The table shows the percentage of each group to answer with each of the four ratings. The final column shows the difference between the percentage of BT 1s that chose each level and BT 2s. From the data, it can be determined that BT 1s felt slightly better prepared than the BT 2s to begin teaching. The average rating of 3.28 out of 4 on a level of preparedness is somewhat higher than the average rating of 3.0 that the BT 2s gave.

	BT 1 (%)	BT 2 (%)	Difference
1: Not Prepared	6.5	0.0	6.5
2: Somewhat Prepared	8.7	30.0	-21.3
3: Prepared	47.8	40.0	7.8
4: Very Prepared	37.0	30.0	7.0
Average Rating:	3.28	3	0.28

Table 7: Rate your preparedness to begin teaching

Table 8 shows a comparison of BT 1s responses to the overall perception of the education courses that they took compared to the overall perception of BT 2s. While the previous data demonstrated that BT 2s did not feel as well prepared, their overall perception of the courses they took was slightly better than BT 1s. The average rating of BT 2s of 3.15 is higher than the average rating of 2.59 for BT 1s.

	BT 1 (%)	BT 2 (%)	Difference
1: Not Good	4.4	0.0	4.4
2: Fair	26.0	15.0	11.0
3: Good	50.0	55.0	-5.0
4: Excellent	19.6	30.0	-10.4
Average Rating	2.59	3.15	-0.56

Table 8: Rate your overall perception of the education courses you took.

Another key question that was to be answered through the Beginning Teachers Survey was to determine if each the schools had done all that they could to support the beginning teachers. All participants were asked to rate the helpfulness of their administration and faculty using a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 was not helpful, and a score of 4 was extremely helpful. Based on the results of the question regarding the helpfulness of the administration, the BT 2s felt that their administration was slightly higher than the BT 1s. BT 2s gave their administration and overall rating of 3.21, while BT 1s gave their administration and overall rating of 3.04. Table 9 displays the results of each groups responses to the helpfulness of their administration.

Table 10 demonstrates the BTs perception of the helpfulness of the other faculty members. The comparison between the two groups is very close. There was only a 0.08 difference in the average rating of the helpfulness of faculty members. 93.5% of BT 1s felt that their faculty had been helpful or very helpful. 89.3% of BT 2s felt that their faculty had been very helpful. It is important to notice that overall, beginning teachers felt that their faculty had been more helpful than their administration. For both groups, the percentage of those that felt their administration was helpful or extremely helpful was over 5% less. This was especially true for the BT 1s. 73.9% of the BT 1s rated their administration with a 3 or 4, which is 19.6% smaller than their rating of their faculty.

Another aspect of support from within the school is the availability of resources such as technology, manipulatives, materials, etc. Without the proper resources, beginning teachers could struggle to effectively teach their students. Table 11 demonstrates the BT's perceptions of the availability of resources in their schools. Overall, the BT 1s felt that resources were slightly more available than BT 2s. With an average rating of 3.11 and 3.0 respectively, BT 1s and 2s feel that resources are available when needed.

Finally, an orientation to the school could be helpful in supporting beginning teachers before students even step foot into the classroom. The question was asked if there was an orientation at their school, and if so was it beneficial? Table 12 displays the findings of this question. Between 70 and 75% of those surveyed said that there was an orientation. However, of those that did have an orientation, there were discrepancies in how beneficial the orientation was. For BT 1s, 51.5% felt that it was beneficial, 21.2% felt that is was somewhat beneficial, and 21.2% felt that the orientation was not beneficial. Of the BT 2s that responded, 76.2% felt that their orientation was beneficial; this was 24.7% higher than the BT 1s responses.

	BT 1 (%)	BT 2 (%)	Difference
1: Not helpful	10.9	0	10.9
2: Somewhat helpful	15.2	17.9	-2.7
3: Helpful	32.6	42.9	-10.3
4: Very Helpful	41.3	39.3	2.0
Average Rating	3.04	3.21	-0.17

Table 9: Rate the helpfulness of your school's administration

	BT 1 (%)	BT 2 (%)	Difference
1: Not helpful	0	0	0
2: Somewhat helpful	6.5	10.7	-4.2
3: Helpful	41.3	25	16.3
4: Very Helpful	52.2	64.3	-12.1
Average Rating	3.46	3.54	-0.08

Table 10: Rate the helpfulness of other faculty members

	BT 1 (%)	BT 2 (%)	Difference
1: Not Available	2.2	0	2.2
2: Somewhat Available	19.6	25	-5.4
3: Available	43.5	50	-6.5
4: Always Available	35	25	10
Average Rating	3.11	3	0.11

Table 11: Rate the availability of resources (technology, manipulative, materials, etc.)

	BT 1 (%)	BT 2 (%)	Difference
Yes	71.7	75	-3.3
No	28.3	25	3.3

If there was an orientation, was it beneficial?			
	BT 1 (%)	BT 2 (%)	Difference
Yes	51.5	76.2	-24.7
No	21.2	9.5	11.7
Somewhat	21.2	14.3	6.9
Did not attend	6	0	6

Table 12: Was there an orientation at your school when you began working?

The professional development department of any school system plays a vital role in the success of beginning teachers. The Beginning Teacher Survey also asked the participants to rate the helpfulness of the professional development department as well as the usefulness of the workshops offered. Tables 13 and 14 display the results of the questions in the survey on the helpfulness of the department, and the usefulness of workshops, respectively. Overall, both groups felt that the professional development department was helpful with an average rating of about 3.2 out of a possible 4. Similar results were found in the usefulness of the workshops offered by the professional development department. Both groups rated the workshops between 3.04 and 3.18 overall in terms of usefulness.

Table 15 asked the teachers to rate how clear they were on the requirements of a beginning teacher. Both groups felt between clear and very clear with an average rating of 3.46. Along with the clarity of the requirements is the level of communication between the teachers and the professional development department. The BT 2s rated the communication slightly higher than the BT 1s. 53.6% of BT 2s felt that the communication was very good, while 47.8% of BT 1s felt that way. Table 16 displays this data.

	BT 1 (%)	BT 2 (%)	Difference
1: Not helpful	2.2	0	2.2
2: Somewhat helpful	13.4	14.3	-0.9
3: Helpful	47.8	53.6	-5.8
4: Very Helpful	37	32.1	4.9
Average Rating	3.2	3.18	0.02

Table 13: Rate the helpfulness of the county professional development department

	BT 1 (%)	BT 2 (%)	Difference
1: Not useful	0	0	0
2: Somewhat useful	21.7	17.9	3.8
3: Useful	52.2	46.4	5.8
4: Very Useful	26.1	35.7	-9.6
Average Rating	3.04	3.18	-0.14

Table 14: Rate the usefulness of the workshops offered by the professional development department.

	BT 1 (%)	BT 2 (%)	Difference
1: Not clear	2.2	0	2.2
2: Somewhat clear	6.5	3.6	2.9
3: Clear	34.8	46.4	-11.6
4: Very clear	56.5	50	6.5
Average Rating	3.46	3.46	0

Table 15: How clear are you on the requirements of a beginning teacher?

	BT 1 (%)	BT 2 (%)	Difference
1: Not good	0	0	0
2: OK	10.9	7.1	3.8
3: Good	41.3	39.3	2
4: Very good	47.8	53.6	-5.8
Average Rating	3.37	3.46	-0.09

Table16: Rate the communication between you and the professional development department.

The biggest difference in the two groups being survey was in what type of mentoring program in which they participated. BT 1s had system – wide mentors, while BT 2s had school based mentors. Each group was asked questions relating to how often they communicate with their mentors, how comfortable/helpful their relationship with their mentor has been and whether they would feel more comfortable with a school – based mentor, a system – wide mentor, or both.

Table 17 shows the data from the question on how often each group communicates with their assigned mentor. BT 1s show more consistent communication with their mentors, while several BT 2s did have regular communication with their mentors. One BT 2 even responded that they were unsure who their mentor was. Close to 20% of BT 2s did not communicate with their mentor at least once a month, while 100% of BT 1s communicated with their mentors at least once a month.

The discrepancy between BT 1s and 2s relationships with their mentors continued with the next question on how comfortable they felt contacting their mentor when needed. Close to 74% of BT 1s felt very comfortable contacting their mentor, and only 60% of BT 2s felt very comfortable contacting their mentors. The BT 2s gave their comfortableness with their mentors and average rating that was 0.3 less than the BT 1s. This data is displayed in Table 18.

Table 19 displays the results from the question on the helpfulness of having an assigned mentor. The group with system wide mentors (BT 1s) rated the helpfulness higher than the group with school based mentors. The biggest difference between the two groups was that 63% of BT 1s felt that having an assigned mentor was extremely helpful, while only 39.3% of BT 2s felt that way. The answers to the question on if the BTs would feel more comfortable talking to a county mentor, or someone at their school does not coincide with the differences of opinions

51

displayed in Table 19. Table 20 shows that the largest percentage (37%) of BT 1s would prefer to have both school and system-wide mentors. However, half of the BT 2s that responded would rather have a school-based mentor, even though they rated the helpfulness of the mentor lower than the BT 1s. The table does show that a large portion of those surveyed would prefer to have mentors in the school and outside of the school.

	BT 1 (%)	BT 2 (%)	Difference
Once a week or more	65.2	67.9	-2.7
Once every two weeks	30.4	14.3	16.1
Once a month	4.4	0	4.4
once every two months	0	10.7	-10.7
3 times a year	0	3.6	-3.6
unsure who mentor is	0	3.6	-3.6

Table 17: How often do you communicate with your assigned mentor?

	BT 1 (%)	BT 2 (%)	Difference
1: Not comfortable	0	3.6	-3.6
2: Somewhat comfortable	4.4	10.8	-6.4
3: Comfortable	21.7	25.4	-3.7
4: Very Comfortable	73.9	60.2	13.7
Average Rating	3.7	3.4	0.3

Table 18: Rate how comfortable you feel contacting your mentor when needed.

	BT 1 (%)	BT 2 (%)	Difference
1: Not helpful	4.4	7.1	-2.7
2: Somewhat helpful	10.9	17.9	-7
3: Helpful	21.7	35.7	-14
4: Very Helpful	63	39.3	23.7
Average Rating	3.43	3.07	0.36

Table 19: Rate the helpfulness of having an assigned mentor.

	BT 1 (%)	BT 2 (%)	Difference
County	19.6	20.8	-1.2
School	30.4	50	-19.6
Both	37	20.8	16.2
No Opinion	13	8.3	4.7

Table 20: Would you feel more comfortable talking to a county mentor (someone not in your school) about issues or someone at your school, or both?

Retention Rates

The purpose of changing the mentoring program in New Hanover County was to help support new teachers better, and hopefully retain more teachers. It is important to look at the retention rates for each group to determine if the type of mentoring program had an effect on the retention. There were two ways to examine the data on retention rates. A comparison could be made between the current BT 1s when there were system-wide mentors and the BT 1s from the previous school year when there were not. This comparison is made in Table 21 and illustrated in Figure 2. Another comparison could be made between the retention rates of BT 1s in the current school year that had system-wide mentors with the BT 2s that did not have system-wide mentors. These results are displayed in Table 22 and Figure 3. Either way you examine the data, it appears that teachers who had system-wide mentors have a lower retention rate than those teachers that had school-based mentors. It is important to note however, that the retention rates for the 2006-2007 school year are projections based on survey results. The retention rate might decrease with the beginning of the next school year.

System - Wide Mentors (BT 1s) in 2006 - 2007 School Year	80.40%
School - Based Mentors (BT 1s) in 2005 - 2006 School Year	85.86%

Table 21: Comparison of Retention Rates of this with system-wide mentors vs. those with school-based mentors.
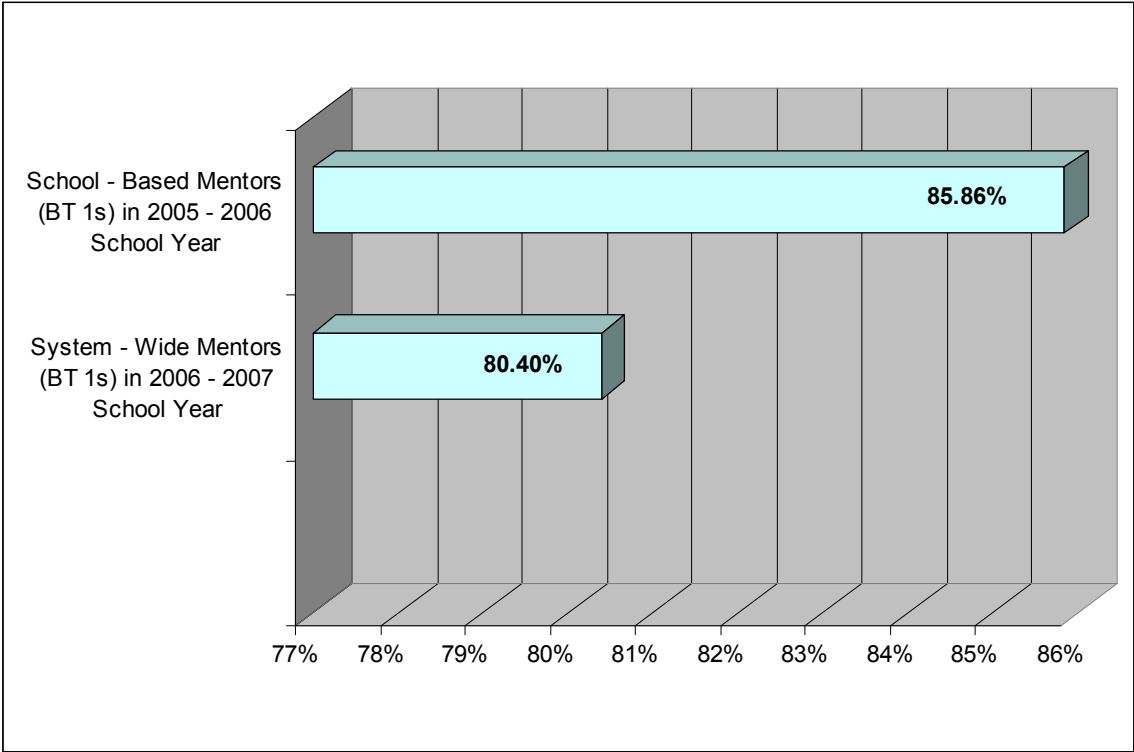

Figure 2: Comparison of Retention Rates of Teachers with System-Wide Mentors vs. School-based mentors

	BT 1s	BT 2s
2006 - 2007 School Year (Projected based on survey results)	80.40%	92.90%

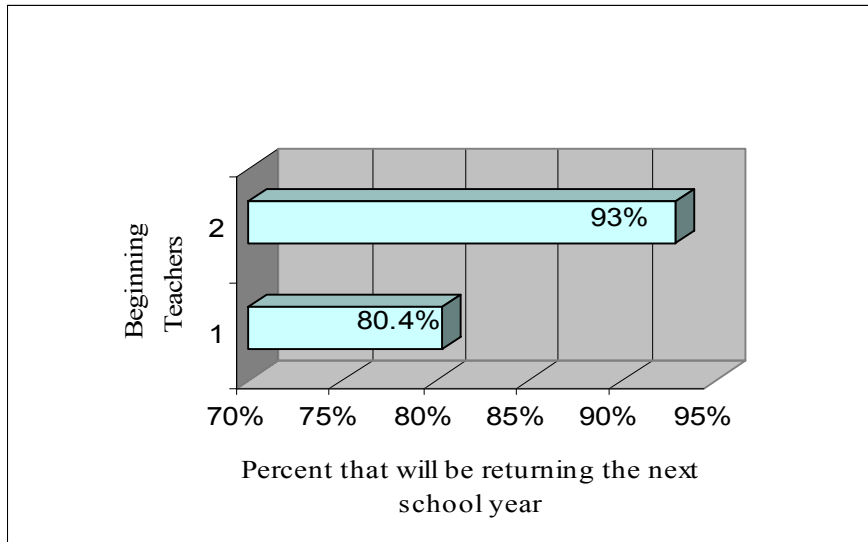Table 22: Retention Rates of Current School Year

Figure 3: 2006 – 2007 School Year Retention Rates (projected based on survey results)

DISCUSSION

Based on the responses to the two surveys given, there were mixed results between the BT 1 and BT 2 teachers. The mentor survey given by the professional development department demonstrated that overall system-wide mentors are more helpful than school based mentors. However, the independent survey given to Beginning Teachers demonstrated that while the school-based mentors were not as helpful, the majority of BT 2s preferred having mentors in the building with them. One possible reason for this discrepancy could be that the BT 2s have no knowledge of having a system-wide mentor, and are unsure of the benefits of having one. The results of the second survey also point out that the majority of teachers would like to have both a county mentor and a school mentor in order to receive the best possible support. The current mentoring program does not guarantee that there is a school based mentor for each beginning teacher.

The second survey given also demonstrated the lack of support from the administration in some cases. The BT 1s have a lower retention rate, and also rated the helpfulness of their administration lower than the BT 2s. This could be evidence that it was not the mentoring program that had an effect on the retention rates, but the lack of support from administration. Along the same lines of a supportive administration is the fact that several schools did not have orientation sessions for beginning teachers, and if they did, several teachers did not feel they were beneficial. The fact that over 40% of BT 1s did not feel that they participated in an orientation that was helpful when beginning the school year could have started the year off in the wrong direction.

The two surveys both determined that the professional development department has proven to be helpful to beginning teachers. The department has been good at communicating

with the beginning teachers, and providing useful workshops. Because over 50% of both groups feel that they are very clear on the requirements of beginning teachers, it is apparent that the professional development department has made sure that the majority of beginning teachers are aware of what requirements need to be met to ensure licensure.

With the limitations of the surveys, it is difficult to determine the exact cause of the lower retention rates in BT 1s. There are several factors that determine if a teacher is satisfied or not, only one of which is the mentoring program.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

As a result of evaluating the mentoring program, it can be determined that system-wide mentors are more effective at helping beginning teachers than school-based mentors. The system-wide mentors have more flexible schedules to spend time with teachers, observe, and discuss plans of action. Because the majority of system-wide mentors meet with their mentees at least once a month, they are able to help the beginning teachers grow in their profession based on the ten INTASC Standards for beginning teachers. System-wide mentors are also not overloaded with involvement in other school activities like many school-based mentors are. Although some comments on the surveys do indicate that the mentor/mentee ratio of 1/24 is too high. A couple of teachers mentioned that they felt their mentor was too busy helping other teachers to help them as much as they would have liked. Overall, the comments provided with the Mentor Survey given were positive. Many teachers claimed that they might not have made it through the school year without the help of their county-based mentor.

The results do show however that only having system-wide mentors is not the most desired type of mentoring program among the beginning teachers. Because a large number of BTs stated that they would rather have school-based mentors or have both school-based and county-based, proves that there does need to be a compassionate individual at the school to help take the beginning teacher under their wing to help them out when needed. Many comments from the teachers stated that their county-mentor was great with helping them with content pedagogy, planning, classroom management, and differentiating instruction. However, since the county-based mentor was not as familiar with the day to day workings of the school, they could not help the beginning teachers with everything that they needed. Because of these comments, and the quantitative data from the surveys, it can be determined that there does need to be

school-based mentors in place as well as county-based mentors. County-based mentors can provide more opportunities for growth, while school-based mentors can help the beginning teacher with learning the ropes of his/her school. Having both is also important to promote confidentiality between the mentor and mentees. Since a county-based mentor answers to the professional development department, the beginning teacher could feel more comfortable approaching them with issues of administration and other faculty members. The beginning teachers can see that the county-based mentors are there to provide support, not assess whether they are quality teachers or not. On the other hand, having a school-based mentor that is willing to speak up for a beginning teacher can also help the new teacher to feel more comfortable in his/her school.

It is apparent from the research and the data collected that school administrators play an important role in the retention and satisfaction of beginning teachers. Several of the BT 1s made comments that they felt more welcome by the faculty than the administration. If administration does not make beginning teachers feel welcome, and provide much needed support, the beginning teacher will begin to get very frustrated and overwhelmed. Higher stress levels in beginning teachers can only lead to lower retention rates. One way that administration can provide support to new teachers is to make sure that they are provided a "buddy" in the school who can help them with the day to day issues of a school that the system-wide mentors cannot. Also, administration can communicate with and utilize the system-wide mentors when they see that their beginning teachers are having trouble. Too often beginning teachers are not aware of the growth that could be made until the administrator has evaluated them. If the administrators see that there is a potential problem, he/she could go to the system-wide mentor before it's too late to provide focused remediation.

While the research and evaluation of the mentoring program proved the helpfulness of having system-wide mentors, it did not prove whether or not the mentoring program had a great effect on retention rates. In fact, by looking at the data it would appear that using system-wide mentors actually lowered the retention rates among beginning teachers. However, this was an incomplete study due to the fact that true retention rates will not be determined until the following school year. It is also unclear whether it is the mentoring program or other factors that led to the nine (19%) of BT 1s who claimed that they will not be teaching in New Hanover County. All of the qualitative data tends to say that it was not the mentoring program, but other factors that lead to the new teachers leaving the profession. However, a quality mentoring program could help beginning teachers make it through those other factors and grow from the situations that might arise. More research and longer research will need to be conducted to determine for sure if system-wide mentors do harm the retention rate as preliminarily indicating in this study.

In the field of curriculum, instruction, and supervision it is important to be cognoscente of how to help beginning teachers and how to maintain high retention rates. Lead teachers are often asked to serve as mentors to beginning teachers. By following up on this research and study, it will be possible to help promote positive change and growth in the mentoring program of whatever school system one ends up in. The expertise of a curriculum, instruction, and supervision specialist will be invaluable when it comes time to train possible mentors on how to effectively promote growth in their mentees. Also, if there is an administrative type position open, it will be important to understand the impact that administrators have on retention and satisfaction of new teachers. In order to save time and money on recruitment, it will be important to retain quality teachers in any way possible. Whether it is through mentoring

programs, support, resources, or professional development, all stakeholders will benefit in investing in high quality induction programs. As educators, the ultimate goal should be to see students grow in their knowledge, confidence, and ability. The best way to see student growth is through promoting teacher growth in their knowledge, confidence, and abilities.

REFERENCES

Archer, Jeff. (1999). New teachers abandon field at high rate. [Electronic Version]. Education Week, 18(27), 20-21.

Boehner. House of Representatives. (2003). *Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act of 2003*. Washington, D.C.

Brewster, Cori & Railsback, Jennifer. (2001). Supporting beginning teachers: How administrators, teachers, and policymakers can help new teachers succeed. Northwest Regional Education Laboratory. Portland, OR.

Feimen-Memser, Sharon. (1998). Teacher mentoring: A critical review. ERIC Digest. Retrieved April 15, 2007 from http://www.ericdigests.org/1997-1/mentoring.html.

Haycock, K. (1998). Good teaching matters…. A lot in thinking K-16.

Ingersoll, Richard M. & Smith, Thomas M. (2003). The wrong solution to the teacher shortage. [Electronic Version]. Educational Leadershhip, 60(8), 30-33.

Ingersoll, Richard M. & Smith, Thomas. (2004). What are the effects of induction and mentoring on beginning teacher turnover? Unpublished research, Vanderbilt University and University of Pennsylvania, USA.

Morris, Vivian Gunn. (2006). Investment in new teacher center mentoring program pays huge divends, study shows. [Electronic Version]. Memphis Business Journal.

National Governors Association. (2001). Teacher supply and demand, is there a shortage? [Electronic Version]. Digest of Education Statistics. Retrieved March 15, 2007 from http://wwwnga.org/cda/files/000125TEACHERS.pdf.

NEA. (2002). 2002 Tommorrow's teachers: Help wanted: Minority teachers. Retrieved June 20,

    2007 from http://www.nea.org/tomorrowsteachers/2002/helpwanted.html.

NEA Foundation. (2001). *Resources: Creating a Teacher Mentoring Program*. Retrieved March

    19, 2007 from http://www.neafoundation.org/publications/mentoring.

NCES, National Center for Education Statistics. (2003). Percent of students who are minority,

    by community type and by state: School year 2001-02. Retrieved June 20, 2007 from

    http://nces.ed.gove/pubs2003/overivew03/tables/bable_11.asp.

NCTAF, National Commision on Teaching and America's Future. (2002). *Unraveling the*

    "Teacher Shortage" problem: Teacher retention is key. Washington, D.C.

U.S. Department of Education. (2003). Fact sheet on the major provisions of the conference

    report to H.R. 1, the No Child Left Behind Act. Retrieved June 22, 2007 from

    http://www.ed.gove/nclb/overview/intro/factsheet.html.

 Weiss, Eileen Mary. (1999). Perceived workplace conditions and first-year teachers' morale,

    career choice commitment, and planned retention: a secondary analysis. [Electronic

    Version]. Teacher and Teacher Education, 15(1999), 861 – 879.

APPENDICES

Mentoring Survey:
1. I am a:
   a. BT 1   b. BT 2

2. I teach in:
   a. Elementary school   b. Middle School   c. High School
   - if you teach at multiple levels, please select the level in which you devote the most time.

Please select the best response to describe the level of help you mentor has been for statements 3 – 15 using the scale below

        5 - Extremely helpful
        4 - Helpful
        3 - Fairly helpful
        2 - Slightly helpful
        1 - Not at all help

Statements 3 – 12 reflect the INTASC Standards

3. My mentor has been _____ to me with content pedagogy through resources such as: review of the SCOS or Blueprints, navigation of Learn NC, and networking with Instructional Serviced Department.

4. My mentor has been _____ in discussing the importance of understanding student development to plan age appropriate learning activities.

5. My mentor has been _____ in encouraging me to look at the different needs and prior experiences of my students as I plan appropriate lessons to reach all students in my classroom.

6. My mentor has been _____ in sharing a variety of instructional strategies to encourage student participation and the development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.

7. My mentor has been _____ to me with the understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self motivation.

8. My mentor has been _____ to me with the use of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.

9. My mentor has been _____ to me with planning instruction based upon subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.

10. My mentor has been _____ to me with the use of formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social, and physical development of the learner.

11. My mentor has been _____ in my development as a reflective practitioner who evaluates the effects of his or her choices and actions on others and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.

12. My mentor has been _____ to me in my development as a teacher who fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well being.

13. My mentor has been _____ in providing me with a relationship that I feel was comfortable, trustful, and confidential.

14. Overall, I feel my mentor has been _____ in my growth as a teacher this year.

15. My mentor has been _____ to me with completing the paperwork requirements for the Beginning Teachers Program.

16. During the year, my mentor and I met on an average of:

        5 – once a week or more
        4 – about every other week
        3 – about once a month
        2 – about every other month
        1 – less than every other month, or not at all

17. Please list any additional comments you may have.

Survey for Beginning Teachers

Hello! My name is Jill Hastings, and I am conducting a survey as part of my thesis for UNCW. My thesis is on new teacher retention rates and mentoring programs. The survey is completely anonymous, and will only be used in the development of my thesis. Participation is not required but greatly appreciated.

Circle: BT 1   BT 2   BT 3

School: (Optional) _____

Teaching Assignment: Grade(s) and Subject(s) _____

Part I: Background
1. Years of prior experience (if any) in schools. If so, how much? What type? (Ex. Substitute, tutor, day care, etc.)
    _____

2. Undergraduate Institution(s) attended. _____

3. Major and /or certification _____

 Answer #4-6 only if you were an education major.
4. Rate your preparedness to begin teaching:
    1 – Not Prepared   2 – Somewhat prepared   3 – Prepared   4 – Very Prepared

5. Rate your overall perception of education courses:
    1 – Not very good   2 – Fair   3 – Good   4 – Excellent

6. Suggestions on improving education program and preparedness of students:
    _____
    _____
    _____

Part 2: School Based Questions

1. How many preps do you have each day? Are you satisfied with your teaching assignment?

2.   Rate the helpfulness of your school's administration.
    1 – Not helpful   2 – Somewhat helpful   3 - Helpful   4 – Very Helpful

3.   Rate the helpfulness of other faculty members.
    1 – Not helpful   2 – Somewhat helpful   3 – Helpful   4 – Very Helpful

4. Rate the availability of resources (technology, manipulatives, materials, etc
   1 – None available   2 – Some available   3 – Available   4 – Always available

5. Was there an orientation at your school when you began working?
   Yes   No

6. If yes to number 5, was it beneficial? Explain

7. Have you been made to feel welcome at your school? Explain

8. What has been the best aspect of you first year(s) at your school?

9. What has been the worst aspect of your first year(s) at your school?

10. Please list any suggestions to make the transition into teaching at your school easier.
   _____
   _____

Part 3: County Based Questions
   1. Rate the helpfulness of the county professional development department.
      1 – Not helpful   2 – Somewhat helpful   3 – Helpful   4 – Very Helpful

   2. Rate the usefulness of the professional development offered workshops and seminars
      1 – Not useful   2 – Somewhat useful   3 – Useful   4 – Very Useful

   3. How clear are you on the requirements of a Beginning Teacher?
      1 – Not clear   2 – Somewhat clear   3 – Clear   4 Very Clear

   4. Rate the communication between you and the professional development department.
      1 – Not good   2 – So so   3 - Good   4 – Very good

   5. How often do you communicate with your assigned mentor? _____
      Once a week, once every two weeks, once a month, once every two months, other (describe)

   6. Rate how comfortable you feel contacting your mentor when needed.
      1 – Not comfortable 2 – Somewhat Comfortable   3 – Comfortable
       4 – Very comfortable

   7. Rate the helpfulness of having an assigned mentor.

1 – Not helpful   2 – Somewhat helpful   3 - Helpful   4 – Very Helpful

Part 4: Miscellaneous

1. Is there someone at your school that you feel has gone above and beyond to make you feel comfortable and offer help when needed? Explain.
    _____
    _____

2. Would you feel more comfortable talking to a county mentor(someone not in your school) about issues or someone at your school or both? Explain.
    _____
    _____

3. What suggestions do you have to improve the Beginning Teachers program in New Hanover County Schools?
    _____
    _____

4. Rate your overall satisfaction of your first year(s) of teaching.
    1 – Not satisfied   2 – Somewhat satisfied   3 – Satisfied   4 – Very Satisfied

5. Please explain your rating for number 4 above.
    _____
    _____

6. Will you be teaching in New Hanover County next year?
7. If no to #7, please explain your reason(s) for leaving.
    _____
    _____
    _____

Thank You for participating in this survey!
You may email me if you would like to know the results of the survey at
jhasting@nhcs.k12.nc.us.

73