

HIGGINS, HEATHER, Ph.D. Putting Induction into Practice: A Case Study of How School Context Mediates Induction Policies and Practices. (2009)  
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This study describes beginning teacher support and retention in four high schools in a large school district in North Carolina. State and district policies mandate that all beginning teachers receive multiple layers of mentor support, including district mentors, school-level mentors, school buddies, and school Induction Coordinators.

Little is known about how individual schools enact the induction policies set forth by the district, or about individual teacher's response to the activities within a given school context. This qualitative research study on the nature of the implementation of induction at four different high school sites and beginning teachers' experiences in these contexts during their first two years provided information about the kinds of support that beginning teachers need and receive, and the impact that induction practices had on their decisions to stay, move to another school, or leave the profession. Data collection from 25 first and second year teachers and 13 Support Providers (district administrators, school administrators, mentors, and Induction Coordinators) provided evidence regarding what factors were helpful to them for transitioning into their professional roles and what factors most influenced their decisions to stay or leave.

The general research question for this study is: "How do participants (Support Providers and beginning teachers) involved with induction perceive the relationship between school context, support, and teacher retention at their respective schools?" Two specific research and several sub-questions guided this study:

- 1) How do participants perceive support for beginning teachers at their schools?
  - How do they perceive the implementation of induction policies and practices at their schools?
  - How do participants perceive other types of support at their schools?

- 2) Why do some beginning teachers choose to leave, and why do some beginning teachers choose to stay in their schools?
- How do participants perceive support needs in relationship to the unique needs of their school?
  - How do participants perceive retention for beginning teachers at their schools?

The research found that Support Providers and Beginning Teachers cited similar sources of support for beginning teachers, including induction-related activities, mentors, administrators, and colleagues. Some teachers found induction supports cumbersome, time consuming, and misaligned to their needs. Support Providers reported that a primary role in support of beginning teachers was to provide a menu of options for beginning teachers to choose from. District personnel felt that they set up a strong structure of support for beginning teachers, but that they felt constrained by their case-load to work with schools with large numbers of beginning teachers.

All participants felt that beginning teachers who left their school were not adequately prepared for and supported in their particular school environment. Beginning teachers who stayed did so because of their passion for working with their students and satisfaction from seeing students make academic gains, regardless of whether or not they felt supported by their administration. These teachers had a personal commitment to their school and students and felt supported *enough* to continue in their respective schools.

Each of the four schools presented a unique teaching context. As a result, the needs of the beginning teachers varied greatly depending on the school's needs and their individual preparation and expectations for the role. Induction was embedded in each school's particular culture, and as a result, district level induction policies played out differently at each school.

PUTTING INDUCTION INTO PRACTICE: A CASE STUDY OF HOW  
SCHOOL CONTEXT MEDIATES INDUCTION  
POLICIES AND PRACTICES

by

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Background: Evolution of Induction Practices, Policies, and Research**

The growing teacher shortage has led federal and state policymakers to reconsider teacher certification pathways in order to recruit a larger pool of teaching candidates and find ways to prepare teachers better for the realities of the schools and classes they will serve (Nagy & Wang, 2007). While Zeichner and Schulte (2001) argue that the nineteenth-century normal schools were the states' first practice of alternative certification, it was not until the last 20 years that states have begun to shape policies which recruit teachers through different certification routes.

Teacher preparation programs have existed in the United States since the nineteenth century (Bradley, 1999). By the early 1900s states began to assert more control over teacher preparation programs by hiring and licensing their own candidates. Since that time, the evolution of state involvement in teacher preparation has led to more formal training programs which included specific college curricula. While most states began teacher preparation programs with "normal schools," which issued licenses for successful completion of examinations, by the end of World War II these schools had been replaced by four-year teacher preparation programs at colleges.

It was not until the early 1980s that states began to implement alternative programs on a more widespread basis (Zeichner & Schulte, 2001). By 1999, more than 40 states accepted alternative certification in addition to traditional certification. States also began investing larger amounts of funds into alternative programs to address growing teacher shortages. Berry (2004)

points out that the federal government also began to create policies that allowed states to invest in alternative certification,

In 2002, the federal government outlined how states could draw from almost \$3 billion in Title I and Title II dollars to meet the “highly qualified” teacher mandates, with an emphasis on strategies such as signing bonuses and merit pay, recruitment of nontraditional candidates, new teacher induction, scientifically based professional development, and alternative certification. (p. 5)

North Carolina is typical of many other states that face a growing teacher shortage and lack of qualified candidates to fill vacancies. A brief prepared by the Center for Teaching Quality (CTQ) for Durham Public Schools in North Carolina (2006) indicates that North Carolina needs approximately 11,000 new teachers annually while state colleges and universities only graduate approximately 3,200 teachers annually who seek a North Carolina teaching license. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 calls for states to implement policies which put a “highly qualified” teacher in every classroom, making the shortage in teacher recruitment pools an even more pressing issue (CTQ, 2006).

As a result there are a myriad of fast-track alternative licensure programs cropping up in order to provide new teachers their credential in a timely manner (Wayman, Foster, & Mantle-Bromley, 2003). Historically, the teaching profession has attracted educators from a variety of academic backgrounds and disciplines. While most of these educators have experienced some formal training in teaching, there are some who come into the field with little actual teaching experience. Teacher shortages, especially in certain disciplines such as math and science, are among the causes for out-of-field teacher recruitment and the introduction of alternative certification programs (Wayman, Foster, & Mantle-Bromley, 2003). Typically, out-of-field teachers, or alternatively certified teachers, were given temporary or emergency licenses in order

to fill a growing need in schools. Today, it is a common practice to recruit unlicensed teachers through alternative licensure programs (Tell, 2001).

While it seems that states and districts are working hard to meet the demands of recruitment, there is less evidence that steps to reduce teacher attrition are working (CTQ, 2006). Despite these efforts to fill the growing vacancies, large numbers of teachers from both traditional and alternative licensure pathways leave each year. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2002) reports that nearly a third of teachers leave within their first three years, and nearly half of teachers leave within their first five years (as cited in CTQ, 2006). In North Carolina, The Center for Teaching Quality (2006) found that in 2005-2006, the average district-level teacher turnover rate was 12.58 percent, and in many schools over 20 percent of teachers were leaving every year. Teacher turnover was most acute with teachers who had just one to two years of experience teaching (CTQ, 2006).

Teacher retention is a problem with both traditionally certified beginning teachers and alternatively licensed teachers because they "become initiated into a profession that too often sets them up to fail" (Weiss, 1999, p. 861). New teachers, despite their best intentions of coming into the profession, often lack basic knowledge about instructional pedagogy, classroom management and school policies and procedures (Bartell, 2005). These skill deficits often exacerbate the normal challenges of entering the teaching profession, which include enculturation into the school, application of their knowledge into practice, and for first-career teachers, adjusting to a full-time work schedule.

This constant 'changing of the guard' can be problematic to schools and students on many levels. A primary concern is the price tag for teacher turnover; it is more costly for schools to attract and recruit new teachers every year. Breaux and Wong (2003) estimates that "districts lose \$50,000 when each new teacher leaves the system" (p. 6) due to the initial investments in

recruitment, mentoring and professional development. The Alliance for Excellent Education reports that “it costs a minimum of \$12,000 to replace a teacher who leaves a classroom” (CTQ, 2006). Even more important than the financial costs, turnover creates an environment of discontinuity among the school staff which, in turn, affects student learning and the overall morale of the school. Turnover puts a strain on school resources and means a constant flow of less experienced teachers in and out of the classroom. These teachers often leave before developing the kinds of relationships and teaching expertise that would enable students to make higher academic gains. Sanders and Rivers (1996) report that over time, the impact on students, who are subjected to less experienced and less effective teachers for several years in a row, is also more profound.

As a result, it seems that political and research attention has shifted towards finding ways to retain qualified teachers in addition to recruitment efforts (Strunk & Robinson, 2006). The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (2003) called for a three-part approach in keeping teachers in the field, which includes building and maintaining quality preparation and licensure programs, creating learning environments that support teachers and students, and by providing better professional incentives and rewards. North Carolina’s response was comprehensive plan of action to reduce teacher turnover, raise student achievement, and reward teachers for their performance. This plan, known as the Excellent Schools Act was signed into law by Governor James B. Hunt in 1997 and maintained that “All teachers who hold initial licenses after January 1, 1998 are required to participate in a three-year induction period with a formal orientation, mentor support, and additional observations and evaluation prior to recommendation for continuing license” (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1998). While North Carolina does not have a statewide comprehensive induction model, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction website offers a list of suggestions for counties to

consider when designing induction programs, and the state does offer funds to districts to support mentoring for new teachers, an important component of teacher induction (Author, NCDPI).

Teacher induction programs are seen as one part of the “answer” to giving beginning teachers the support they need to keep them in the field. However, induction programs look different across the 117 school systems in North Carolina and among the schools within those counties (Roulston, Legette, and Womack, 2005). There is great variation in the length and rigor of induction programs. Some programs are designed for the first year of teaching, while others extend into the first three years. The types of induction activities (e.g. mentoring, professional development, class assignment, resources) also vary greatly.

One possible reason for such variance in implementation is a lack of a common definition of induction and what kinds of support that entails (Tushnet, Briggs, Elliot, Esch, Haviland, Humphrey, Rayyes, Riehl, & Young, 2002). In addition, there is a dearth of research to support a linkage between induction support implemented across a variety of school contexts and teacher retention. Some research is beginning to assess the impact of individual induction activities on teacher retention and satisfaction with the job, but there is far less research which examines the effect of context in which teachers work has on teacher satisfaction and retention (CTQ, 2006). The research that is available is not comprehensive enough to tell the story of how specific induction activities support new teachers and impact retention.

As North Carolina faces its own teacher shortage and is considering models for more comprehensive induction, it is crucial that policymakers and school leaders strive to improve the quality of such induction programs and ease the transition into teaching for all. By studying these policies and programs at a local level, policymakers may be better equipped to design “learning and working environments” which will promote quality teaching and teacher retention (Jorissen, 2002).

### **Statement of the Problem**

We have a growing teacher shortage in North Carolina. North Carolina needs approximately 11,000 new teachers annually while state colleges and universities only graduate approximately 3,200 teachers annually who seek a North Carolina teaching license (CTQ, 2006). Nationally, nearly a third of teachers are leaving the field within their first three years of teaching, and nearly half leave within the first five (NCTAF, 2003). State and district policy-makers are implementing new policies and induction activities to provide supports to new teachers during their first year(s) of teaching. It is unclear as to how and why schools interpret and carry out these policies differently and the degree to which these policies impact the teacher's initial experiences within their respective schools.

### **State and County Induction Policies and Practices**

The state of North Carolina does not have a formal induction program, but there are policies in place to ensure that all beginning teachers receive some basic induction-related support. According to the authorities in one school district in the Piedmont region on North Carolina, hereby referred to as X County, the state requires all districts to pay beginning teachers for three days of orientation prior to the start of the school year (Snavey, M., personal communication, March 3, 2008). In the 2007-2008 school year, during the time of this study, X County designed a *four*-day induction program for all of its beginning teachers, which included teachers with fewer than three years of teaching experience who transferred from another district. All principals gave teachers an exchange day in order to provide this fourth day of orientation. Orientation included a central meeting with all beginning teachers which included seminars on a variety of topics such as behavior management and planning as well as an opportunity to fill out required paperwork, obtain an ID, and learn about district deadlines and requirements. Teachers met both as a large group as well as in subject-area and grade-level cohorts. On the fourth day of

orientation, teachers went to their respective schools for a meet-and-greet with the staff and an orientation, which includes a tour of the building and an opportunity to begin setting up their classrooms. The X County director of induction requested that all administrators notify staff regarding the beginning teacher visit and plan an orientation day to the school which includes lunch and a tour. Ultimately though, each school used this fourth day differently, and to varying degrees of success; in fact, one of the schools participating in this study did not schedule activities for their teachers on this day at all.

In addition to the orientation, the state requires that all first, second, and third year teachers have a mentor. X County gives principals the freedom to determine how to partner mentors with beginning teachers as well as how to implement mentor training and designate mentor roles and responsibilities. However, typically the Induction Coordinator in each school matches beginning teachers with mentors and peer buddies. As a result, mentor/mentee interactions vary in nature in each school depending on how this program has been set up. ICs hold mentors accountable for holding regular meetings. During the first year, X County expects beginning teachers and mentors to meet at least weekly but in the second and third year, it's harder to determine the extent to which mentors and mentees meet regularly (Snively, M., personal communication, March 3, 2008). Mentors must meet with second and third year teachers at least one time. Mentors keep a log of their meetings and must log in at least 20 minutes for each meeting.

Ideal mentor/mentee matches occur when teachers are teaching in the same content area and on the same grade level, although this pairing is sometimes not possible due to staffing availability. Mentors must be teachers with at least four years of experience; in many schools, it is difficult to find teachers in the same content area that fit that requirement. X County solves this potential problem by requiring that each beginning teacher work with a peer buddy from their

school in addition to a mentor (Snavey, M., personal communication, March 3, 2008). The peer buddy usually works in the same content area and grade level as the beginning teacher. Because the peer buddy is usually a less experienced teacher, he/she can relate well with many of the challenges that beginning teachers face and can serve as a non-evaluative source of support. The peer buddy is also usually someone who works in close proximity to the teacher, so this person becomes a good source of daily support.

In addition to these beginning teacher supports, X County has taken additional steps to improve hiring practices in an effort to increase teacher retention rates and raise student achievement scores (Snavey, M., personal communication, March 3, 2008). All new teaching hires in the district must pass the initial screening interview, which analyzes teaching dispositions and beliefs and makes predictions about how teachers will behave on the job and cope with stress. This process includes an initial online screening followed by an in-person interview between the candidate and two X County principals. The 2007-08 academic year is the second *official* year that this screening has taken place. The Teachers who participated in the first year of screening are now classified at Beginning Teachers 2 (BT2s), which is how they will be designated in this study. Data related to student achievement scores and teacher retention rates are now available for this cohort. However, County X has not released findings at this time regarding the impact of this initial screening method on teacher retention and student achievement scores.

Aside from the use of the initial screening tool, X County makes strong efforts to staff every classroom prior to the beginning of the school year (Snavey, M., personal communication, March 3, 2008). Because North Carolina is a Right to Work State, there are no formal requirements about when teaching employees may resign their posts. However, teachers who wish to move to another school must put in a petition to move for special circumstances if they have less than three years of experience in the school. Because many teachers choose to resign



their posts during the summer following the school year, school and district administrators are often hard-pressed to staff vacancies at some schools prior to the start of the school year, particularly in areas such as science and math. As a result, many schools, particularly hard-to-staff schools, hire lateral entry teachers at the start of the school year to fill vacancies. X County retention data from the 2006-2007 school year showed a much higher volume of lateral entry teachers leaving the profession after their first year than traditionally certified teachers. As a result, current hiring practices pose some challenges for district and school administrators in thinking about how to better prepare lateral entry teachers who typically have no pedagogical or instructional training.

In addition to providing orientation and mentor/buddy supports, the X County requires that each school designate one of its staff members to serve as the Induction Coordinator (IC). ICs receive training three-four times per year at the county level (Snavey, M., personal communication, March 3, 2008). IC's collaborate at this time to coordinate expectations for their roles in every school, share ideas, and develop seminar topics for ICs to use in their meetings with BTs. The role of the IC is to support mentors and BTs in their schools and to provide monthly seminars in each school. There are suggested monthly topics for these seminars, but ICs have the freedom to implement their own ideas depending on the needs of their BTs. Example topics for seminars include help with setting up an electronic grade book, completing paperwork, and dealing with student behavior and classroom management concerns.

X County also gives each beginning teacher a \$300 debit card at the beginning of the school year to assist them in setting up their classrooms (Snavey, M., personal communication, March 3, 2009). The district sends BTs a monthly newsletter with tips and updates and offers training to access online resources. And, beyond the school's accountability, X County requires that each new teacher have an induction support coach from the district office. This person has

access to district resources and can go in and provide confidential support to new teachers. District coaches differentiate the amount of time they spend with new teachers depending on need, but each coach manages a meeting with beginning teachers at least once a month.

While there is a structure for induction in place at each school in X County, schools choose how to best implement induction policies and practices (X County Schools, 2007). Thus, it is unclear as to how these induction practices play out in different school contexts amongst different individuals. Initial screening data will shed some light on teacher dispositions and teacher retention rates and positive student outcomes, two major objectives taken into account during the initial X County hiring process. However, once in the schools, it is unclear how induction policies and practices impact teacher retention and student achievement.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to understand the context of induction by documenting and analyzing the implementation of policies set forth by the district for the induction of teachers at various stages of their career in four high schools in X County. Smith and Ingersoll (2004) suggest that the more components of induction that teachers receive, the more likely those teachers are to stay in their schools beyond one-three years. This study will build upon the findings regarding the critical components of induction discussed in Higgins' (2007) pilot study by examining those components across different teacher subgroups and school contexts.

Teacher induction, the first three years of teaching, is a time for teachers to become part of the teaching profession as they are initiated into the procedures, routines, and fundamentals of teaching while putting into practice all they have learned during their teacher education program and university training (Bartell, 2005). Teacher induction programs have been developed to help support and guide new teachers into a successful and long-lasting career.

While induction activities have become the norm for socializing beginning teachers into their schools in X County, little is known about how individual schools implement and regulate induction policies set forth by the district or the individual teacher's response to those activities within their given school context. Research on the nature of implementation of induction and beginning teachers' experiences during their first year, will provide insight regarding the kinds of impacts that induction has on teacher retention and student achievement. Further, this research identified why some induction activities are particularly successful or unsuccessful and provided school and district-administrators with valuable insights about how to improve upon their induction programs. Data collected from beginning teachers who left after 1-2 years of teaching provided retrospective evidence regarding what factors were helpful to them to transition into their professional roles and what factors most influenced their decisions to leave.

### **Theoretical Rationale**

Research suggests that the overall induction experience is best when it is embedded within the culture of the school (Wood, 2005). While the district mandates certain induction activities, such as orientation and monthly cohort meetings, it is the school that regulates and supports both district-level and school-level induction activities. As the literature suggests, school leadership and the working conditions of the school are important factors that affect new teachers' socialization into their schools (Humphreys, Weschler, Bosetti, Park, & Morales, 2008; Useem, 2003; Certo & Fox, 2002).

The theoretical underpinning of this study is based in Lev Vygotsky's socio-cultural approach, which posits that an individual's ability to learn in a new setting is contingent on the patterns of interactions with others and the opportunities to scaffold knowledge by working in the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Ormrod, 2006). The Zone of Proximal Development is that region in which learners can, with the help of others, perform tasks, that they otherwise could

not do on their own (Ormrod, 2008). Beginning teachers are socialized into their school settings largely by their more experienced peers and administrators, and their ability to adjust to their new roles and become effective teachers relies upon having supports appropriate to their individual ZPD. Consistent with Vygotsky's belief that learning is attained when supported by a more experienced other, most induction programs include one-on-one support from a mentor. Mentors as well as other experienced teachers and administrators work with new teachers to model procedures and instructional strategies and provide verbal instructions regarding professional expectations. As these interactions continue, beginning teachers are increasingly able to internalize these conversations and work independently.

### **Propositions**

Research shows that beginning teachers need a variety of supports depending on their backgrounds, pathways to certification, and dispositions (Tushnet et al., 2002; Glazerman, Seneskey, Seftor, & Johnson, 2006). Further, teacher working conditions and school context factors seem to play an important role in shaping teachers' overall experiences. Thus, the study proposes that 1) district induction activities ensure that all beginning teachers receive some induction support including orientation, mentoring, and ongoing professional development; 2) that each school implements induction activities differently depending on a variety of factors including resources, time, and leadership involvement; 3) beginning teachers rely on a variety of supports that extend beyond what schools and districts explicitly provide; and 4) the socialization of the beginning teacher impacts their overall experience with the school and potentially impacts their decisions to stay in the profession.

### **Research Questions**

The main research question for this study is: "How do participants involved with induction perceive the relationship between school context, support, and teacher retention at their

respective schools?” Participants include those involved in beginning teacher induction, including the teachers who take part in the induction activities and the school leaders who implement them. School-leader participants include school and district-level administrators, mentors, and Induction Coordinators. Two specific research and several sub-questions guided this study:

1. How do participants perceive support for beginning teachers at their schools?
  - How do they perceive the implementation of induction policies and practices at their schools?
  - How do participants perceive other types of support at their schools?
2. Why do some beginning teachers choose to leave, and why do some beginning teachers choose to stay in their schools?

### **Definitions of Terms**

Key concepts such as induction, leadership, professional development, accountability, teaching and learning, and school climate can be described differently depending on the contexts in which they are used. For the sake of this research study, these concepts will be defined as following:

- Teacher INDUCTION has been defined in different ways, but it generally offers a “systematic, organized plan for support and development of the new teacher” with the ultimate goal of creating a highly trained professional who will continue to serve the school over time. Induction begins before the first day of school, even as early as recruitment, and can extend into the first two to three years of teaching (Bartell, 2005; Breaux & Wong, 2003).
- LEADERSHIP is a group of actions that support the essential work of teaching and learning in schools (Higgins, 2005). LEADERSHIP is the first priority as it influences every aspect of schooling including the school’s mission and goals, overall

climate, attitude of teachers, classroom practices, organization of curriculum and instruction, and the students' opportunity to learn. LEADERSHIP includes providing vision, sustaining good communication, facilitating decision-making, marshaling resources, and evaluating progress to drive further improvement. LEADERSHIP can be embodied in one person or many, depending on the design of the organization.

- TEACHING and LEARNING encompasses both the instructional practices of the individual teacher and any school-wide instructional approaches (Higgins, 2005). TEACHING and LEARNING includes teachers' knowledge of their subject and their students and their beliefs about learning as well as their conception of their role in helping students achieve defined learning goals. The quality of teaching has the strongest impact on the quality of student learning experiences and student achievement (Glazerman et al., 2006).
- School CLIMATE defines the learning environment for students and the working environment for staff (Higgins, 2005). It refers not only to the physical safety and security of the facilities, but also to the respect, regard and collaboration between and among students, teachers, leaders, staff, parents and the community. Most critically, the attitudes of teachers and learners toward academic achievement create an intangible but powerful force for success. When everyone – teachers, parents, administrators, and the community – takes responsibility for helping students learn, students are more likely to reach high standards. A safe and secure learning environment, both physically and psychologically, is an essential prerequisite for academic learning.
- ACCOUNTABILITY is the driving force regarding STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT (Higgins, 2005). ACCOUNTABILITY refers to the

collective responsibility of all stakeholders to continue to constantly strive for high standards and strong student performance. At each level, LEADERSHIP, TEACHING and LEARNING, and CLIMATE and CULTURE, ACCOUNTABILITY provides a system of continuous feedback to monitor and refine practices and create a better environment for student learning. In order to create a strong ACCOUNTABILITY system, all staff should engage in a regular process of PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

- PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT is at the heart of creating a unified school-wide mission and a safe positive CLIMATE and CULTURE (Higgins, 2005). LEADERSHIP should engage the staff in ongoing PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT embedded within the school day and focused around specific TEACHING AND LEARNING goals for the entire school as well as the individual classroom. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT activities advance the knowledge and skills of the teacher with regard to instruction, school policies and procedures and the content area.
- TEACHER TURNOVER/RETENTION – According to NCReportCard.org, TEACHER TURNOVER refers to the overall percentage of teachers who leave their respective school during or after each school year. However, it is unclear as to whether rates of teacher turnover these teachers capture why beginning teachers move or leave the profession entirely. TEACHER RETENTION is the act of keeping teachers in the field, and in this study, TEACHER RETENTION means keeping teachers in their respective schools.
- INDUCTION POLICY – Wikipedia defines POLICY as “a deliberate plan of actions to guide decisions and achieve rationale outcome(s)

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Policy>). INDUCTION POLICY refers to the plan of actions which are designed to guide decisions related to the socialization and support of new teachers in their schools in order to provide positive support and to ultimately reduce teacher attrition.

- INDUCTION PRACTICE refers to those specific practices enacted on the district and school-levels to provide support to new teachers during the first three years, which is commonly known as the INDUCTION PERIOD. Induction is a critical intervention that provides scaffolding to beginning teachers who need support transitioning into their school environment and the role of teacher.



## CHAPTER II

### CRITICAL COMPONENTS OF INDUCTION PROGRAMS—A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Teachers' initial experiences may affect their long-term decisions to continue in the profession (Weasmer & Woods, 2000). Not only is the job highly demanding of a teacher's time and energy, but many teachers enter schools where working conditions are less than desirable. Teaching is one of the few professions where "the least experienced members face the greatest challenges and most responsibilities" (Brock & Grady, 1997, p. 11). Typically, these teachers become disenchanted with lack of support, difficult teaching assignments, professional demands impeding their personal lives, excessive paperwork, inadequate classroom management and stress.

New teachers who inherit these circumstances are either first-career or mid-career entrants. First-career teachers must undergo these demands while making the transition from student to professional (Brock & Grady, 1997). Often, school expectations coupled with changes in interpersonal relationships can present an overwhelming situation for a first-career teacher. Mid-career teachers who are reentering the profession after substantial time away may suffer from an overestimation of knowledge and abilities (Brock & Grady, 1997). Often, they find that changes in the school culture and work environment are more drastic than their expectations. Mid-career teachers who enter the field for the *first* time may encounter a degree of culture shock after working in other professional environments (Johnson, & The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, 2004). While these new teachers may enter the field with prior work experience and cultural and educational resources, they often bring in a different set of expectations about their work environment. These teachers are "often dismayed when they find that their new workplaces

are dreary or dilapidated . . . [and] that basic resources such as paper may be in short supply, and they must use precious time to do routine, clerical tasks” (pp. 21-23). Certainly finding and retaining bright new teachers is a priority for school leaders and districts because of the impact that their growth and continued commitment to the profession have on students. However, keeping experienced teachers in the field also benefits beginning teachers and students through their contribution of “wisdom, insight, and maturity” (Alvy, 2005). For both groups, induction is a critical intervention that provides scaffolding to a new teacher who may need additional help when transitioning into the role. Kester and Marockie argue that “a program for beginning teachers allows local systems to continue the sequence and provide a continuous process from initial preparation to induction, continuing through the teacher’s years of service” (as cited in Brooks, 1987, p. 25).

Several studies of the experiences of teachers in their first few years indicate that some of the major factors influencing teachers’ decisions to either stay in the field or leave related to the level of support received during the induction period and the overall working conditions of the school (Johnson et al., 2004; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Tushnet et al., 2002). Working conditions and support are factors that go hand-in-hand; a nurturing environment that supports and encourages *all* teachers is more beneficial to a beginning teacher over time than specific induction-related supports alone.

Both first-career and mid-career teachers consider school working conditions in their decisions to continue in the field or leave. McCann, Johanneson, and Ricca (2005) found that major areas of concern for all teachers had to do with 1) relationships with students, parents, colleagues, and supervisors; 2) workload/time management/fatigue; 3) knowledge of subject/curriculum; 4) student evaluation and grading; and 5) personal autonomy and control.

Just as beginning teachers need high-quality individualized mentoring, so should veteran teachers receive training and support to facilitate their assistance (Brooks, 1987). Johnson et al.'s (2004) "integrated professional culture" advances the kinds of working conditions that supports both groups (McCann et al., 2005). This culture includes, but is not limited to working conditions that encourage collegial interactions by providing professional development that addresses specific teacher needs and interests, by encouraging teachers to connect to their profession (such as applying for National Board Certification, and "proactively help[ing] teachers anticipate crises that might confront them in school and explore and assess possible outcomes of action to meet [them] . . ." (p. 34).

Many new and veteran teachers who choose to leave their school or the profession altogether cite poor working conditions as a major reason for departure (Certo & Fox, 2002). These teachers felt they were unsupported by their leadership in regard to optimal class assignments, opportunities for ongoing and directed collaboration, lack of resources, and lack of administrative support. Beginning teachers need the same kinds of support as veteran teachers, but to a greater extent. Strong induction programs, which provide opportunities for teachers to learn their role within a sheltered environment and quickly encourage them to interact with colleagues, seemed to make a difference for those who stayed (Brock & Grady, 1997; Weasmer & Woods, 2000). Continuous support for ALL teachers, a clear and shared vision for student learning, and high levels of collaboration are important characteristics of a school culture where teachers survive and thrive (Shannon & Bylsma, 2003).

School leadership is the driving force in creating working conditions that can truly promote such elements (Useem, 2003). Leadership works in two capacities; on one hand it sets the structure of support through mediation of district induction policies and on-site induction support and the allocation of resources. It also sets the tone for the school through the formation

of supportive interpersonal relationships between teachers and their colleagues, and administrators (Certo and Fox, 2002). The importance of building good relationships is underscored by the fact that many beginning teachers indicated that relationships to mentors, colleagues, and leadership affected their overall satisfaction with their roles and impacted their decisions to stay (Certo and Fox, 2002).

### **Section 1: Induction Programs**

According to Lopez, Lash, Schaffner, Shields, and Wagner (2004), there is a dearth of rigorous studies that investigate the impact of induction on teacher quality and retention. This review points out several studies which took place in the 1980's and 1990's that examine the effects of both different induction activities, such as mentoring and internships, as well as more formal and structured induction programs offered by a district or university on teacher competency and retention (Gold, 1987; Schaffler, Stringfield, & Wolfe, 1992). Lopez, et al (2004) however, concluded that the findings and methodology were not significant enough to make a strong argument "that induction works – that it improves teacher retention or effectiveness" (p. 32). One of the major limitations of the studies was lack of uniformity and clarity when defining such constructs as induction, retention, and teacher quality. Further, the researchers often relied solely on self-report data to measure their outcomes, and many of the studies only had one outcome measure. While there is an important need for continued research on the effects of specific types of induction activities and programs on teacher retention and quality, the aforementioned studies do provide some context for more recent research. For example, Gold's (1987) study offers the argument that quality mentoring can impact the growth and development of both new and veteran teachers, and ultimately positively influence a new teacher's decision to stay in the field.

Gold's (1987) study supports the notion that quality mentoring can have a positive impact on the teachers both giving and receiving services. The study examined a program sponsored by the City University at New York that recruited and trained retired teachers to mentor new teachers. Former principals made recommendations for mentors, and those who were chosen attended a four-day training session. Each mentor then was assigned to a school with "high teacher attrition" to work with three beginning teachers. Mentors logged in approximately 66 hours for each teacher during the school year.

More recent evaluations of induction programs are providing better context and support for the use of induction in promoting both teacher retention and teacher efficacy. Glazerman et al. (2006) are currently conducting a longitudinal evaluation of three teacher induction programs in order to ascertain their impact on teacher retention. The authors make the argument that teacher attrition is costly to schools and districts and detrimental to student achievement scores. It also disrupts continuity to "the overall school experience, which makes it more difficult for other teachers and principals to do their jobs well" (p. 1). Induction programs have been seen as a way to better support new teachers and improve retention. However, due to funding shortages to support large-scale formal induction programs and the lack of empirical research to drive policymakers to financially support induction, implementation of induction is left to the district and the school, and it often lacks rigor. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) provides funds to states to improve teacher quality through training and recruitment. Glazerman et al.'s (2006) evaluation seek to fill a gap in research by rigorously examining the impact of "high intensity" induction programs on teacher retention as well as better teacher and student outcomes (Glazerman et al., 2004, p. 2).

The evaluation by Glazerman et al. (2004) takes into account mediating factors such as neighborhood demographics, administrative and financial support, special needs of students, and teacher work history as these affect the impact of each induction program on teacher retention and teacher and student outcomes. Further, the outcomes of the programs must also account for how each program puts particular emphasis on different aspects of induction, such as professional development or orientation, as well as different allocations of time, and resources to implement these activities. The particular context of each school, district, and individual involved therefore interacts with these mediating factors to tell the story of how induction impacts teacher retention and student outcomes. The authors conclude that “the main purpose of the impact evaluation is to determine the size and strength of the relationships between the intensity of teacher induction services and the positive teacher and student outcomes” (p. 4).

Glazerman et al.’s (2004) study chose 17 school districts across the country to participate in the study, and employed an experimental design. The study schools were randomly assigned to a treatment group, which received high intensity induction, or a control group, which takes part in the district’s normal induction program. In all, 13 states participated and 960 teachers from 400 schools were chosen to enroll in the study. Random assignment helps to control for differences attributed to individual schools, teachers, or students, and the large sample size ensures more meaningful statistical findings.

The study employs two treatment groups: the Santa Cruz New Teacher Project provided by the New Teacher Center (NTC) and the Pathwise Framework Induction Model provided by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) (Glazerman, et al., 2006). Both programs use highly-trained mentors who serve about 12 teachers in a full-time capacity. The NTC model takes place for first-year teachers, and consists of mentoring, orientation, monthly seminars, and special release days to observe other teachers and to work on classroom management. The ETS model is also a year-

long program, and it too provides first-year teachers with an orientation, one-on-one meetings with mentors and monthly professional development. Instead of the release days, the ETS model has teachers meet with each other monthly in study groups with their mentors.

The researchers intentionally left out districts that already implement high-intensity induction programs, such as New York City, in order to better separate the control and treatment groups (Glazerman et al., 2006). Most of the districts chosen did provide first-year teachers with a mentor and orientation. However, the amount of one-on-one time available to spend with first-year teachers is limited, and most mentors receive little to no formal training. The sample consists of “career teachers” in their first year working in elementary grades at schools that had a majority of students on free or reduced lunch and were interested in participating in this study. Because the settings and contexts of elementary schools are so different from high schools, the findings should not be generalized to ALL schools. A future evaluation of high schools would add more bearing to these findings.

The initial intervention began during the 2005-2006 school year; however data collection will continue into three follow-up years (Glazerman et al., 2006). Data sources include surveys, observation, and student records. Survey records and observations will continue to be collected in the follow-up years. While the survey data provides both baseline and follow-up data, the study does not employ teacher focus groups or interviews. Most likely because of the large sample size, it is difficult to interview a representative sample of participants, but the lack of teacher voice in explaining the real impact of the intervention is a weakness of the study.

The impact analysis focused on teacher mobility, student achievement, and teacher practices. Teacher mobility takes into account rates at which teachers stayed in their schools, moved to other schools, or left teaching altogether. It also measures rates of retention over time and explores possibilities of relationships between retention and other teacher characteristics,

such as SAT/ACT scores, background and preparation. For impact analysis of teacher practices, the authors conducted a factor analysis of teacher practices, which can be categorized in the areas of classroom management, lesson content, and lesson implementation. The analysis of student achievement looks at achievement gains for individual students from one year to the next, while controlling for “factors outside of the teacher’s control” (p. 34). In all categories, teachers from schools receiving intensive induction experiences were compared to teachers receiving their district’s normal induction experiences.

In order to examine teacher retention rates, Glazerman, et al. (2006) first conducted *t*-test of differences of retention rates after year one, and then computed “regression-adjusted estimates of program impacts” (p. 35) in order to make estimates more precise. The authors also conducted survival analysis, which estimates the probability of teachers staying in the field over time, as well as subgroup analysis, which looks at impacts for teachers in certain categories and in certain school settings. Finally, the authors also did a descriptive analysis of teacher characteristics, which includes preparation, background, and program costs.

In a study of the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program (BTSA), researchers from WestEd and SRI International conducted an evaluation in order to determine the effects of this program on retention of beginning teachers as well as their knowledge and skills (Tushnet, et al., 2002). The evaluation also examines the organizational structure of the program as well as the impact of statewide expansion of the program in California on program quality. However, for the purposes of this literature review, these latter two issues will not be discussed. In order to examine the effect on teacher retention, researchers reviewed BTSA program databases and state databases. To explore the effects of BTSA on knowledge and skills, researchers surveyed approximately 400 teachers and conducted classroom observations of approximately 40 teachers. Other sources of information include Individual Induction Plans



(IIPs), which are issued to every teacher participating in the BTSA program and CFASST (California's formative teacher assessment at the time of the study) results.

The Tushnet et al.'s (2002) evaluation of BTSA found that teachers leave for a variety of reasons, but that many of these reasons tie in to overall workplace conditions. Working conditions affect the happiness of ALL teachers, not just beginning teachers, who find themselves poorly compensated and working in schools that are overcrowded with difficult teaching assignments. "All of these workplace conditions are particularly difficult for beginning teachers, as they try to learn how to teach and cope with the seemingly insurmountable obstacles to their success and their students' learning" (Tushnet et al., 2002, p. 141). Even though most new teachers would benefit from having a space to call their own, in schools that were overcrowded, new teachers were more likely to travel to different classrooms. Further, new teachers also found themselves at a disadvantage in terms of teaching assignments. Many times, because of their lack of seniority, they taught the least desirable classes and schedules. In fact, because of shortages, beginning teachers are often assigned to classes which they were not prepared to teach or are out of their subject area. In high-needs schools in particular, it was also difficult to get quality resources for new teachers, and often it was a challenge to find substitute teachers, so that beginning teachers could attend professional development or observe other teachers.

These practices affected the morale of the beginning teachers and their ability to view themselves as professionals in the workplace. Principals had an impact on driving these conditions that could either support new teachers or put them at a disadvantage (Tushnet, et al, 2002). A principal sets the tone for the entire school that supporting new teachers is a collective responsibility. The evaluators note that in schools where BTSA was *least* effective, principals were busy running triage; whereas in schools that were successfully supporting new teachers, principals were developing and enacting systems throughout the school that ensured smooth day-

to-day operations. Further, principals can set policies that protect new teachers from getting ill-fitted teaching assignments, extra preps, and extra duties. The evaluation found that about “20% of beginning teachers reported having reduced duties” (p. 142), an amount that falls short from the ideal. The evaluators make the argument that beginning teachers ultimately need an *environment* that can support them while they grow and learn. Until that environment is in place, they asserted that *any* induction program will have limited results at best.

Susan Moore Johnson and the Project on the Next Generation of Teachers (PNGT) have conducted numerous studies of how the conditions under which beginning teachers are hired and inducted relate to their decisions to stay (Johnson, et al., 2004). The PNGT conducted a longitudinal study, which began in 1999 of first- and second- year teachers working in public schools in Massachusetts. The participants of the study entered teaching through a variety of certification pathways and at different stages of their professional career. The qualitative study consisted of two individual interviews in 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 and surveys disseminated in the summers of 2002 and 2003. This information was combined with two other studies, a “four-state survey of first-year and second-year teachers, and a three-site study of exemplary school-based induction programs” (p. 279). Johnson’s research provides rich interpretive description and lengthy vignettes of teacher perspectives of their experiences during recruitment and induction.

Johnson and the PNGT found that beginning teachers value observation, feedback, and collaborative support from their colleagues and administrators. Teachers who participated in schools with this type of culture, which Johnson calls an integrated professional culture, were more satisfied, and felt supported in their work, and were most likely to stay (Johnson, et al, 2004). They found that approximately 82 per cent of teachers in integrated professional cultures stayed after the first year of the study. The teachers who stayed reported that they valued collaboration and having a voice in their instructional decision-making. And while many

participants suggested that salary was not a major factor in their decision to teach, they did feel that they would be more likely to continue teaching if the profession offered a better salary, in addition to more comprehensive support and career advancement opportunities.

One limitation of this study is the relatively small sample size, 50 participants in Massachusetts who either entered through a traditional Bachelor or Masters Program or the alternative Massachusetts Signing Bonus Program. Because the study only explores the impact of one alternative certification program on teacher retention and teacher retention in one state, the results may not be generalizable to contexts in which teachers enter through other alternative pathways or through formal induction programs. However, Johnson et al (2004) argue that participants in their study are not meant to be representative of the entire population of new teachers or of all alternative certification programs. Instead, the goal of the study is to think about what motivates beginning teachers to enter the field and what sustains them to stay in the field.

Humphreys, Wechsler, Bosetti, Park, and Tiffany-Morales (2008) of SRI International were commissioned by the Joyce Foundation to conduct a study of induction programs in Illinois and Ohio's in order determine relationships between induction, teacher retention and teacher quality or effectiveness. Similar to Johnson et al. (2004) and Tushnet et al. (2002), Humphreys et al. (2008) concluded that induction programs were most effective when tailored to individual teacher needs and implemented in schools that had working conditions that supported teachers in all regards. Findings from the Humphreys et al. (2008) study found that even strong supports were "undermined if schools suffered from weak leadership, a shortage of basic supplies and materials, or a lack of a professional community" (p. 1). Further, the pool of beginning teacher candidates in this study includes individuals from many diverse backgrounds and certification pathways. Therefore, Humphreys et al. (2008) concluded that support needs varied greatly

depending on these factors, and that one, preset induction program would not be appropriate to all beginning teachers.

Humphreys et al. (2008) gathered evidence during a 2-year study of teacher induction programs in Illinois and Ohio. Ohio's state-wide induction program has been in existence since 2002-03, while Illinois moved away from district-driven induction programs to a more formal state-wide induction program in 2008. Data collected in the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school years included interviews with state policymakers, case studies of eight Illinois induction programs, including four from their induction pilot program, and case studies of five Ohio programs. In addition, researchers surveyed all participants and collected retention data for all programs.

Retention data in both states indicated positive results for overall teacher retention, but mixed results for teacher retention within the initial schools (Humphreys et al, 2008). In Illinois, 27% of teachers left the *profession* within five years; however, 44% of teachers left their *initial school* within two years. Overall, as many as one out of four teachers who were teaching in a school in the spring of 2007 did not return to that same school in the fall of 2007. In both states, many teachers were moving to new schools within their first years of teaching. Humphreys et al (2008) argue that many teachers are moving to new schools to find school environments which are more supportive to their needs.

Survey data further supported this argument that environmental factors also contribute to decisions to move to new schools. Humphreys et al (2008) conducted surveys on a 4-point Likert scale of teachers in the participating programs and conducted factor analyses of survey responses in order to determine the following six constructs that contributed to teacher efficacy and retention: "school environment, availability of instructional materials and supplies, induction program support for instructional preparation and planning, induction program support for

working with special student populations, mentor support for instructional preparation and planning, and mentor support for working with special student populations” (p. 6). Scores for each construct were compared against teacher retention rates (returning to the same school for the 2007-08 school year), particularly those of teachers who scored in the top and bottom quartiles. Of the six constructs, statistical significance was found between the quartiles for school environment and for program support for working with special student populations. In general, however, teachers who received strong support across each construct were more likely to return to their school than those who received weak support. Further, Humphreys et al (2008) found that teachers working in more supportive school contexts reported a higher degree of self efficacy than those who worked in less supportive contexts. School environment and good support systems seem to play a role in keeping teachers at their original schools beyond one year.

Survey data also revealed that teachers from different certification pathways and backgrounds required varying degrees and types of support. Humphreys et al (2008) recommend that induction programs and alternative certification programs “work together to provide coherent and consistent support” (p. 11). In particular teachers receiving alternative certification require different supports than traditionally certified candidates. Supports that alternative certification candidates specifically point out are assistance with classroom management, filling out paperwork, and instructional strategies. Because most of these teachers are completing coursework during their initial year of teaching, they often find balancing classroom demands with certification requirements to be very challenging. Better integration of the content of induction programs and licensure coursework might alleviate overlap in content and provide these teachers much needed time. Coordination of district leaders, school leaders, and licensure program managers would further help to tailor and shape a quality induction experience that meshes with the existing school culture.

Humphreys et al. (2008) provides some compelling evidence to support the notion that teachers choose to stay in their first position due to a variety of factors that extend beyond specific induction support. These factors are largely related to the school environment and working conditions. However, their study is limited in that it did not compare teachers to student outcomes, and thus can only comment on working conditions, inductions and relationships to retention. Further research should examine different school environments against instructional growth and student outcomes. Further, Humphreys et al. (2008) primarily surveyed beginning teachers to determine levels of satisfaction and rates of agreement/disagreement to statement regarding school environment and induction supports, such as mentoring. Deeper investigation, including interview data, would add further evidence to understand the reasoning behind survey responses, particularly with regard to teachers who chose to move to another school. This evidence would be particularly compelling because it would shed light on what teachers are *looking for* when they make decisions to move to another school.

The studies conducted by Glazerman et al. (2006), Tushnet et al. (2002), Johnson et al. (2004), and Humphreys et al. (2008) explore the effects of different kinds of induction programs and school cultures on teacher retention and skill development. However, few studies exist that explore how the mediation of district induction policies on the school level impacts the nature of support that beginning teachers receive. Youngs's (2007) case study of two high-poverty school districts in Connecticut aims to better understand the association between district induction policy and the nature and quality of instructional assistance experienced by first- and second-year teachers and to understand how conceptions of induction support by school leaders, such as mentors and principals, "mediate the effects of district policy on new teachers' experiences" (p. 797). Data collection in each district consisted of several interviews with each teacher and mentor participant over the course of the school year as well as several observations of mentor-beginner

teacher meetings. Questions for all participants related to perceptions of support for beginning teachers in understanding content, planning instruction, and reflecting upon practice. Second year teachers were also asked about support that they received putting together their portfolios.

Youngs (2007) chose two districts with similar characteristics with regard to the socioeconomic status of their student populations and policies related to mentor training. The districts differed in terms of the policies regarding support to beginning teachers, particularly in terms of professional development and mentor selection and assignment, the sizes of the districts, and the kinds of professional development offered to second year teachers. In the Copley school district, mentors assigned to beginning teachers shared the same content area and grade level and had demonstrated experience with teaching and working with others. However, in the Ashton school district, mentor matching did not align to specific criteria; thus many teachers were assigned to mentors outside of their grade level and content area. Further, in the Copley district, second-year teachers received induction support related to creation of portfolios, whereas teachers in the Ashton district did not receive this kind of support.

Ultimately, Youngs (2007) found differences between districts with induction policies that impacted the quality of support teachers received. One district, Copley, provided a much more rigorous selection and training criteria to mentoring and a higher level of support to second year teachers than the other district, Ashton. Additionally, Youngs found that the perceptions of induction support and mentoring by mentors, administrators and educators did correlate with a difference in the “quality of assistance . . . with regard to acquiring curricular knowledge, planning instruction, and reflecting on practice” (p. 797). These conceptions did appear to mediate policy on beginning teachers’ experiences. Few mentors, teachers, and administrators in the Ashton viewed “induction support as helping beginning teachers acquire content-specific pedagogical knowledge and analyze the effects of their teaching on student learning” unlike their

counterparts in Copley who did hold these views (Youngs, 2007, p. 805). Youngs posits that because of this meditational effect, further research should explore the interactions between educators' understandings of induction and district and school induction policies, and how these interactions ultimately shape induction support in their schools.

Youngs's (2007) study was limited by a relatively small sample size (two districts with approximately eight first- and second-year teachers from each district, five mentors total and three-four principals from each district) and a relatively short length of study (one year). Further, the districts could not be closely compared on some levels, because Copley was much larger than Ashton in terms of number of students and teachers. However, Youngs accounts for these differences and focuses the study around the *population* of students (low-income) that these districts serve and the types of induction policies enacted in each, in this case two districts with *different* enactments of mentoring and induction policy. Finally, while the study did create a compelling argument between *perceptions* of induction support and the *enactment* of support, further research should explore the relationships between the two to understand *how* perceptions ultimately impact enactment.

## **Section 2: Leadership**

There are very few studies on how principals perceive their roles in providing induction to beginning teachers. A database search using keywords "principal," "induction," and "leadership" found two studies which were relevant to this topic. Wood's (2005) survey of principals in urban school districts found that principal leadership served important functions in building school culture, instructional leadership, management of mentors and others who work with beginning teachers and recruiting and supporting beginning teachers. Brock and Grady conducted two similar studies in 1997 and 1998 which address teacher and principal perceptions about the kinds of challenges the beginning teachers face and the expectations that principals and



beginning teachers have of one another. In both studies, they found that principals understand many of the major challenges that beginning teachers face and make efforts to provide information to new teachers regarding their expectations. However, they sometimes underestimate the power of informal encouragement and feedback in influencing teacher's decisions to stay, and the importance of viewing induction as a long-term process that extends beyond the beginning of the school year.

Principals have a critical role in influencing beginning teachers' experiences during their first three years of teaching (Wood, 2005). Principals are responsible for recruitment and hiring of new teachers and providing beginning teachers with guidance and feedback on their performance. Principals also tend to provide support to beginning teachers by fostering a school environment that welcomes new teachers into the community and gives them access to information and feedback from experienced teachers on staff. Wood's (2005) study of principals' roles "in a large, urban, standards-based induction program" surveyed principals from eight high schools, four middle schools, and 42 elementary schools using a 37-item Likert-scale survey, in an urban school district in California. Five elementary and secondary schools were selected as case studies, and Wood held focus group meetings and interviews with beginning teachers, mentors, principals, and site induction coordinators. The study was mainly qualitative in nature; multiple data sources were triangulated to determine perceptions about principals' roles in induction.

Wood found that principal leadership serves five different functions: "(a) culture builder, (b) instructional leader, (c) coordinator/facilitator of mentors, (d) novice teacher recruiter, and (e) novice teacher advocate/retainer" (p. 39). Research literature has long suggested the importance of the school principal in finding and keeping new teachers (Brock & Grady, 1997; Johnson et al, 2004), but Wood's study adds to the conversation about the principal's role in creating an effective induction program. Principal actions have an impact on the climate and culture in which

beginning teachers work. Their leadership is important in terms of the system they create for induction within the school as well as their individual support. Systematic elements include hiring practices, professional development, resources, class assignment, and designation/training of mentors and other induction leaders. Individual support includes those actions in which the principal works directly with the beginning teacher. Wood argues that principals are often effective when they are instructional leaders, going so far as to model lessons and participate in professional development activities. However, their support also comes in the form of ongoing instructional feedback as well as advocacy in terms of informal meetings, encouragement and “individual attention” (Wood, 2003, p. 55).

Brock and Grady (1998) surveyed 49 teachers and 56 principals from public and nonpublic elementary and high schools in Nebraska. The purpose of the survey was to gather information about teacher and principal perceptions of the problems that first-year teachers experience, what expectations first-year teachers and principals had of each other, and what differences existed between the types of assistance first-year teachers wanted and the types that principals provided. They found that while teachers and principals agreed on what types of support beginning teachers needed, both parties had differing conceptions of how induction practices should be enacted.

Principals and teachers agreed that first-year teachers need support in several key areas: school policy/procedures, instruction, and workload management/stress (Brock & Grady, 1998). In terms of instruction, principals and teachers agreed that the number one problem for beginning teachers was classroom management and discipline. Other instructional areas that needed support included evaluating student work, differentiating instruction, varying teaching methods, and pacing lessons. While both parties shared similar beliefs about the areas that induction should address, the major difference was between the kind of assistance that teachers wanted and the

kind that principals provided, which had to do with length and comprehensiveness of the induction program. Principals tended to see their role in induction in terms of hiring, providing a fall orientation, assigning mentors, and conducting evaluations. Teachers, however, wanted induction support to extend through the end of the school year and into the second year. Additionally, teachers wanted to see their principals playing a more active role in providing direct support and feedback.

Brock and Grady (1997) also conducted a similar survey of 37 elementary and high school teachers and 36 elementary and high school principals employed in Catholic schools in Nebraska. The survey found that both principals and beginning teachers held clearly defined conceptions of each other's roles; however, there were discrepancies between teacher needs and actual induction practices. Beginning teachers responded that they expected principals to shape school culture, convey policies and procedures, evaluate performance and provide guidance through classroom observations and feedback, meeting regularly with them, explaining school traditions and affirming that they are on the right track. Overall, teachers perceived that principals play a key role in socializing beginning teachers into the school.

When compared to studies about teacher perceptions of their induction needs and expectations of their principals in delivering support, these two studies confirm that while school principals have extensive knowledge of teacher support needs and kinds of induction activities that are most supportive to beginning teachers, they may sometimes be short-sighted in how they view the length of induction. They may also overlook the importance of everyday informal conversations and feedback with beginning teachers in developing relationships that make teachers feel valuable to the school community. However, with only two empirical studies regarding principals' perceptions of their roles, both of which are based on survey data, these findings are not conclusive. Because there is a greater body of research which examines induction

programs as a whole, as well as teacher perceptions of induction, more empirical research is needed regarding leadership perceptions of induction and its role in supporting beginning teachers.

### **Section 3: Teacher Perspectives**

Brock and Grady's (1997, 1998) studies are particularly useful because they compare the expectations that principals and teachers have of one another. Additional literature on what teachers say about their induction needs and the role of school leadership in induction was found through database searches using keywords: "teacher;" "induction;" "leadership;" "perspectives;" and "perceptions." Smith and Ingersoll's (2004) empirical study of induction programs and teacher retention addresses the extent to which induction is being implemented in schools nationally and teacher perspectives on critical elements of induction. Three qualitative studies, Useem (2003), Jorissen (2002) and Certo and Fox (2002) focus on how factors that affect teacher satisfaction during their first year(s) impact their decisions to stay in the field or leave. Unlike Smith and Ingersoll's study, which examines induction *activities*, these three studies included discussion regarding the role of leadership in induction. Finally, a study by Quinn and D'Amato Andrews (2004) study focuses more specifically on teacher perceptions of the role of leadership in induction, particularly the principal's role.

Smith and Ingersoll (2004) studied the effect of induction on teacher retention using the 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS). The SASS and its follow up, the Teacher Follow-Up Survey provide information on the "staffing, occupational, and organizational aspects of elementary and secondary schools" (p. 687). The purpose of Smith and Ingersoll's analysis of SASS was to see if certain induction activities, such as mentoring and collaboration, had an impact on beginning teachers' decisions to remain in their positions. Their study fills a gap in literature by including a national sample and by comparing teachers who did and did not

participate in induction activities. The survey has been administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), and at the time of this study, the survey had been cycled four times. Smith and Ingersoll use data from the 1999-2000 SASS, which includes a more detailed battery of questions related to “induction, mentoring, and professional development” (p. 685). Of the 52,000 elementary and secondary teachers who participated in the study about 3,235 were in their first year of teaching. Smith and Ingersoll focused on the latter group in order to determine relationships between induction and turnover, the prevalence of induction nationally, and how many teachers were participating in these activities.

Data analysis included descriptions of induction, mentoring and turnover and summaries of the types of induction activities that beginning teachers participated in. Smith and Ingersoll also analyzed the impact of induction and mentoring activities on teacher retention using logistic regression. Predictors included: “(a) teacher characteristics and school characteristics; (b) participation in mentorship activities; (c) participation in group or collective induction activities; and (d) the provision of extra resources for beginners, such as reduced teaching workload or having a teacher’s aide” (p. 688). Results of the data analysis found that major induction activities included mentoring programs, collaboration, professional development for new teachers, and regular communication with school leadership, including administrators and department chairs. While the types and numbers of induction activities offered in schools varied greatly, Smith and Ingersoll did find a significant relationship between participation in induction activities and fewer rates of turnover at individual schools. There were some types of activities, such as common planning times with other teachers in the same subject and collaboration with other teachers on instruction, which had a more sizable effect on reducing turnover.

While the Smith and Ingersoll study did take into account certain induction activities such as mentor programs, resources such as reduced workloads, and group induction activities, it

did not take into account teacher perceptions of the impact of school leadership. It also did not take into account the length and intensity that these activities have at individual schools. Questions regarding mentor programs did not take into account how mentors were hired, trained, and how they worked with individual teachers.

A three-year cohort study conducted by the Philadelphia Education Fund examined beginning teacher retention and staffing by focusing on “high poverty middle schools” in Philadelphia (Useem, 2003). In order to learn more about the high attrition rates of new teachers in these schools, Useem followed a cohort of 60 teachers from seven middle schools over a period of three years. Data collection was primarily qualitative in nature; teachers were interviewed individually during their first, second and third years. The cohort of teachers involved in the study dropped from 60 in the first year to 25 in the third year due to teacher attrition. The purpose of this study was to further inform the problem of teacher staffing through analysis of teacher retention data, teachers’ prior preparation, sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and plans for the future.

Useem (2003) found that teachers who chose to leave cited low salary, dissatisfaction with leadership in their schools, and poor job placement (many were trained to teach in elementary school settings) as reasons for moving on. Several schools in the study had astoundingly high numbers of teacher turnover; this turnover was due, in part, to dissatisfaction with the school climate and ineffective administrative teams. Teachers who stayed beyond the first year or two said that they were more likely to teach in their respective school and the Philadelphia School District for longer terms. Their choice to stay came from the support they received from colleagues, administration and staff. “In several schools, the teachers lauded their principals” (p. 18). Further these teachers felt more confident in their ability to teach subject matter effectively; their growing expertise was influential in their decisions to stay. It would seem

that even in the most challenging school settings, teachers who were encouraged to stay in the field had the support of school leadership and the resources to develop their skills and knowledge to teach effectively.

A study by Jorissen (2002) focused on teachers who chose to stay in the field in order to determine what factors supported them during their first two years of teaching. Jorissen's study included seven participants who had completed an alternate route program; all were mid-career teachers of whose ages ranged from 28 to 44. All participants were parents who had completed the same licensure program as a cohort. The program was co-sponsored by a university and a "large suburban school district" (p. 48). Key features of the program included a pre-internship seminar, a year-long supervised internship which included a full-day seminar one day per week, and a post internship seminar. Themes of the program ranged from growth and development, to curriculum development and classroom management. Data were collected from participating teachers via case studies, observation of lessons, and questionnaires. A cross-case analysis of interviews and data revealed themes that resonated with the participants.

Jorissen (2002) found that some of the critical factors that contributed to the satisfaction of these beginning teachers were participating in a cohort, completing a one-year internship program prior to assuming full teaching responsibilities and receiving on-going support from an assigned mentor. These factors relate to the development of collegial relationships which foster both emotional and professional support. However, Jorissen also found that the most critical factor in teacher support was the building principal. The principals, in these cases, acted as advocates when new teachers encountered resistance from parents and/or other teachers. The principals also allowed new teachers to introduce new curricular ideas into the existing school culture, in essence giving them the freedom to develop their skills without additional constraints. "Ways in which principals provided support included allocating funds for materials, providing

release time for in-service, promoting school wide programs, attending meetings, conveying clear expectations, and recognizing staff who participating in the new teachers' initiatives" (Jorissen, 2002, p. 55). Further, principals can prevent first year "hazing" by protecting beginning teachers from additional students, difficult teaching assignments, extra non-teaching duties, and lack of resources, which sometimes includes a room to teach (Wood, 2003).

Relationships with administration and the overall working conditions of the school were strong indicators of whether teachers chose to stay in their district or leave in a qualitative study conducted by Certo and Fox (2002). Their study of teachers with less than eight years experience in seven Virginia school divisions consisted of focus group and phone interviews. Certo and Fox chose teachers with eight years or less experience, because they found that in these particular districts teachers tended to leave at this time rather than at the more typical three year or five year mark. Findings revealed that variables affecting retention and attrition were highly related. Generally, teachers who chose to stay cited commitment to the profession, relationships to their colleagues and quality administration as reasons affecting their choice. When teachers were asked why they believed some of their colleagues left the profession, salary was the number one reason cited for leaving, followed by lack of administrative support.

Administration was a strong factor for teachers' choices to stay at their school or leave (Certo and Fox, 2002). Many teachers perceived administration as a source of support for teachers and a strong influence on the overall working conditions at the school. Certo and Fox subdivided administration into the two major categories: district-level administration and building-level administration. On the district level, teachers who left felt that there was disconnect between the district and the school. Teachers wanted more decision-making power and less bureaucracy and paperwork. On the building level, teachers who were satisfied with their schools felt that administration provided adequate resources and supplies for instruction,



professional development, and were visibly involved in classroom instruction. Administrators visited classrooms regularly, listened to teachers needs and took pains to place teachers with classrooms that they were most qualified to teach (Certo and Fox, 2002). Further, administration protected teacher planning time, another factor that Certo and Fox found that contributed to teacher retention and attrition. For many new teachers, “they said they didn’t realize that it would be like this, like this meaning all of the ways that you are pulled by several different people and all the expectations” (p. 19).

Different sets of expectations between administrators and beginning teachers do not always align perfectly. Brock and Grady’s (1997, 1998) surveys of teachers and principals in Nebraska found that while teachers and principals agreed on what types of support beginning teachers need, both parties had differing conceptions of how induction practices should be enacted. Teachers reported that they needed to know proper school policies and procedures, such as dealing with discipline and contacting parents. However, these teachers also needed to know what principals expect of them and how they will be evaluated (Brock & Grady, 1998; Wood, 2005). Those expectations extend to sharing important school policies and customs. Finally, teachers needed help with dealing with stress and overload. Teachers surveyed saw the principal as a source of emotional and professional support. Wood’s study corroborates this idea; findings indicate that even spontaneous and informal words of encouragement imparted to the beginning teacher by the principal can influence whether beginning teachers chose to remain teaching in their district and/or school in future years (2005). Further, teachers felt that induction should not be limited to the beginning of the year, but should be a whole year process; “Don’t forget that at the end of the school year, we’re still beginning teachers. We have never ended a school year before” (p. 5). Brock and Grady (1998) recommend that principals start to look at induction as a long-term process which is structured to provide continuous feedback and support.

A study by Quinn and D'Amato Andrews (2004) also suggests that principals have an effect on new teacher support and retention by shaping the atmosphere and culture of their schools. The purpose of the study was to compare first-year teachers' perceptions of support received by their school principals to the total amount of support they believed they received. Quinn and D'Amato Andrews disseminated a survey to 182 first-year teachers in a district serving approximately 60,000 students. Approximately 136 teachers responded to the survey, for a response rate of 74.7 percent; however, a total  $N = 106$  of surveys were usable for the study. Teachers who responded served all populations and ages of students. The survey consisted of 20 Likert-scale items, ranging from "very strongly disagree" to "very strongly agree," which addressed perceptions of support with curriculum and instruction, personal support, access to resources, information about school and district policies, classroom management, and work with parents. Participants were also asked to rank the amount of support given by their principal on a scale of one to ten. A Spearman Rho correlation for the total amount of support perceived (total of the 20 items) and the amount of principal support perceived "indicated a strong relationship between principal support and total support, as perceived by the first-year teachers, ( $r_s = .601$ ,  $p < .001$ ) (Quinn and D'Amato Andrews, 2004, p. 165). Further testimony as to connections between total support and principal support were gathered via 57 follow-up phone interviews.

Results of the Quinn & D'Amato Andrews (2004) study indicate that a majority of teachers need more support with orientation to the school, particularly in terms of administrative policies and procedures, where to find materials and resources, and introductions to the rest of the school faculty. Teachers who rated support from the principal highly also tended to rank the total support from the school highly. Quinn and D'Amato hypothesize that this connection can be explained by the argument that principals "lead by example" by both creating structures for direct support for new teachers and by encouraging their staff to do the same (p. 167). Wood's (2005)

study also suggests that morale is greatly improved for beginning teachers when principals provide institutional structures that promote relationships between beginning and experienced teachers. Principals can create this atmosphere of collective responsibility by valuing induction as an integral part of the school community and by participating in induction activities in the school (Wood, 2005).

In North Carolina, Algozzine, Gretes, Queen, and Cowan-Hathcock (2007) analyzed teacher perceptions of induction experiences within their first two years in 14 school systems in the southwestern part of North Carolina. The purpose of the study was to understand how teachers perceived the induction-related interventions put into place by school administrators in order to address challenges encountered by beginning teachers that ultimately lead to attrition. Algozzine et al. (2007) implemented a 60-item survey with primarily close-ended questions, and three open-ended questions to 1,318 third-year teachers. They had an overall usable response rate of 34% representing 451 teachers. The largest response demographic was white female teachers, and the largest group responding were elementary teachers. Most of the respondents were initially-licensed teachers, 19% of whom were lateral entry. The survey asked teachers to respond to questions pertaining to the nature of the induction activities they participated in, assistance in teaching and nonteaching areas and support from different subgroups, such as other teachers and school leaders.

Several sets of findings are important when considering induction implementation in schools. In induction program assistance, teachers reported that the most effective types of assistance included locating materials and resources, incorporating state standards into the curriculum, understanding school policies, planning for instruction, and use of different teaching methods (Algozzine et al., 2007). Effectiveness ratings were consistent with the top types of assistance teachers received. In induction program support, most teachers reported that *other*

teachers provided them the most support, in areas such as building community, dealing with stress, and delivery of content. Between 55 percent and 77 percent of teachers reported mentors as an important source of support; however, mentors had common planning times with only 47% of respondents. Administrative support consisted primarily of observation and feedback, discipline, outlining professional expectations, and curricular issues. Less than 50% of teachers reported administrative support in building positive relationships, meeting state standards, understanding school policies and routines, and delivering instructional content.

In addition to closed-ended responses, teachers were asked these two open-ended follow up questions: “Do you intend to remain in the position after this year?” and “If you are not planning to remain . . . what are your reasons for your decision?” (Algozzine et al., 2007) Seventy-eight respondents answered either “no” or “undecided” to the former question citing reasons such as money, time, continuing education, lack of support, family, accountability, changing careers, lack of professional treatment, and unnecessary paperwork as reasons for their decisions.

Although each of these studies approaches teacher perceptions of induction and leadership roles in different ways, there is a great deal of overlap in the combined findings. Smith and Ingersoll (2003) and Useem’s (2004) studies revealed that factors relating to beginning teacher retention underscore the need for additional analysis of how leadership impacts induction. Brock and Grady’s (1997, 1998) surveys compared the expectations that principals and teachers have of one another. The studies reveal discrepancies in the two viewpoints and the need for all parties involved in induction to have a unified vision about the critical program elements for induction and a clearly defined set of expectations for leadership roles in supporting beginning teachers. Quinn and D’Amato Andrews’ (2004) survey of first-year teachers found a significant relationship between principal support and total school support received. They hypothesize that

principal leadership has a strong impact on overall school culture thereby creating structures for support amongst new and returning faculty. Jorissen's (2002) case study of alternatively certified teachers found that beginning teachers felt that principals supported them most by acting as their advocate, giving them freedom, time, and resources to implement curricular ideas. Certo and Fox's (2002) qualitative study of teachers also found that administrative support was one of the most important factors in teachers' decisions to stay. Important aspects of administrative support were visibility and accessibility, resource allocation, and professional development. "The findings [have implications for] the importance of formal and informal structures along the continuum of teacher preparation and induction [in] promoting professional integration and retention" (Jorissen, 2002 p. 45).

Nevertheless, data are limited because of the scarcity of overall research in the field of teacher perceptions of leadership roles in induction and the lack of multiple sources of data. Two studies relied exclusively on survey data, one study focused solely on alternatively certified teachers and one study asked teachers with more than several years of experiences to reflect on their induction. Future research on teacher perceptions of leadership in induction should collect data from a larger pool of participants, including teachers from different certification pathways. Research should also examine the impact of administrative turnover on overall school climate and relationships between administrative and beginning teacher retention. Useem (2003) argues that such research is critical to effecting policy change; "Improving the leadership capacities of principals and other administrators must be a key component of overall system reform" (p. 18).

This study will add to the existing knowledge base on beginning teacher induction by examining the relationships between perceptions of induction support by different stakeholders, including beginning teachers and Support Providers, the implementation of induction policies and practices set forth by the state and the school district, and the retention of beginning teachers. If

beginning teacher retention is influenced by a variety of factors, including school working conditions, support, and leadership (Glazerman et al., 2006; Johnson et al., 2004; Tushnet et al., 2002), then it follows that induction cannot be viewed as a stand-alone program of support for beginning teachers (Humphreys et al., 2008). Youngs (2007) found that leadership perceptions of the kinds of support that beginning teachers need impacted the scope and quality of implementation of their induction practices, and Glazerman et al. (2006) found that there was a relationship between the school environment, support, and beginning teachers' decisions to stay in their schools or leave. This study will fill a gap in existing literature by examining how stakeholders' understandings of beginning teacher needs shape the enactment of induction policies and practices at the school level. Much of the existing literature discusses beginning teacher retention in terms of those teachers who stay in the profession or leave the profession. This study will also discuss why teachers move to other schools, but stay in the profession. It uses teachers' and Support Providers' voices to present an in-depth discussion of the real impacts of induction on beginning teachers' decisions to stay, move to another school, or leave the teaching profession entirely.

### **CHAPTER III**

#### **PURPOSE AND DESIGN**

The purpose of this study was to document and analyze the enactment and interpretation of district-mandated and school-initiated induction activities for new teachers in four high schools in X County. Analysis of the findings provided a detailed description of induction experiences and interventions for beginning teachers in their unique school contexts. Smith and Ingersoll (2004) suggest that the more components of induction that teachers receive, the more likely those teachers are to stay in their schools beyond one-three years. This study built upon the findings regarding the critical components of induction discussed in Higgins' (2007) pilot study by examining how and why those components were implemented in each school through the perspectives of school leaders and different teacher subgroups.

The researcher chose to use a qualitative research paradigm by conducting a comparative case study for the purpose of describing four high schools with varying rates of teacher retention. The investigation followed Yin's (1994) framework of case study design. Use of the case study is appropriate "when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context" (Yin, 1994, p. 1). Because interpretation and enactment of induction varies greatly depending on a variety of school and individual factors, the case study approach is most effective. The case study "allows the investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events (Yin, 1994, p. 1)." This investigation sought to understand the complexity of how induction is implemented while refraining from trying to control events (p. 3). The general research question for this study is: "How do participants involved with induction perceive the

relationship between school context, support, and teacher retention at their respective schools?”

Two specific research and several sub-questions guided this study:

1. How do participants perceive support for beginning teachers at their schools?
  - How do they perceive the implementation of induction policies and practices at their schools?
  - How do participants perceive other types of support at their schools?
2. Why do some beginning teachers choose to leave, and why do some beginning teachers choose to stay in their schools?
  - How do participants perceive support needs in relationship to the unique needs of their school?
  - How do participants perceive retention for beginning teachers at their schools?

Participants are those who either played a role in implementation or received components of induction. These participants included district administrators school Support Providers such as school administrators, mentors, Induction Coordinators, and beginning teachers. A similar set of participants was chosen at each school because these are the key people either operationalizing and enacting induction at their school site, or they are the key people influenced by induction practices at their school site. Non-teacher participants were chosen based on their role with induction; only one Induction Coordinator was available at each school, but there were various mentors and supervising administrators who interacted with and influenced beginning teachers. Teacher participants were chosen based on their years of teaching experience as first or second year teachers and convenience. The only criterion used in selecting teachers was their BT status, i.e. BT1 and BT2. Teachers had different life experiences, professional backgrounds and different pathways to teaching. Some teachers were traditionally certified, and some were lateral entry teachers, meaning that they had met requirements to be a highly qualified teacher under the No



Child Left Behind Act, but that they were completing coursework to become fully licensed while teaching. The same criteria was used in selecting teachers who left the school; half of the teachers chosen left their school after the first year, and half left after their second year.

Each school environment was unique. The first school, School A, was classified as a School of Distinction by the state; it had a history of academic excellence, low teacher turnover, and high parent involvement. The second school, School B, was a new magnet school designed to prepare low income students for careers in the medical/technical field while offering students opportunities to earn college credits. Because School B was a relatively new initiative and implemented a career-related curriculum, a majority of its teachers were entering as mid-career, novice candidates through the Lateral Entry licensure pathway. The final two schools were considered high-priority schools; School C served a predominantly African American population and School D served students representing over 17 countries and an equal number of languages or dialects (Author, NCDPI). Both schools had high rates of teacher turnover and were under intense scrutiny from the district and the state to raise student achievement scores.

The study describes what is going on within the context that teachers teach in, as described by the stakeholders. Ultimately, the impact of these experiences impacts teachers' decisions regarding their continuation at the school, thus the issue of teachers who leave and teachers who stay represents the primary unit of study. The informants to the unit of analysis are the various stakeholders involved, such as the teachers, administrators, mentors, and Induction Coordinators. The specific intervention used to socialize teachers into the school and ultimately increase teacher retention were the induction practices used at each school. However, implementation of induction was influenced by its various stakeholders and their school contexts. Thus, case study strategy was most relevant to this study because it "investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon (induction) and context

(school) are not clearly evident” (Yin, 1994, p. 13). By exploring how and why certain induction activities were implemented and how teachers perceived the support they receive as a result of implementation, the research described beginning teacher experiences within each school and addressed issues regarding teachers’ decisions to stay or leave. Because there were “many more variables of interest than data points”, (Yin, 2004, p. 13) multiple data sources were used in order to triangulate evidence regarding how stakeholders in these schools interpret and implement induction practices, why these practices look different or similar in each school context, and the how these practices impact the beginning teacher’s overall experiences.

Data collection procedures triangulated research questions around participants. Data sources examined how supervising administrators, Induction Coordinators, mentors, and teachers defined and carried out various induction activities at their respective schools. The research questions addressed issues concerning how stakeholders interpreted induction policies set forth by the district, operationalized induction practices, and perceived these practices at these schools. Multiple data sources provided information reflecting differential access of perspectives. A crosswalk indicating the research question, data types, and the stakeholders responding to each data source is shown in Table 3.1 to provide an overview of this investigation and confirms opportunity for triangulation (O’Sullivan, 1991).

In order to fully understand how stakeholders interpret and carry out induction and how teachers respond to various types of support, the researcher communicated with all participants regularly over an extended period of time from February-July, 2008. How these participants understood or carried out induction activities was not within the control of the researcher. The researcher’s role was to document what was happening within each school and to elicit the perspectives of the participants. The use of case study was appropriate for this methodology because case studies are descriptive in nature and each site could be compared, both of which

were necessary components for describing the characteristics of induction in the two schools of interest.

**Table 3.1. Crosswalk of Research Questions and Data Sources**

<b>Data Sources</b>			
	<b>Pre and Post-Interviews</b>	<b>Check-ins</b>	<b>One-time Interview</b>
<b>Research Questions</b>			
1) How do stakeholders perceive support for beginning teachers at their schools?	BT1s and BT2s	BT1s and BT2s	District Administrators, School Administrators, Induction Coordinators, Mentors, Teacher Leavers
2) Why do some beginning teachers choose to leave, and why do some beginning teachers choose to stay in their schools?	BT1s and BT2s	BT1s and BT2s	District Administrators, School Administrators, Induction Coordinators, Mentors, Teacher Leavers

Some of these induction activities came about from district-wide mandates, such as monthly beginning teacher cohort meetings with Induction Coordinators, which covered a suggested set of topics. Other activities or induction provisions were embedded in the school culture, and were more subtle. For example, the kinds of class assignments and course loads beginning teachers received and the role of the Department Head or the mentor in providing

support were not a formal component of induction, but were an influence on the experience of the beginning teachers in each school. The overall guiding assumption was that induction policies and/or activities would be enacted in each school differently depending on stakeholders' assumptions about how to support beginning teachers and school context factors which facilitate or inhibit implementation.

### **Role of Researcher**

My role in this study was that of the researcher and the observer. My experiences as a high school teacher and supervisor for preservice teachers influenced my role as a researcher. Having been a high school teacher, I am aware of the challenges that beginning teachers face in their first year(s). I am also aware of the ways in which school leaders seek to support new teachers and how these efforts are sometimes assisted or thwarted by school and district-context factors. For instance, as a beginning teacher I appreciated the school administrator's attempts to give me a reduced course load as well as a space of my own to work. However, because the school was crowded beyond capacity, my office was in a common room which afforded little privacy. Further, this overcrowding meant that I was assigned a mobile classroom, which meant that I moved from room to room each period to teach. Despite those efforts to support me as a new teacher, certain school context factors made it difficult to provide some comforts and amenities that would reduce stress during the first year.

Working with preservice teachers gave me an idea of what kinds of skills, knowledge, and dispositions young teachers need to have prior to entering the field. Knowledge of the coursework they study and the kinds of preservice field experiences they participate in gave me an idea of how beginning teachers are prepared (in the traditional method) prior to entering schools and what possible gaps they have in their knowledge and skills. Knowing this

information, I could better understand what types of support were most beneficial to beginning teachers.

My interest in educational policy and school reform also framed my role as a researcher. My Masters in Education, which concentrated in Administration, Planning, and Social Policy, fueled my interest in improving working conditions for teachers and learning conditions for students. I since interned at the Boston Plan for Excellence in Boston, MA, the Center for Teaching Quality in Hillsborough, NC, and SchoolWorks, in Beverly Ma, where I engaged in work that advanced research, programs, and policies that sought to reform schools and improve the professional lives of teachers. This study connects my interest in teaching and in school reform by focusing on the implementation of induction policies and practices at the local level and sharing the implications of this work with teachers, school leaders, and policy-makers.

### **Background for Selection of Case Schools**

X County Schools is a large school district in the Piedmont region of North Carolina encompassing two urban areas. It is comprised of 119 schools and approximately 68,000 students in grades Pre-Kindergarten through Twelve and 5,000 teachers. In selecting schools, I was initially interested in finding one school with a higher rate of teacher retention and one school with a consistently lower rate of teacher retention. A key informant in the Office of Employment at X County Schools made initial suggestions regarding schools that have higher and lower teacher retention rates. Follow up review of NC Report Card data of teacher retention rates in X County high schools confirmed the validity of these choices.

#### ***Case School A***

School A is located near several thoroughfares and shopping areas in X County, North Carolina. In the 2007-08 school year, the total number of students was 1,820, far higher than the district average enrollment of 821 students and state average enrollment of 854 students

(<http://www.ncreportcard.org>). School A's course enrollment ranged from as few as 18 students in Algebra I to as many as 28 students in civics and economics. Course sizes at this school were higher on average than district and state averages in all subjects except Algebra I, which was comparable to the district average for that course. There were a total of 14 acts of crime or violence reported for the 1,820 students, which was comparable to district and state averages.

School A ranks higher than many other high schools in the district on End-of-Course tests (<http://www.ncreportcard.org>). The percentage of students scoring at or above grade level on the ABCs End-of-Course tests were equal to or above district and state averages in every subject except for Algebra I and physical science. The percentage of passing scores on the End-of-Course tests grouped by gender, ethnicity, and other factors was also comparable to or higher than district and state averages for every sub group. The school received School of Progress classification, meaning that at least 60% of students were at grade level on End-of-Course tests (<http://www.ncreportcard.org>).

In 2007-08 the faculty at School A included 113 classroom teachers; 90% of whom were fully licensed, and 31% of whom had advanced degrees. There were 19 National Board Certified Teachers, and of the entire teaching population, 25% had between 0-3 years of teaching experience, 22% had between 4-10 years experience, and 53% had 10+ years of teaching experience. The overall teacher turnover rate for the 2007-08 school year was 17%, comparable to the district's 17% rate and higher than the state's rate of 14% ([www.ncreportcard.org](http://www.ncreportcard.org)).

***Key participants.*** The principal of School A granted permission to conduct the study and provided contact information for the Induction Coordinator, potential teacher, mentor, and department-head participants. County X provided data on teachers who left School A in the 2006-07 school year.

***Case School B***

School B is located near School D and a major thoroughfare and shopping area in X County, North Carolina. In the 2007-08 school year, the total number of students was 208, much lower than the district and state average enrollments (<http://www.ncreportcard.org>). School B's course enrollment ranged from as few as 14 students in chemistry to as many as 22 students in geometry. Course sizes at this school were comparable to district and state averages in all subjects. There were a total of 0 acts of crime or violence reported for the 208 students, which was lower than district and state averages.

School B ranks lower than many other high schools in the district on End-of-Course tests (<http://www.ncreportcard.org>). The percentage of students scoring at or above grade level on the ABCs End-of-Course tests was below district and state averages in every subject except for English I, and civics and economics. The percentage of passing scores on the End-of-Course tests grouped by gender, ethnicity, and other factors was also below district and state averages for every sub group. The school received Low Performing classification, meaning that less than 50% to 60% of students were at grade level on End-of-Course tests OR less than 50% of students were at grade level (<http://www.ncreportcard.org>).

In 2007-08 the faculty at School B included 18 classroom teachers; 39% of whom are fully licensed, and 22% of whom have advanced degrees. There were two National Board Certified Teachers, and of the entire teaching population, 61% had between 0-3 years of teaching experience, 28% had between 4-10 years experience, and 11% had 10+ years of teaching experience. The overall teacher turnover rate for the 2007-08 school year was 18%, slightly higher than the district's 17% rate and higher than the state's rate of 14% ([www.ncreportcard.org](http://www.ncreportcard.org)).

***Key participants.*** The principal of School B granted permission to conduct the study and provided contact information for the Induction Coordinator, potential teacher, mentor, and department-head participants. County X provided data on teachers who left School D in the 2006-2007 school year.

### ***Case School C***

School C is located near a downtown section of one of the primary cities in X County, North Carolina. Based on the 2007-08 school report card data its student enrollment of 1,415 students was higher than many high schools in the district (as compared to the district average of 821 students) and the state (which has an average of 854 students) (<http://www.ncreportcard.org>). School C's typical course enrollment ranges anywhere from 13 students in English I to 20 students in geometry; enrollments in all courses are comparable to district and state averages. The School also reported a total of 40 acts of crime or violence on campus or during school-sponsored activities, a number that was three times higher than the district or state average.

School C is below average academically compared to other high schools in X County. According to NC Report Card, in 2007-08, students scoring at-or-above grade level on the ABCs End-of-Course test at School C ranked lower than district-wide averages in every subject (e.g. English, Algebra, Social Studies, Science, etc.) except in Chemistry, which was comparable to the district rank, and ranked lower than state-wide averages in all subjects, (<http://www.ncreportcard.org>). The percentage of passing scores on the End-of-Course tests grouped by gender, ethnicity, and other factors was also lower than district averages in every ethnic group, except for Black and Hispanic. The school received Priority School classification, meaning that 50 to 60% of students at grade level, OR less than 50% of students performed at grade level on the state's End-of-Course Tests. (<http://www.ncreportcard.org>).



The faculty of School C included 107 classroom teachers in 2007-08, 74% who were fully licensed, and 18% who had advanced degrees. The school also had two National Board Certified Teachers. In terms of teaching experience, 33% of their teachers had 0-3 years of teaching experience, 26% had 4-10 years of experience, and 41% of teachers had 10+ years of experience. The school had a teacher turnover rate of 19%, slightly higher than the district rate of 17% and the state rate of 14%.

**Key participants.** The principal of School C granted permission to conduct the study and provided contact information for the Induction Coordinator, potential teacher, mentor, and department-head participants. County X provided data on teachers who left School A in the 2006-07 school year.

#### **Case School D**

School D is located near a major thoroughfare and shopping area in X County, North Carolina. In the 2007-08 school year, the total number of students was 1,222 which was higher than the district and state average enrollments (<http://www.ncreportcard.org>). School D's course enrollment ranged from as few as 6 students in physics to as many as 22 students in physical science. Course sizes at this school were slightly lower on average than district and state averages in all subjects except physical science, Algebra II, Civics and Economics, and US History. There were a total of 18 acts of crime or violence reported for the 1,222 students, which was comparable to district and state averages.

School D ranks lower than many other high schools in the district on End-of-Course tests (<http://www.ncreportcard.org>). The percentage of students scoring at or above grade level on the ABCs End-of-Course tests was far below district and state averages in every subject. The percentage of passing scores on the End-of-Course tests grouped by gender, ethnicity, and other factors was also below district and state averages for every sub group. The school received

Priority School classification, meaning that 50% to 60% of students were at grade level on End-of-Course tests OR less than 50% of students were at grade level (<http://www.ncreportcard.org>).

In 2007-08 the faculty at School D included 101 classroom teachers; 88% of whom are fully licensed, and 21% of whom have advanced degrees. There were two National Board Certified Teachers, and of the entire teaching population, 29% had between 0-3 years of teaching experience, 32% had between 4-10 years experience, and 40% had 10+ years of teaching experience. The overall teacher turnover rate for the 2007-08 school year was 17%, comparable to the district's 17% rate and higher than the state's rate of 14% ([www.ncreportcard.org](http://www.ncreportcard.org)).

***Key participants.*** The principal of School D granted permission to conduct the study and provided contact information for the Induction Coordinator, potential teacher, mentor, and department-head participants. County X provided data on teachers who left School D in the 2006-2007 school year.

### ***Comparison of Case Schools***

This case study will seek to compare the implementation of induction at each school as seen through the perspectives of various stakeholders. Each of these schools presented some unique characteristics in terms of its performance on ABCs End of Course Tests, student enrollment, and teacher quality. School A had the strongest student performance of all four schools; it was the only school that has not been given a Priority or Low Performing Status by virtue of making expected growth on the state's ABCs tests. School A also had the largest student population of all four schools, and had the highest percentage of fully licensed teachers and teachers with 10+ years of experiences. School B was the newest school of the four. It had the lowest designation (Low Performing) of all four schools based on the state's ABC tests. School B also had the lowest student enrollment, lowest percentage of fully licensed teachers and the highest percentage of novice teachers of all four schools (between 0-3 years of experience).

School C and School D had comparable student performance scores. Both schools were considered under-performing on the state’s ABC tests and had been given Priority School classification. Both schools had comparable student enrollment numbers, and both schools had comparable numbers of novice teachers and National Board Certified Teachers. School C had a lower percentage of fully licensed teachers than School D, and School C had the highest teacher turnover rate of all four schools in the study.

Understanding the differences between student and teacher makeup and academic achievement scores at both schools is provided to lend contextual information regarding how teachers are initiated into their school cultures.

**Table 3.2. Overall Teacher Turnover Rates at Each Case School**

<b>School 2007-08</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Fully Licensed Teachers</b>	<b>0-3 Years Experience</b>	<b>4-10 Years Experience</b>	<b>10+ Years Experience</b>	<b>Teacher Turnover Rate</b>
<b>School A</b>	School of Progress	90%	25%	22%	<u>53%</u>	17%
<b>School B</b>	Low Performing	<u>39%</u>	<u>61%</u>	28%	11%	18%
<b>School C</b>	Priority School	74%	33%	26%	41%	19%
<b>School D</b>	Priority School	88%	29%	32%	40%	17%
<b>District</b>	NA	85%	29%	27%	45%	17%
<b>State</b>	NA	89%	23%	26%	52%	14%

([www.ncreportcard.org](http://www.ncreportcard.org))

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Data were gathered from each case site using Yin’s (1994) single case study approach. The main focus of study was the implementation of major induction activities by stakeholders at

each school. The case study included studying the implementation of other induction-related activities and/or policies by stakeholders at each school and the participants' perceptions of induction. Yin's (1994) three principles of data collection (using multiple sources of evidence to assure triangulation; developing a case study database; and creating chains of evidence) characterized the data collection phase of this study. Multiple data sources included semi-structured interviews, document review, and informal check-ins, and on-site observations of teaching or professional development activities (upon request of participant). Development of similar interview protocols for each set of participants allowed for triangulation around participant groups' responses. Participants included Induction Coordinators, mentors, supervising administrators, and teachers. All protocols appear in the appendices. The data collection matrix is as follows:

**Table 3.3. Data Collection Matrix for New Teacher Induction**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Interviews (Formal)</b>	<b>Document Review</b>	<b>Informal Check-ins</b>
<b>Teachers</b>	X	Document reviews consisted of X County retention data and NC Report Card Data. X County data were provided by Human Resources and NC Report Card Data were available online.	X
<b>Administrators</b>	X		
<b>Induction Coordinators</b>	X		
<b>Mentors</b>	X		
<b>District Administrators</b>	X		

Preliminary data analysis occurred during the data collection phase in order to establish preliminary themes and inform follow up interview and focus group questions. Data analysis included transcription and initial coding of interview data as well as data entry and initial analysis of document data. Preliminary analysis established initial themes and revealed gaps in data that need further exploration/clarification during data collection. Initial feedback was solicited from the participants in the form of ongoing member checks.

1. Each semi-structured interview lasted between 30 minutes and one hour. All participants were involved in individual interviews, which were tape recorded and transcribed. Each participant was asked to grant permission to record prior to conducting the interview. Current teachers were interviewed two times, once at the beginning of the study and once at the end of the study. All other participants took part in one interview, including Support Providers, either face-to-face or by phone. Teachers who left the school were interviewed one time either by phone or in person over the course of the study.
2. Documents were collected on an as needed basis in order to gather information regarding school and/or teacher characteristics. Example artifacts reviewed for this study included teacher retention data, school achievement and demographic data, and teaching conditions data. Document review was used to corroborate with data obtained through interviews. Supervising administrators were asked to provide potential documents for review, including School Improvement Plans, student achievement data, and teacher data (including teacher retention data, hiring data, and/or demographic data). Additional documents subject to review included school data found online, including school report card data.

3. Informal weekly check-ins with active teachers (BT1s and BT2s) also provided corroborating information with data provided from other sources. Check-Ins occurred with teacher participants took place between 1-4 times, with an overall average of two check-ins per teacher participant. Check-ins were brief, lasting 10-20 minutes, and took the form of short conversations that occurred primarily in person. However, if participants were unable to speak in person, they were able to provide updates via email or phone. Occasionally, participants invited the researcher to visit their classroom or other teaching-related activity if they felt that it would offer further insight into the key topics of conversation that arose during check-ins. These visits included three classroom visits and three observations of induction-related activities, such as professional development and meetings with supervisors.

### ***Unit of Analysis***

The unit of analysis was various stakeholders' interpretation of induction activities and/or policies at two high schools in X County, North Carolina.

### ***Data Collection Protocols***

Data collection protocols for interviews ensured that the investigator addressed key questions with all participants in a consistent fashion (see Appendix A). Use of protocols also ensured consistency amongst data collection procedures at both case schools. Yin (1994) argues that the data collection protocol increases the "reliability of case study research and is intended to guide the investigator in carrying out the case study" (Yin, 1994, p. 63). Individual protocols were constructed for each set of participants for the focus groups, semi-structured interviews, and surveys. The data collection protocol consisted of the following components:

1. Selection procedures: Selection of participants began with the identification of prospective high schools in X County which met the criteria necessary for the study.

One criterion used in selection of schools was teacher retention. One school (School A) had a historically higher rate of teacher retention, one school (School B) was brand new and did not have a history of teacher retention, and the other two schools (Schools C and D) had historically lower rates of retention. I looked at overall teacher retention rates using NC Report Card data for schools in X County over the past five years to find the two schools with higher/lower retention rates over time.

The selection of schools within X County was most convenient for the researcher as they were more accessible for the scope of research. An employee, Mr. Smith (pseudonym), in the Human Relations Department at X County Schools provided initial suggestions on which schools would serve as suitable case sites. Mr. Smith had worked with X County Schools in staffing services for a number of years, making him an ideal resource for finding schools with high and low teacher retention. Mr. Smith released data on BT2s for each school with permission to conduct research given by the X County Schools' Office of Research and Compliance.

When schools which met these criteria were identified, I contacted school principals first to explain the nature of the study and gain access to other participants. I initially called administrators and sent copies of the research proposal by email for their review. Once each principal agreed to participate, I applied for consent to conduct the study through X County Schools Office of Research and Compliance.

Within each high school, participants were selected based on their involvement with induction-related activities (e.g. Induction Coordinators, mentors, supervising administrators, and teachers). These participants included the school Induction Coordinator, one supervising administrator, one-two mentors, two-five active teachers, and two teachers who had either left their school within their first or

second year of teaching or who had submitted resignation from their school and were not returning the following year. All teacher participants were within their first or second year of teaching, classified by the district as BT1 or BT2 (BT=Beginning Teacher). Teachers participating in the study entered the profession through different licensure pathways (alternative and traditional licensure) and from different professional backgrounds (some were first-career, and some were mid-career entrants). Some BT2s had entered their school at the start of their second year, having moved from either another school within X County or another school district entirely. While these teachers were not able to offer year-to-year comparisons of their experiences within their current school, they were able to offer comparisons of their experiences *between* their schools. These data were relevant in providing further comparative evidence to shed light on the unique contexts of the participating schools.

Participating BT1s and BT2s at School A were chosen and contacted by email upon the recommendation of the school Induction Coordinator, and participating teachers from the other three schools were recruited by the researcher at induction meetings after school. All teachers received a formal presentation regarding the purpose and data collection procedures of the study and volunteered to participate in the study. Teacher leavers were chosen based on the recommendation of other participants in study, such as administrators and Induction Coordinators, and the recommendation of Mr. Smith. These teachers were recruited by phone or email directly by the researcher and agreed to participate in the study following a formal presentation of the purpose and data collection procedures.



Participants from School A and some mentor and teacher-leaver participants were contacted first by email introducing the researcher and the study. If email addresses were not available, participants were contacted by phone. Follow up phone calls and/or emails were made to set up initial interviews or focus groups. Prior to participation in the study *all* participants were read an oral presentation of the study and signed a consent form. Those participants recruited by phone received an oral presentation and acknowledged consent to take part in the study orally. Oral consent was tape recorded and kept on record.

All study participants received copies of an abbreviated study proposal and consent forms. They were assured that their identities would be kept confidential, and that the final written report used pseudonyms for both schools and individual participants. By using pseudonyms, the researcher was able to maintain a level of confidentiality in written reports.

2. In order to conduct the study, permission was obtained first from principals at each case school, and then through written application with the X County School's Office of Research and Compliance. The application for conducting research included the researcher's vita, description and purpose of the study, data collection procedures and timelines, description of confidentiality procedures, potential benefits and risks, and all data collection protocols. Once written consent was obtained from the Office of Research and Compliance, the research obtained proper permission to conduct research on human participants through an application with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Following IRB approval, the researcher obtained proper permission to conduct research with all participants and gave each a copy of the

oral consent form, which included the purpose of the study, data collection procedures, and potential risks and benefits for participation.

3. The data collected consisted of semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and informal check-ins. One initial interview took place with active teachers at the beginning of the study. A follow-up interview with each active teacher took place at the end of the study as well. A minimum of two check-ins took place with active teachers took place between the initial and concluding interviews, however most participants took part in three-four check-ins. At least one interview was conducted with Induction Coordinators, mentors and supervising administrators. Interviews contained open-ended questions with additional probing questions, when needed. Document analysis provided additional information regarding school demographic and achievement data, individual teacher factors, and teacher retention. Classroom visits and/or other school-related visits took place upon the participant's invitation in order to corroborate with interview data.
4. Preliminary data analysis took place throughout the data collection period and afterwards in order to generate emerging codes and themes and to determine gaps in research which needed to be addressed during the study.
5. The study took place between February 2008 and July 2008.

#### **Procedures for Analysis of Data**

The research questions guided data collection and data analysis procedures for this study. This study was qualitative in nature, investigating the nature of implementation of induction at each case school from the perspectives of participants involved.

**Table 3.4. Data Collection Timeline**

<b>Fall-February 2007</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepared survey protocols for research purposes</li> <li>• Turned in Research Proposal to X County Schools</li> <li>• Turned in IRB for approval by UNCG</li> </ul>
<b>February-March 2008</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contacted school administrators for permission to conduct research</li> <li>• Conducted initial interviews with all teachers</li> <li>• Interviewed Support Providers</li> <li>• Reviewed documents of teaching and school data</li> </ul>
<b>March-April 2008</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviewed Support Providers</li> <li>• Conducted weekly check-ins with active teachers</li> <li>• Interviewed Teacher Leavers</li> <li>• Continued document review</li> </ul>
<b>April-July 2008</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued weekly check-ins with active teachers</li> <li>• Interviewed Support Providers</li> <li>• Interviewed Teacher Leavers</li> <li>• Conducted final interviews with active teachers</li> <li>• Continued Document review</li> </ul>

The research questions and objectives were guided by the theoretical proposition that social interactions within the school context influenced how stakeholders perceived and implemented induction activities (Yin, 1994). This proposition became the lens through which data analysis occurred. The dominant mode of analysis for this particular study was an explanation-building technique (Yin, 1994). This particular strategy allowed the investigator to “build an explanation about the case” and to “develop ideas for future study” (Yin, 1994, p. 110). In this case, data analysis was used to build an explanation regarding how and why induction activities were implemented similarly/differently in each school and how teachers perceived induction as a support mechanism. In order to ensure validity of data analysis procedures, findings were repeatedly compared against theoretical propositions and program objectives and questions. As a result, initial propositions and research questions underwent revision and clarification. The use of case study protocols, the “establishment of a case study database,” and the systematic creation of chains of evidence ensured validity during the data analysis phase (Yin, 1994, p. 113).

Qualitative data were gathered, coded, and analyzed through the use of the ATLAS TI coding program. Specific protocols, field notes and records were kept in order to maintain accuracy and allow for future replication of this study. Field notes included researcher memos, records of participant contact, and records of the planning and implementation process for research. Data were inputted into the ATLAS TI coding program into and coded into categories developed from major research questions. Major categories included induction support, other types of support, uniqueness of school, teacher retention, and participant- and school subgroups. Because of the large amount of data, sub codes for each major category were created. All major codes and collapsed sub codes were collapsed, defined, and counted (see Appendix B). Ultimately, codes used for analysis in Chapter IV were chosen based on their relevance to the major research questions and their frequency (frequency for codes from Support Providers must be four or higher (N=4), and frequency for beginning teachers must be 15 or higher (N=13)). Data were then presented in Chapter IV comparing findings from the codes from two major participant groups, Support Providers and beginning teachers.

### **Reliability and Validity**

The audience will recognize this study as “good research” by the clear statement of the research problem, purpose, theoretical framework, methodology, and research design. All aspects of the research have been delineated clearly, and the researcher presented strengths and limitations of the study in addition to areas for future research. Findings are stated in plain language and logical sequence geared towards an audience of school leaders and district and state policymakers. These findings are also context specific in that they reflect the experiences of the participants with induction in their specific school and they do not claim to draw broad conclusions regarding induction programs and induction experiences in general. Rather, the

researcher presented this study as a snapshot of induction within these school contexts to further shed light on how support programs play out for individual teachers.

Reliability has been ensured in focus group and interview data by using previously tested and refined data collection instruments from a prior pilot study. Further, all protocol questions were presented in a similar fashion to each participant (use of same wording on questions that pertain to all groups, and use of similar formatting and numbering on survey questionnaires when appropriate). Follow up interviews with fact checks determined reliability of survey information with participants to explain why any deviations occurred.

Validity of previously used data collection instruments had been established during the pilot study phase of this research. Further, triangulation of participants (teachers, principals, Induction Coordinators, and mentors) helped establish validity of the findings reported. Member-checking was used throughout interviews to provide further explanation or examples of statements as well as to insure accuracy and clarity of information provided on surveys. In addition, member checking took place as needed during the writing of the report to confirm emerging themes and accuracy of findings. All findings were presented in terms of general themes and lengthy descriptions, which includes vignettes and/or quotes from the data. Because the study was small, all findings were presented to represent the stakeholders' experiences nested within their particular school context. Further, the researcher qualified these findings in such a way as to represent the lives and experiences of these teachers and make some generalizations about how working in *their* particular school contexts impacted how induction activities were carried out.

### **Written Report**

The final written report located in Chapter IV reflects overall findings from each case study school and general findings regarding induction implementation in different school contexts

based on a comparison between the schools. In Chapter IV, I first present findings and description in narrative form from the two main participant groups, Support Providers and Teachers, incorporating specific findings from each group at their individual schools. I then present a discussion comparing similarities and differences between participant groups and schools. Like data analysis, writing of the report occurred in stages throughout the data collection and analysis phases. Writing was an iterative process providing constant comparison of findings from each school, comparisons of results across schools, and further analysis of areas which required more investigation. Key participants and informants of the case were given the opportunity to review the written report.

The organization of the case study report in Chapter IV follows Yin's (1994) comparative structure, when a case is replicated allowing the researcher to compare "alternate descriptions or explanations of the same case" (p. 139). Thus the same questions were explored at each school with a similar set of participants, in order to describe induction implementation from

#### *Summary*

The purpose of this research was to understand how stakeholders from four high schools perceived induction practices and policies in the ways that they do. This research focused on schools with varying rates of teacher retention and student performance on the state's ABC tests in order to describe the implementation of induction activities in regards to unique school contexts. Yin's (1994) descriptive case study framework was used because it allowed the researcher to consider induction implementation from a variety of perspectives without seeking to control events. Four schools in X County, North Carolina, were chosen based on district recommendations and NC School Report Card data. Within each school, participants included school administrators, Induction Coordinators, mentors, and teachers. Primary data sources included interviews, document review, and informal check-ins.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

In this chapter, data are summarized from one case study that spans four individual sites. Based on the research design suggested by Yin (1994), this case study was intended to provide knowledge about how stakeholders involved with induction perceive the relationship between school context, support, and teacher retention at their respective schools. Information from Support Providers (school administrators, mentors, Induction Coordinators, and district administrators) and teachers (BT1s, BT2s, and Leavers) relate to each sub question:

1. How do participants perceive support for beginning teachers at their schools?
  - How do they perceive the implementation of induction policies and practices at their schools?
  - How do participants perceive other types of support at their schools?
2. Why do some beginning teachers choose to leave, and why do some beginning teachers choose to stay in their schools?
  - How do participants perceive support needs in relationship to the unique needs of their school?
  - How do participants perceive retention for beginning teachers at their schools?

The first and second research questions will be addressed by the two major participant groups: Support Providers and teachers. Each question will be addressed by a general summary of findings for the entire participant group or by a cross-case analysis between schools when the data exhibits compelling differences. The findings from the major participant groups will then be compared for major similarities and differences.

### **Background of District and State Induction Policies and Practices**

There were 13 Support Providers interviewed for the purposes of this study. Three participants were district-level administrators. Four were school administrators, three were school Induction Coordinators, and three were school mentors. Because the number of participants in this subgroup is relatively small, it is difficult to conduct in-depth case study analyses for each school. However, factual information regarding each school's induction program is presented here as well as overall general findings regarding beginning teacher support across all participants.

Interviews with the district Induction Coordinator, human resources personnel, and an Instructional Improvement Officer (IIO) provided the most information regarding state and district induction policies. The district personnel who provide the most *direct* support to beginning teachers include Induction Coaches and the IIO. In the 2007-2008 academic school year, the district provided 8.5 (one part-time position and 8 full time positions) district Induction Coaches who provided a direct line between the central office and the individual schools. The responsibilities of these coaches include monthly check-ins with beginning teachers at their assigned schools with follow-up observation and training for teachers who express a need or for teachers targeted for instructional intervention. Coaches also serve as a liaison between teachers and school administrators, offering advice and support to administrators regarding how to best serve their beginning teachers' needs. An Induction Coordinator spoke of how this form of support gives teachers one-on-one help: "I think that they have the best interest in their school. It becomes a part of them. And [District Coach] is of course one of my people who comes over here and works with my teachers one-on-one from downtown." The IIO also conducts observations of beginning teachers and provides guidance and advice regarding support to administrators, mentors and Induction Coordinators:



I have most of my conversations with the mentors and the coaches . . . And so okay, I was in so-and-so's room. He didn't do this very well. Or he did this extremely well. So [I]share the good, the bad, and the ugly. Not directly with the teacher . . . if they are not doing an excellent job, I do not tell them. I tell the mentor, the AP, the principal, or the academic coach who is working with them. And I ask them to frame it so that it's not necessarily coming from me, but that it's an observation where some suggestion on how to include . . . Just trying to protect those new teachers, because I remember how it was when I was a new teacher. (IIO, May, 2008)

Work with the principals to support beginning teachers goes beyond communication on a teacher's classroom performance. The IIO works with all leadership to model what is expected of them as instructional leaders. "I expect them in classrooms as instructional leaders. I'll ask them to do walk-throughs with me . . . It's important to care about people and build relationships with them. So I take a special interest in my principals" (IIO, May, 2008).

The Central Office also requires that each school designate an Induction Coordinator (IC). This person usually serves the school in a dual-capacity as an IC and a Curriculum Facilitator (CF). The primary responsibility of the IC is to assist in the coordination of the annual new teacher orientation, which all beginning teachers are required to attend. The IC is also responsible for carrying out the instructions and advice given by the district Induction Coach regarding the day-to-day needs of their beginning teachers. ICs also select, train, and manage school mentors, ensuring that every beginning teacher has a proper mentor match. Finally the IC conducts monthly beginning teacher meetings with all BT1s and BT2s on topics that are relevant to the teachers' needs. The IC is given a list of recommended topics by the Central Office, but ultimately the IC can choose meeting topics which are best suited to the particular needs at the school. These topics range from information on how to set up a grade-book program online to instruction on classroom management. The IC also acts as a resource for beginning teachers and a direct line to the school administrator regarding beginning teacher progress.

In addition to District Coaches and Induction Coordinators, the district implements a state policy that every first and second year teacher receives an on-site mentor. Mentors meet with BTs at the school at least once a month to discuss teacher needs, give instructional and procedural feedback, and to provide encouragement. These meetings are confidential, and teachers are encouraged to rely on mentors for day-to-day needs. One administrator commented that the mentors provide teachers with a “safe” forum in which to speak that many administrators cannot provide: “I think that the mentors are one of the better resources, because the person feels less threatened. If I walk in, they will automatically feel threatened by me, just by my title.” Implementation of the mentor program varies both within and among schools; all mentors are required to meet with BTs, but the depth of commitment, types of feedback, and availability of good mentor/mentee matches can vary. All mentors, Induction Coaches, and Induction Coordinators must go through district-wide mentor training. Generally, mentors go through district-wide training prior to assuming their role, however, there are times when high demand places mentors in this role prior to training. One mentor commented on the benefits of training and the disadvantages of the timing of the training:

I know we’re trained. I was trained. I got partial training, but that was after my first two years. And so the initial training that I should have gotten, I never knew, which is why I was uncomfortable being a mentor . . . now that I see what’s going on I’m a better mentor. I think that training helped, but it’s not productive if you’re just kind of being verbatim—do this, do that, read this, or read that. (Mentor interview, June 2008)

The district also provides school administrators and staff with a list of recommendations to ease the transition for the beginning teacher into the school. New teachers are sent to their schools on the first day of their district-wide orientation. The administration and ICs at the schools have been advised to provide beginning teachers with a tour of the school, lunch, a gift basket and a punch-list of items for beginning teachers to attend to when settling into their

classrooms. Principals and Assistant Principals are also advised to refrain from conducting formal observations of BTs during the first month of school, again to give BTs an opportunity to put classroom systems into place. Finally, the district provides all BTs with a “Start Card,” a pre-paid debit card for beginning teachers to purchase resources to set up their classrooms.

Administrators are asked to provide start cards to BTs upon their entrance to the school.

The state also offers individual schools supports depending on their Annual Yearly Progress (AYP). Two of the four schools participating in this study had not met their AYP in the year prior. Thus, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) offered supports in addition to what the district provided to train teachers in the curricular areas that have been most challenging. One school administrator commented that this type of support was helpful in aligning teachers within the department around a similar set of goals:

We are going to write that curriculum the end of the month. We have our DPI Turnaround Team person in Social Studies, which will be coming in and working with my department and all that . . . specific concepts will be addressed first semester, and then you will run the Standard Course of Study the second semester. (School Administrator, July, 2008)

The collaboration between the DPI, the district, and the school is another way that beginning teachers receive support relative to the unique needs of their students at their school.

### **Support Providers**

Research Question 1: How do the Support Providers at these four schools perceive support for beginning teachers at their schools?

- How do they perceive the implementation of induction policies and practices at their schools?

Support Providers described support for beginning teachers at their schools in terms of resources which beginning teachers can access for various needs, including administration,

mentors, district-level support, and other professional development activities. Support Providers also talked about the challenges and successes encountered in implementation of beginning teacher support. These findings are presented in seven broad themes that describe what support looks like generally and, when relevant, in the different school contexts.

Theme 1) Support Providers talk about school-based support in terms of administration and implementation of induction policies and practices.

#### School A

Two Support Providers spoke about how administration impacted implementation of induction policies and practices at School A. The principal at School A had previous leadership experience, but was new to both the district and the school in the 2007-2008 academic year. One support provider noted that a third-year Assistant Principal was considered the “most senior” leader on staff [April, 2008]. Interviews with key leadership induction support revealed that while leaders had a basic understanding of how to support beginning teachers, implementation of induction policies and practices at the school level were “hit or miss.”

In terms of recruitment of beginning teachers, the school principal receives an extensive number of emails from potential applicants who see job postings on the district’s website each day. Screening these candidates can be cumbersome, so the principal can also use the district’s Human Resources Website to scan candidates for positions more closely. When the principal is ready to interview and ultimately hire an applicant, s/he must conduct the reference check himself. The hiring and interview process is extensive and time-consuming, particularly during the spring when teachers make decisions to stay, leave, or move to another school.

The leadership team at School A includes a mix of administrators who have been at the school for many years and several who are new to the school. The new leadership had *some* understanding of the district’s induction policies and procedures, but was less versed in its

implementation. One administrator said, “We get an overview of [the induction program] and things like that, but I don’t know specifically what goes on in there . . .” (School Administrator, June, 2008). Additionally, inheriting a new school had implications for setting up programs and policies which supported beginning teachers.

When I got here, [School A] had already made a determination that the school didn’t need a Curriculum Facilitator (CF) for this present year. So I didn’t have that person working with new teachers. I had a teacher who had a full-time teaching load who was going to run the mentoring program, so that was not a good situation for younger teachers. The idea that we get them a mentor, then we pay that person to work with them is a good thing, but I will tell you for next year, [School A] has a CF . . . I want someone who is doing that job who is going to work with that mentor person, but also work with the mentors in terms of what the newbies need. (School Administrator, June, 2008)

Lack of personnel to both directly support new teachers as well as train those who work with them, such as mentors, was further compounded by the newness of administration and the inability for leadership to prioritize their role as instructional leaders. One administrator said “I was not an effective instructional leader. I did not get to spend my time and energy in that area; I spent a lot of time this year being a policeman. But I’m used to having a lot more contact and interaction [with teachers]” (School Administrator, June 2008). A veteran Support Provider noted that the lack of personnel made supporting beginning teachers more difficult. She noted that while she felt the “crunch of caring for BTs while maintaining class and leadership duties,” she felt “a lot of loyalty to her teachers” (Induction Coordinator, April, 2008).

#### School B

One Support Provider commented that School B has a large number of new teachers, having opened the doors to its new building in 2008. The school’s new technical curriculum in medical careers and construction technology attracted a large number of mid-career lateral entry teachers; there are only “two career teachers at the school” (School Administrator, May, 2008). As a result, the teachers are highly capable and motivated, but lack experience and “have no

education background” (School Administrator, May, 2008). The principal of the school is also new; she transferred to the position midyear and had prior experience as a teacher and as an Assistant Principal within the district.

Implementation of induction policies and practices consisted of finding capable veteran teachers to mentor its overwhelming number of BTs in addition to leaning upon District Coaches for one-on-one support. Because the school was so new, it relied upon a neighboring high school to provide both an Induction Coordinator and mentors for the 2007-2008 school year. The school administrator also provides support to beginning teachers in the form of ongoing observation and feedback as well as recruitment and selection. The administrator noted that her goal was to find teachers who would connect with other teachers and seek help: “You cannot teach in isolation” (School Administrator, May, 2008).

#### School C

Three Support Providers cited School C as one of the more established schools in the district having a “rich history” and sense of “pride in the generations that come through” (Mentor, June, 2008). The school has had some struggles meeting AYP in past years and as a result is receiving additional support from both the district and the state. The principal of the school is also a veteran who moved to another position in the district at the completion of this study.

When asked about implementation of induction policies and practices at their school, Support Providers mentioned that there was a mentor program and that there were specific qualities that administrators looked for during the recruitment and placement process. The Induction Coordinator at the school oversees the mentor program and ensures that all BTs are matched up at the start of the school year. Finding the right fit between the teacher and the school is also an important piece in the induction process. One Support Provider noted that because of School C’s unique community, it is important during recruitment that beginning teachers “are

able to relate to that community, communicating as well as teaching to make them better able to communicate . . . because [School C] is not considered a Title I school, although when you look at the demographics of the people who come through, you have to know that not all of the students come from [a lower] socioeconomic background” (Mentor, June, 2008).

Additionally, Support Providers perceived implementation of induction policies in terms of support given to beginning teachers primarily as it pertains to administrative observation and feedback. One Support Provider observed that administration was most effective when it gave “more in depth feedback” and took into consideration the specific needs of lateral entry teachers who are “not used to the education lingo part yet” (Mentor, June, 2008).

#### School D

Three Support Providers spoke about administrative support at School D. School D has a long-standing commitment to the education of diverse students, possessing one of the most diverse student bodies in the district. The school has struggled to meet AYP in past years, resulting in the addition of district and state resources to assist administrators and students. The head administrator has been at the school for three years and has prior experience with a similar school in another state. When asked about the implementation of induction policies and practices at the school, Support Providers talked about support in terms of the combination of resources that beginning teachers can utilize according to their needs. One support provider said, “I can see their mentors. I can see their buddy, I can see people in their department. I can see administration . . . I’ve always told a teacher, and this is what I did myself as a classroom teacher, I would always network” (School Administrator, June, 2008).

Another form of support cited was the leadership of the school. Support Providers spoke about administrative support in terms of feedback they give to beginning teachers and the

relationships that they cultivate. One Support Provider noted that feedback is a strong priority for beginning teachers:

After teaching fifteen years, I know that those days happen and moments happen, but you come back the next day and you talk about what's happened and what we'd do different. And the support of the administration. As much as we need teachers, they are so quick to jump on [negative] side instead of saying, okay, that lesson plan didn't work. Let's figure out how to make Johnny want to do this. (Mentor, May, 2008)

Another Support Provider noted the same potential for negative feedback and commented that she used the induction programs, such as the monthly meetings, to help train beginning teachers in school policies and procedures and advocated for them to the administration.

that's the thing. Sometimes you are doing what you think is right and then you find out, 'Uh oh, there was something I left out or didn't do'. I tried to work with them about grades. We had one session on how to do their grades, and then I've asked their buddies and mentors to go to them, and I've actually sat down with a couple of them [BTs] and more or less done their grades, as much as I hate to say it, because it's the first time. And then I thought 'Okay, now this is what you've got to do from here on out.' And that's one of the big questions. 'What does he expect?' is another question, talking about our principal about various things. 'What does he expect of me?' I know that [the principal] has certain buzzwords that will be different at a different school depending on where you go. And I've tried to stop any pitfalls that they might fall into before they fall into them. And when I've seen things, I've said 'Hey, are you sure you should be doing that?' (Mentor, May, 2008)

Thus, Support Providers cited the combination of resources available to beginning teachers as way to offer multiple layers of support from different sources. Because administrators serve in an evaluative role, other Support Providers could offer day-to-day help with both classroom and administrative needs.

Theme 2) Support Providers talk about mentor work in terms of mentor/mentee matches.

When asked about mentoring as a form of support, four of the thirteen Support Providers spoke about the importance of the mentor/mentee match. An administrator commented that



because the mentor is not an evaluator, the mentor can act as a leader with whom the beginning teacher can feel comfortable sharing their questions, concerns, and needs.

I think it's very important for them to develop a very close relationship in a mentoring program, very confidential relationship. And if they can't be with their mentor, because the mentor is not the right person, they may be stuck with them, whatever, then the IC at the school needs to be able to be there for them to unload. And very often it's not going to be with administration, but they need to have that individual . . . and the mentor needs to be changed, then they can get that mentor changed. And that's where the IC is important at the school to make sure that person and those meetings are going on, that it is a valid meeting and that it's not just on paper . . . That IC needs to exist in all schools, and it needs to be a situation where they are following up with those BTs and mentors and making sure the match is there, mentor and teacher. (School Administrator, June, 2008)

Thus a good mentor/mentee match ensures that the BT can feel secure in going to a school veteran for help and that the mentor is committed to serving in that supportive role.

Another Support Provider spoke about how a good mentor/mentee match could create a collaborative system of support for *both* teachers involved. While it is difficult for school leaders to always match all mentors and mentees across subject areas, the access to the resources of a veteran teacher in the same content area is an asset for both parties.

It's a wonderful mentee/mentor relationship that we have . . . and she is across the hall from me—very convenient . . . her first year, we both taught biology . . . I find that we meet almost every day, even if it's just in a hallway. 'Hey what lesson did you do? Oh really? Great! What did you do?' So we collaborate every day . . . (Mentor, June, 2008)

This particular match continued into the BTs second year and grew stronger as a new first-year teacher joined the circle.

And she actually had gotten one of her friends . . . to apply . . . and she actually got hired at [school] this past year. And ironically she became my mentee for this year . . . She's right down the hall . . . and we meet once a week as far as collaboration. But it's really interesting because since [the original mentee] has helped . . . brought her one, and [she] is my mentee, she has actually bonded with [the new mentee] and pulled her up under her

wings. So now I have my mentees working together and whenever they have a question they can come to me as one. It's really great! (Mentor, June, 2008)

A good mentor/mentee match can help beginning teachers both share ideas from their own preparation and receive timely instructional and procedural support. Therefore, time to meet in addition to complimentary subject areas is another important factor in finding a good match. A good mentor/mentee match also allows for time in which both parties can meet and even observe one another. One Support Provider suggested that “a lot of [support] has to happen through discussion, time to discuss” (Mentor, June, 2008).

Theme 3) Support Providers talk about mentor work in terms of types of support that mentors offer mentees.

Four Support Providers cited the *types* of support that mentors offer teachers thirteen times when asked about the kinds of practices that the school utilized to support beginning teachers. In general, mentor support came in the form of regular check-ins with BTs to help with day-to-day needs or questions. Specific needs addressed were most often in areas of instructional planning, classroom management and behavior management, acclimation to the school culture and help with individual students. One mentor said that her “role as a mentor has been to, either weekly or monthly make sure that I’m checking in on my mentee and mak[ing] sure that whatever needs they have, or things I can help them with, to help them, so they are acclimated to the culture [of the school]” (Mentor, June, 2008). Mentors work with teachers to acclimate to the school by introducing them to school policies and procedures and by making “sure that teachers are able to relate to that community [of students and parents]” (Mentor, June, 2009).

When asked about what kinds of issues that BTs tended to need the most help with, several mentors cited pedagogy and classroom management. One mentor noted that her role was to help teachers understand the relationship between strong pedagogy and student behavior:

A lot of the mentees that I come across, those particularly who are coming through, have an understanding of their content and the Standard Course of Study, but it's one thing to be a practitioner whenever they get into the classroom, they have to apply the things they learned. What we may think of as exciting, the kids are thinking is boring. So, how could they take those things across the board and apply them in a classroom using the resources of other teachers? It's important that they come out of their shells a little bit where if they have questions, that they need to ask so that we can get them to be better teachers. (Mentor, June, 2008)

This mentor felt that growing a teacher implied developing a personal style and approach to communicating the curriculum. Another mentor cited a similar approach in her work, identifying her role in helping beginning teachers develop their professional identity as leaders in the classroom:

The big one is drawing that professional line, because they're so close in age [to their students]. It's hard to figure out how to; you have two extremes. You have teachers that come in and start yelling and demanding respect instead of modeling what respect looks like. And then you have the other extreme where they feel like, if they're friends with their students, then they'll like them. I think it's human nature to want people to like you . . . And in the first few years, it's really important to figure [that balance] out, and it's important for a mentor to help you figure out that line. (Mentor, June, 2008)

Thus, while a mentor helps beginning teachers with day to day questions and specific instructional needs, mentors also can serve as a "safe harbor" for teachers to approach for feedback as they work out, through trial and error, their professional teaching style.

Theme 4) Support Providers talk about district level support in terms of the resources and professional development offered to teachers, the Induction Coaches, and the structural supports that district administrators put into place.

Nine participants addressed implementation of district level induction policies and supports at the school. District personnel spoke about recruitment and retention, district induction programs and policies, and the political context of implementation. School administrators (principals and assistant principals) spoke primarily about hiring and placement decisions and

cited forms of induction-related support. School-level induction providers (mentors and Induction Coordinators) spoke about on-the-ground forms of induction support for beginning teachers.

Hiring and placement practices also impact the support of beginning teachers. In order for many of these beginning teachers to successfully orient to their school, they need to be placed in a well-matched school *prior* to the start of the school year. Early placement ensures that teachers will have time to take part in district-wide orientation activities in addition to orienting to their school, meeting their mentors, and arranging their classrooms. Two of the three district administrators interviewed identified hiring practices as a key factor in supporting and retaining beginning teachers. One administrator commented that schools were encouraged by the county superintendent to have 100% staffing at the start of the school year. In some hard-to-staff schools, some last minute hiring decisions were made to meet this obligation, and many of the teachers hired were lateral entry teachers. One administrator expressed that in *some* situations it would be more beneficial to students to hire a full-time substitute teacher than to staff a position with an under-qualified teacher. This administrator cited the connection between just-in-time staffing and teaching quality: “And we put our most novice people, and I’m talking teachers and principals, in our most highly impacted schools, where the challenges are greater” (District Administrator, May, 2008).

Another district administrator suggested that administrators were encouraged to have their staff hired and placed by July 1, prior to the start of the academic school year (Hooker, A., personal communication, March 19, 2008). However, several hiring and budget policies impede proper recruitment and placement. Lateral entry teachers are required to complete six credit hours of coursework each year until they have fulfilled all certification requirements. They have until June 30 of each year to complete these requirements. If administrators choose to work with lateral entry teachers completing their requirements, they will not advertise a job vacancy for that

position. Thus, if the teacher does not meet their requirements, the administrator must post a vacancy *after* July 1, forcing a late hiring process. Further, beginning teachers are not given the option of transferring to other positions within the school system (with the exception of transfer *into* a Mission Possible School). If teachers wish to leave, they may not announce their resignation until they have secured positions at another school out of district, and often this type of turnover occurs during the summer. Finally state law requires that all lateral entry teachers take part in training or observations as part of induction success program prior to entering the classroom, if they are hired after the start of the school year. This policy, while helpful to the lateral entry teacher, prevents schools from being 100% staffed at the start of the academic school year.

Hiring and placement of school principals also may impact the support of beginning teachers. All four schools in the study have seen principal turn-over at least once in the past three years. One school had three different principals in two years and will receive a new principal in the 2008-2009 school year. One school had two principals in the 2007-2008 school year, one had a principal in his third year at the school, and one had a veteran principal who moved to another position in the district at the end of the study. Administrative changes can have substantial impacts on staffing decisions, school structure, professional development and curricular programs, and ultimately staff morale. One Induction Coordinator commented that the district plays a role in principal turnover:

I think if we had a little more stability within [X] County period, I think sometimes that, not so much as the higher-ups, but even within the principals, I think that that could help. They seem to move around. There's [sic] principals every two or three years. You about get one broken in and they've got to get you broken in the way they want it, and then they're gone and we start all over. (Induction Coordinator, May 2008)

Theme 5) Support Providers talk about challenges in implementing support in terms of teacher workload.

Seven Support Providers cited teacher workload as a potential factor that impacts the types of support teachers receive. All seven references referred to workload as an area that challenged implementation and provided examples of alternative scenarios for support if working conditions could be changed. Support Providers spoke about workload in terms how time impacts the prioritization and implementation of various forms of support.

Five Support Providers spoke about the time constraints that make meeting regularly with mentors and administrators a challenge. One mentor noted that it's especially difficult to meet because

you really are both teaching . . . we can't even get in the classroom. We only have one planning on the traditional schedule. That active rigor means that you need that planning to make your copies, and then at the end of the school day when you finally see your mentor, that's on your time, or it's just pop in, and the whole world is falling apart. (Mentor, June, 2008)

Another mentor noted that she was having difficulty "caring for BTs while maintaining class and leadership duties" (May, 2008). A district administrator also noted that teachers in high schools tended to find time within the workday to meet because teachers get more and more isolated. "Now it is harder to get people to plan together" (May, 2008).

Principals felt that similar crunch in finding time to serve as instructional leaders and support beginning teachers. One administrator said, "I did not get to spend my time and energy in that area [working with teachers] . . . I'm used to having a lot more contact and interaction . . . [but] we never really got the opportunity as an administrative team to sit down, and decide what [beginning teacher support] looks like" (June, 2008). A district administrator made similar remarks regarding administrators' ability to create an ideal system of support. "I think they do the

best that they can to relieve some of the external factors, and sometimes it's not possible . . . I understand why principals do what they do, and sometimes they don't have a choice" (May, 2008).

Beginning teachers have the added responsibility of managing their instructional workload with learning the policies and procedures at the school. Induction supports in the school, such as monthly meetings and mentor meetings, take place either outside of instructional hours or during teachers' planning times. Support Providers note that beginning teachers in particular need *as much time as possible* to develop their curriculum and learn the ropes of their role. One mentor pointed out that new teachers are

exhausted . . . You need the professional development. You get a few at the beginning of the year, but during the workdays, you have to get your grades in. So physically you can't learn how to manage, or learn techniques in the classroom . . . it's a very demanding job. (June, 2009)

They note that in some ways, these "supports" could be perceived as a burden if they impede on teachers' time to plan. "I don't know if I could survive as a new teacher today, because there are so many calls on their time . . . there are so many time constraints here that you just, after a while, you just begin to feel really pushed down, and it makes it hard on some people" (Induction Coordinator, April, 2008). A mentor elaborated on this idea, pointing out that the lack of time and stress could lead some beginning teachers to feel resentment towards induction programs if they are seen as 'another thing.'

The [district induction monthly meeting] is after teaching all day long. You are so tired and aggravated, that's just one more thing to do. You can't work on lesson plans, etc. It's construed as a negative, because they are not getting the opportunity to do positive stuff. It's taking away from what I need to do here. At the same time, it does detract from what they are trying to do. (May, 2008)

While induction programs and practices are perceived as helpful to beginning teachers in many ways, Support Providers are mindful that the lack of time can alter the priorities of teachers and administrators, thereby impacting the ability for beginning teachers to take advantage of these resources.

Theme 6) Support Providers talked about challenges in implementation of induction policies and practices in terms of external pressure.

Four Support Providers spoke about the influence of external factors that schools must factor into the kinds of support that they offer beginning teachers. All four spoke about the pressure that beginning teachers faced when asked to teach classes that have End of Course (EOC) exams attached. One District Administrator noted that most principals try to avoid placing a beginning teacher in a high-stakes class, but that sometimes circumstances made that placement avoidable:

I understand [principals] trying not to put a new teacher in an EOC in the short term until I knew his experience and ability. And that just takes some of the pressure from them as well, just learning how to teach, because that first year teaching is just survival in any school on any level. But I think it's certainly different in those types of [high needs] settings . . . So again, the challenge of transitioning to the workforce and teaching, you try to be mindful of it . . . Sometimes a person was hired, [but] there are so many different variables and factors that come into how teachers are placed. I would think that they tried not to put first year teachers in high stakes classes, but they don't have that luxury.

Even beginning teachers are aware of the performance aspect of teaching, particularly in high-stakes classes. The pressure for beginning teachers to equip their students to perform as well as veteran teachers is ever-present: "If you go into teaching, you say 'I want to be really good. I want to be above average.' Your level of competition in this building is pretty steep. You're going to really have to be super if you're going to be above average in this pool" (School Administrator, June, 2008).



Administrators understand the tension between the time it takes to help a beginning teacher learn the ropes and the external pressure to perform at standard. A District Administrator noted that in schools that were not making AYP, which was at two of the four schools in the case of this study, extra resources were often administered by the district and the state in order to give teachers support with specific needs. “They have [state department], because they are low-performing, they have Judge [X], they have [state] coaches coming in. They have to have development coaches coming in. If you teach math you have coaches from Cumulative Effect, another initiative we have. And that’s all external. That’s not even including me and what I say or what they have [to do] internally” (District Administrator, April, 2008). Program administrators, at the time of this study were not in frequent communication with each other, thus causing scheduling overlap in training sessions which at times overwhelmed teachers rather than supporting them.

I just think we have so much. We have the best of intentions. But I’m not sure we, the external people collaborate enough to look at what we’re doing for teachers. And I will say, we observed that happening this year. We kind of took a step back and had all the external people at the table, but the table got too full . . . But as we are planning for next year, we are a little more cognizant, so if Talent Development is here this week, we won’t have [state] there the same week. Because that’s just so overwhelming. And the other piece that’s more important is that we’re collaborating so we’re giving the same message. (District Administrator, April, 2008)

Further, the District Administrator noted that the multiple forms of support from multiple sources made it difficult to ascertain which programs were benefitting teachers and students the most.

Well that’s the pickle we are in. Unfortunately we were already in it, before I took a step back and realized we were in it. Because I knew about Talent Development, and I know the state’s going to do what they have to do, then I heard about Cumulative Effect, and was like, ‘Whoa.’ So we really don’t have an answer to [the question of which programs are working] yet. Because everybody wants their data to be pure so they can say, ‘This made this occur.’ We honestly can’t say that. (District Administrator, April, 2008)

Thus, good communication between different sources of support and coordination of efforts could provide more streamlined support to teachers and more transparency regarding the effectiveness of different programs.

Theme 7) Support Providers talk about successes in implementation of induction policies and practices in terms of teacher growth.

Support Providers cited different areas in which they felt that implementation of induction practices were a success, but four of the thirteen pointed out that their primary indicator of success was teacher growth. One administrator specifically said that her job was “to grow someone” and that in interviewing prospective teachers, she wanted those who were willing to learn and consider advice given by their more experienced peers (School Administrator, June, 2008). Most Support Providers agree that teachers are not perfect in their first years of teaching, but that their willingness to learn and ability to adapt are keys in growing into successful practitioners. Another administrator noted that she looked for “enthusiasm and being competent in the [content] area. You can work with BTs. And I think that’s a part of what we should be doing in really building support for them” (School Administrator, July, 2008).

Three of the four Support Providers pointed out specific examples of growing a beginning teacher and cited their role in providing interventions that helped their teachers adapt and grow. One noted a teacher who was a “perfectionist” and was ready to leave after her first year, but that she changed in attitude towards the end of the year as she found success in the classroom and developed more positive relationships with her administrators. A mentor spoke about the success of her work with a mentee in helping her become more efficient in classroom management. She noted that during the first year, her mentee “was challeng[ed] just because of classroom management. I know that this year she got it together, her classes flowed a whole lot better . . . So she knows the progress she has made, and she’s on it. And she has told me she has

realized since her management is better, the kids are retaining more information” (School Mentor, June, 2008). An administrator also cited that successful intervention allowed teachers the time to develop their personal style:

You really try to intervene. Our job is to make BTs master teachers. I was thinking about a young man at our school. When he first came he was terrible. I walked in his room and it was a zoo. It was bad. His test scores were really bad. At the end of the year we talked about things. How this would look different and what are you willing to do. So when you see things, you don’t say, this is not for you, you work with people. This same gentleman, this is year three, he is a superstar. First of all, he had the heart and enthusiasm, and we were able to connect him with the resources to help him and then the light came on and he evolved into the type of teacher that he wanted to be. So now he has his own signature if you will. (School Administrator, July, 2008)

Support Providers saw success with induction in terms of the BTs ability to adapt to the school and stick with the position long enough to see improvements. One mentor noted that in her own opinion, teachers just need to “make it past that first three years. It’s a real physical milestone . . . [after] the third year, everything . . . seems to mesh” (Mentor, June, 2008). At times, even intervention and time are not sufficient to develop a beginning teacher. However, these Support Providers felt that their programs were a success if they were able to do as much as possible to help a beginning teacher before they make that determination. “There does come a time that you work and do these things and the light doesn’t come on. But when that doesn’t happen, it’s almost like a mutual thing. But [it is] very seldom. I try very hard to work with them. It is a beautiful transformation to see that happen” (School Administrator, July, 2008).

- How do stakeholders perceive other types of support at their schools?

Support Providers discuss other sources of support that beginning teachers rely upon during their induction to their schools. These findings are presented in two broad themes that describe collegial support and professional development.

Theme 1) Support Providers talk about colleagues as a source of support for beginning teachers.

When asked about where beginning teachers seek support, four of the 13 Support Providers mentioned colleagues within the school as an important source. One school administrator suggested that teachers seek support from a number of sources outside of administrator and induction-specific support, including the department chair and other teachers:

The other piece is how the school is organized, so if the principal is not there, who do I go to? With that being said, I think it's very critical that the department chair is in tune to the needs of new teachers, making sure that they have the Standard Course of Study. And what we've done is see that content area is planned together. So the new teacher doesn't have to say, 'How am I going to do this and what resources?' You are with a group. So you have a shell of what needs to take place, and then you can begin to fill in the dots and details as you interact individually with your students. Then you have the CF which is another source. That person is your direct content area person. I think you have the buddy, and then a mentor. But not only that, I think it's people in the school setting saying, 'these are our new folks,' and meeting with them throughout the year, separate from a staff meeting. (School Administrator, July, 2008)

One potential disadvantage of beginning teachers utilizing collegial support is the potential to receive inaccurate information or less appropriate suggestions for instruction for such an early stage in their career. A school administrator pointed out that the frustration with beginning teachers seeking support from veteran teachers is their tendency to "try on" a variety of instructional "hats" while developing their style. Some are less effective than others.

One of the [potential issues] that's a little unique here, is young teachers who are following the advice of older teachers, and the advice has to do with inflexibility. And from an older teacher, they've gotten to a point where they've drawn a certain line in a certain place, but they have the history, they have the reputation, and they've done a lot of work over the 10-15-20 years to know where that line gets drawn and when it gets drawn. But they'll give the advice to the young teacher that this is where you need to draw the line, and you have someone who has no history, no reputation, no real comfort level for where that line is for them. They've been told, draw it there. And they draw it there, and they can't explain why they're there. It doesn't work for them because they don't have that reputation . . . There are lots of older teachers here who may have a reputation that this is how they do things, and they've been here long enough, they've

been in the community long enough . . . A young teacher doesn't have any of that, but they've been told, 'Draw this line here,' and they go 'Okay.' They don't even honestly know why they did it. I say, 'Well why did you do that? Well, so-and-so recommended it. Well, did you think it was a good idea when you did it? Well, no, it's not the way I would normally do things. Well, okay.' As opposed to saying things like, 'How do I want to do things?' (School Administrator, June, 2008)

Theme 2) Support Providers talk about professional development as another source of support for beginning teachers.

While not geared specifically as an induction activity, four Support Providers talked about school-based professional development (PD) activities as a form of support that beginning teachers utilize. School-based professional development designed to meet the unique needs of the teachers and the students of the school. One support provider noted that the PD at her school was helpful because it gave teachers the tools to work with the diverse student population:

You have to do 'Undoing Racism,' and that is a wonderful training. We all had to take it. We did it during the summer; some of them have been doing it during the school year, and some of them will do it next summer . . . We [all] learned a lot about each other. We also have to do differentiated education, differentiated teaching, all those good things . . . Some of us had to do STARS training. I did that . . . There are several others that I know these teachers have to do, the young teacher have to . . . so we have a lot of those things that are not done all over the county, just with us" (Mentor, April, 2008).

Another school administrator pointed out school-specific programs which are designed to support teachers around the common goals and needs of the school:

One [goal] was to decrease the suspension rate and also create a safe and warm climate for adults and students to learn and be a part of throughout the day. Those were some visions I had in mind and I think one of the overarching models of things that we carried at [School C] was that Failure is Not an Option. (School Administrator, July 2008)

While school-based professional development activities can be extremely helpful to beginning teachers by offering specific content-area, instructional, or classroom management support, a district administrator noted that the potential drawbacks of additional support is the tax on

beginning teachers' time. If PD is a mandated activity in addition to induction related PD, then there may be less time during the school day for beginning teachers to accomplish their day-to-day duties.

So, while we have good intentions, because these are important PD opportunities for our teachers to be involved in, is it really fair to mandate that they take them or can we say over a three year period you will have had this and this. So we try to limit taking them out of the building every day. So we are actually trying to do a better job as a district with special development and limiting it and letting schools say, this will be our focus for this year. If everybody will commit to this, this will be the follow up, this will be the evaluation, and do that well, we will start adding things. Let's do whatever we do well. (District Administrator, May, 2008)

Research Question 2: Why do some beginning teachers choose to leave, and why do some beginning teachers choose to stay in their schools?

Support Providers prefaced this conversation about beginning teacher retention with a description of the unique characteristics of their schools and the support needs of their beginning teachers both generally and relative to their school context. Their perceptions of why beginning teachers leave their schools and/or the teaching profession or stay are then presented in general themes which include their beliefs about important traits they look for when seeking a successful teaching candidate.

- How do stakeholders perceive support needs in relationship to the unique needs of their school?

A major goal for the study was to investigate how the unique context of each school environment drives some beginning teacher needs. Participants spoke in the first section of this chapter about supports that beginning teacher receive from the district and the school. This section will highlight Support Providers' perceptions of what makes their school unique and what further supports, if any, are needed given their school context. While *causal* connections between support needs and individual school context cannot be made, participants were able to speak

about how their school contexts impact the *kinds* of needs that beginning teachers may have. Finally, all Support Providers shared their thoughts on why some teachers chose to stay in teaching or leave within their first three years.

Theme 1) Support Providers spoke about the uniqueness of their schools.

#### School A

Two Support Providers from School A noted three major areas in which they felt that their school was unique: school history and “reputation”, excellence in teaching, and parents. School A is one of the oldest schools in the district, and it has a reputation for high student achievement. This reputation means that there is a school-wide tone “focused on academic rigor . . . it’s the school personality trait that we push everyone into a higher level” (Mentor, June, 2008). Because of its reputation, school administrators hand-pick the most qualified teachers from a large applicant pool. As a result, teachers who come to this school are held to a high standard by their peers. One Support Provider said “I don’t want to be a snob or boastful about this, but I really do believe that our teachers really do offer a high-quality product, for the most part” (School Administrator, June, 2008). Beginning teachers as a result can feel that pressure to perform well in their first years: “You’re looking at your colleagues and going ‘Wow. Will I have been able to teach at that [level]?’” (School Administrator, June, 2008). The pressure can make for a difficult adjustment for some beginning teachers, “I think here, teachers don’t respect you until you show results. And that’s right out of college . . . coming to [School A], where it didn’t matter the wealth of knowledge you had, you had to prove yourself.” Further, at School A, a strong and vocal parent base could exert similar pressure on teachers, even beginning teachers, if they were not showing expected academic results with their students.

I think that this school, in particular, has a very powerful parent group, which is amazing in many respects . . . it’s good on one hand, because these are your children. But on the other hand, it is unfair for parents to go after you if it’s a first year teacher. The first-year

teacher is not going to demonstrate at that level, especially if they may or may not have a mentor teacher who does or does not meet their needs. And really they're doing their best. Even under the best circumstances, the first, second, or third year teacher is going to struggle, mainly because you have the idealistic perception of what it's going to be like and you have reality . . . but I don't think it's fair for a group of parents to gang up and try to run you out of a job . . . so a principal is getting all this flak from the parents. The first-year teacher is crying because no one's helping her. They don't know what to do, they feel like they're not supported. (School Mentor, June, 2008)

Both Support Providers noted that the uniqueness of the school made it a destination for many teachers, but the pressure to succeed and maintain the level of success expected by parents and peers made it often difficult for beginning teachers to feel that they had room to develop their craft during their first years to a level that was on par with veteran teachers.

#### School B

Because School B is a new school that opened the doors to its new facility in January 2008, there was only one Support Provider who could be interviewed. The school outsourced many of its other Support Providers, such as the Induction Coordinator and mentors, to a neighboring high school. The School Administrator of this school commented that the unique aspects of this school were tied primarily to the school's curricular focus (magnet in science) and to its newness. At the time of the interview, the School Administrator said that there were "only two career teachers at the school" and that the rest of the teaching population was made up of beginning teachers, many of whom were entering through an alternative certification program. Thus, there were challenges in providing *peer* support for beginning teachers, the School Administrator commenting that they "need some anchors." Beginning teachers did not have the resources to ask questions of their peers regarding both school policies and expectations and classroom instruction.



## School C

Three Support Providers provided information regarding what made their school unique. All three spoke about school pride and community. One School Administrator said that School C “has a wealth of pride and community” (July, 2008). Another said that School C “has a rich history. A lot of times when you look at [School C], you understand the pride and the generations that come through” (Mentor, July, 2008).

All three Support Providers spoke about the population of the school as a unique factor. One noted that the school has “predominantly minority kids” (School Administrator, July, 2008). Two noted that understanding the population that the school serves is an important priority for beginning teachers there. One notes that teachers can be tempted to liken the population of the school to other similar performing schools, but in actuality the population that the school serves is quite different from the external reputation.

Whenever we’re looking at [School C], just understanding how [it] is distinct from other area schools with respect to the population that we serve. There might be a discipline or a classroom management issue, or a technique that a teacher might have to use in one school, that they might not have to use in other schools. Even down through the communication . . . Because I consider [the school] to be a little bit different. Whenever we talk to other teachers throughout the district, they expect to find it a terrible school, and a lot of times we are compared to [other schools that are lower performing] and things of that nature, but sometimes the teachers that come here have never experienced that population or that particular environment. (Mentor, July, 2008)

One Support Provider stated that teaching kids from this population required teachers to

open up and not only open up within themselves and as colleagues . . . but as far as understanding that whether they like it or not, it’s just the time in society where we adults have to respect the children, believe it or not. And when we respect the children, the children will respect us back. (Mentor, June, 2008)

Other than being honest and showing respect for students, this Support Provider felt that the external reputation that the school was “horrible” did not add up and that “teachers at other schools pretty much undergo the same type of situation” (Mentor, July, 2008).

School C is different from some other schools in the district because it is considered a Priority School (School Administrator, July, 2008). As a result, Support Providers note that teachers at this school are under additional scrutiny from the district and the state to show academic gains. Teachers feel a pressure to perform, even in their first year.

These kids have to pass the test, but she’s a new teacher and she has this subgroup. So how you balance being new and ‘you’ve gotta make it!’ You can’t do it. You’ve got to put those resources there, whether it’s the Curriculum Facilitator working side by side with her, modeling lessons, having her do classroom visits, or putting good tutors or retired folks in there to help her, you’ve got to do that for people. It’s tough, because in my mind, I’m thinking ‘I’ve got to get these scores!’ But I cannot tell this person, stand on their shoulders, and I’ve got to be there to help those people. (School Administrator, July, 2008)

#### School D

Two Support Providers at School D talked about the population of students that the school serves, parental support, and administrative support when asked about what made their school unique. One Support Provider noted the diversity and lower socioeconomic status of the majority of the students that the school served, “At [School D] you don’t see the parents . . . having that experience teaching students with diversity is important” (Mentor, June, 2008). Another Support Provider stated, “it is a very diverse school, and we are working within our department, and within our staff development that we’ve had on campus this year to turn the school around academically” (School Administrator, July, 2008).

The school is considered under-performing, and similar to School C, teachers at School D are under additional scrutiny to achieve student gains. Support Providers talked about administrative support in working with challenging students, when asked about what made the

school unique. One Support Provider outlined the staff development programs geared to “get [students] settled and working” noting that administration was working to institute stronger “no tolerance” policies for student misbehaviors (School Administrator, July, 2008). She notes that students need both behavioral and academic support, “We have many students coming from our feeder schools who have not met the 8<sup>th</sup> grade standards” (School Administrator, July, 2008). Further, many students entering the school are English Language Learners (ELLs), and teachers need support in finding strategies to communicate the content with them, “It’s difficult many times for teachers with what we have going, knowing that we’ve got a lot of things going, and we have to give them assistance” (School Administrator, July, 2008). The other Support Provider commented that even with this assistance, enforcing behavior management policies was difficult because there was a “lack of consistency with administration at the school” (Mentor, June, 2008).

Theme 2) Support Providers spoke about the perceived need for better collaboration.

When asked about what kinds of support that would augment what is currently available, eight Support Providers spoke about the need for better collaboration. While teachers currently receive collaborative support from a variety of places, most Support Providers felt that collaboration was often insufficient due to the particular constraints presented in their school context.

School A

Two Support Providers commented that beginning teachers need more opportunities to collaborate with mentors and administrators. Both felt that lack of time prevented some of the one-on-one support that they would like to provide. One Support Provider felt that because of the administrative transition at the school during the year, more administrative focus was placed on day-to-day operations of the school, leaving less time to work with beginning teachers and build a consensus with other school leaders about how to support them. He advocated for a system of

support where the administrative team could share the responsibility of overseeing beginning teachers and providing nonjudgmental evaluations in addition to formal evaluations.

One of the things that I wasn't able to really do well this year that I'm typically used to doing is, because of a lot of other things that went on at [School A] this year, I was not an effective instructional leader . . . What I want to do is some mock observations with that individual and say, the things you did were really good. But give them the 'buts.' (School Administrator, June, 2008)

Another Support Provider felt that there was not enough non-instructional time to meet for mentors and mentees to meet. “[We need] time to discuss. But if we have a structure set up where a mentor teacher can have someone cover their classes, that would be a solution” (Mentor, June, 2008).

#### School B

The School Administrator interviewed at School B also mentioned the need for increased collaboration between beginning teachers and Support Providers. She noted that if she had *carte blanche*, she would place a “CF in rooms constantly” and that teachers would receive “coaching constantly” (May, 2008). The need for more visible forms of support is especially present at this school because of the lack of peer leadership and because of the small administrative team. Finding the resources to keep an IC in house and have more mentors in house would also increase collaboration, and give teachers more options to receive observation and feedback.

#### School C

Two Support Providers from School C felt that because the school was considered a Priority School, beginning teachers needed additional time to collaborate and receive assistance in instruction. A school administrator stated that critical forms of support for beginning teachers especially in high priority schools included assistance in how to “deliver the content information, assistance in engaging students, assistance in how to limit the distractions within the classroom

setting, and how to do the work and not experience burnout” (School Administrator, July, 2009). Further, because teachers in this school have so many commitments on their time, the administrator feels that she would “like to be able to offer new teachers more time” particularly to receive support and improve instructionally without the pressure of raising test scores. The other Support Provider also felt that there was a need for additional time to collaborate, even though it would mean “extra meetings.” She suggested that mentors and mentees all meet as a group “maybe twice a semester and collaborate . . . I think I would bring newer teachers together as a whole instead of them feeling like they have to fend for themselves . . . it helps to bring the mentors together . . .” (Mentor, June, 2008).

#### School D

Two Support Providers at School D also advocated for the increased opportunity for beginning teachers to collaborate with an experienced teacher and the time to focus on instructional duties. School D is also a high priority school, and subsequently, there are additional calls on beginning teachers’ time that might not be found in schools that meet AYP. One Support Provider spoke about the many departmental and school meetings in addition to professional development offered by the district and the state, such as the “DPI turnaround team” (School Administrator, July, 2008). Also, because many students require special attention who are below grade level academically or ESL, beginning teachers require additional support in “delivery of instruction” (School Administrator, July, 2008). Thus, one Support Provider advocates for the resources to free up beginning teachers

where they would not have to have any hall supervision or cafeteria duty or duties like that. I would like teachers free in that respect to those duties that you have to have during the day to maintain law and order . . . so their focus is on delivery and instruction and development of lesson plans, contact of parents, and being that bridge between school and home. That would mean extra personnel . . . I would also say extra planning periods, but that’s pie in the sky. If you had more time to plan, but, other than that, I think it’s

freeing them of those extra things that keep them from classroom instruction. (School Administrator, July, 2008)

Despite these suggestions, it is more often the case that beginning teachers must hone their craft while fulfilling non-instructional duties. A mentor suggested that teachers need “support on the challenges [unique to their school] and day-to-day things” (Mentor, June, 2008). She advocates that administration collaborate with teachers regarding how to manage their duties and provide a degree of understanding for the challenges of working in their school: “I know that those days happen and moments happen, but you come back the next day and you talk about what’s happened and what we’d do differently. [They need] the support of the administration” (Mentor, June, 2008).

- How do the Support Providers perceive retention for beginning teachers at their schools?

Responses from Support Providers to questions related to beginning teacher retention were classified into four themes: perceptions of why beginning teachers choose to leave, perceptions of the dispositions of a successful teaching candidate, perceptions of why beginning teachers choose to stay, and what principals look for when hiring a beginning teacher.

Theme 1) When asked about recruitment and retention, Support Providers shared their perceptions of why beginning teachers choose to leave.

Ten out of thirteen Support Providers spoke extensively about beginning teachers’ preparation, recruitment, and induction experiences and ultimately how all of their experiences impacted their decisions to stay or leave. They were asked to explain why they felt beginning teachers left. The parameters of that question were ill-defined; teachers could leave the profession entirely, move to another school, or move to another role within the profession. However, Support Providers tended to focus on why teachers left *their school* since they had less

knowledge of where beginning teachers go following their exit. Support Providers were limited to talking about first and second year teachers who left their schools. Reasons for leaving that Support Providers spoke about can be broken into categories related to lack of support, inaccurate expectations, and the inability to adapt to the teaching environment.

Seven Support Providers cited a lack of support as a reason why some beginning teachers choose to leave their schools during their first years. Several noted that the demands of the job are extremely high, particularly for new teachers who must develop all of their lessons and locate resources while teaching a full course load. A mentor noted that the job is

physically laborious. You need the professional development. You get a few at the beginning of the year, but during the workdays, you have to get your grades in. So physically, you can't learn how to manage, or techniques in the classroom. You have upwards of 150 papers. It's a lot. So, it's a very demanding job. It's not 8:30 to 3:30. (Mentor, June, 2008)

An administrator noted that

the first couple of years are probably [the] most challenging years, because you've got to sort of be this teacher that you want to be for yourself, not necessarily what your supporters want for you . . . they've got to do lesson plans, grade papers, and give kids immediate feedback, interact with parents, interact with colleagues, go to workshops. (School Administrator, July, 2008)

Five Support Providers felt that teachers may choose to leave if they feel that they are not getting enough physical and emotional support from school leaders. A district administrator commented that teachers may leave due to this lack of support "from the administrative team, because I've heard that more than you'll believe" (District Administrator, June, 2008). Another mentor said "If you're not happy with the principals and the leadership, people leave . . . if you are at this school where there is no leadership, where the administration does not have your back . . . who would want to be in that type of environment?" (Mentor, June, 2008)? An Induction

Coordinator cited that several beginning teachers were citing lack of support from “administration” as reasons for leaving their school (Induction Coordinator, April, 2008).

A school administrator notes that some beginning teachers might leave due to lack of support and an inability to feel comfortable reaching out to leadership for support.

It may be at times they feel like what they perceive they needed they were not receiving. They needed more than what administration or what other people in leadership, like the Curriculum Facilitator (CF) or IC, they needed more than what was perceived that was needed. And [the teachers] were either hesitant to say it for fear that they were a bad teacher or it wasn't picked up on by those that needed to pick up on it. (School Administrator, July, 2008)

Another school administrator agreed that even teachers who are willing and motivated to be in the profession may choose to leave if they encounter a situation where they do not feel that they are receiving adequate support. “They have a situation where the support is not there. They want to be there but the support is not there. It's really the job dissatisfaction of not having the support because you cannot bring people in and just say, ‘Okay, go for it!’” (School Administrator, July, 2008).

Many beginning teachers need support with classroom management issues in particular. One mentor commented that “I have seen more people come through and not get anything because they are not getting the support that they need. The one thing that keeps them is the classroom management and discipline. If you know that they teacher already has classroom management problems, it should not be in the middle of the year when you come in and get them help” (Mentor, July, 2008). Help with the most common concerns of beginning teachers should occur *beyond* their first semester of teaching. “You get a few [professional development opportunities] at the beginning of the year, but during the workdays, you have to get your grades in . . . You don't see anyone” (Mentor, June, 2008).



Theme 2) Support Providers spoke about teacher expectancies and dispositions with regard to how well beginning teachers are likely to adapt and stay in their role.

Seven out of the thirteen Support Providers cited inaccurate expectations prior to teaching and inability to adapt to the role as reasons why some beginning teachers choose to leave. Four Support Providers cited that the lack of support is further compounded by the reality shock that many beginning teachers undergo when their expectations for teaching students do not meet their reality. One Support Provider commented that teachers left because they came into the role with “unrealistic expectations” (School Administrator, June, 2008). Another said that some teachers who decided to leave were disillusioned as to “what they thought the class was like, that being [good] students themselves, they thought the students were going to act like we are in the 1950’s” (School Administrator, June, 2008). They find that their expectations that teaching would be a “piece of cake” are untrue and that they must balance the multiple responsibilities of teaching while learning to manage a classroom (School Administrator, July, 2008).

Classroom management and student discipline were areas in which beginning teachers who left felt especially unprepared and were unable to adapt. One administrator said that some of her beginning teachers “came here thinking that walking into a teaching job was a piece of cake. And they found out differently, and some of them couldn’t garner respect of the students . . . so eventually they walked” (Induction Coordinator, April, 2008). A School Administrator pointed out that one of his beginning teachers was leaving because she felt that teaching in “an urban high school [was] too difficult. She was working too hard with the management issues” (School Principal, June, 2008).

Three Support Providers indicated that even with support some beginning teachers who left could were not dedicated enough to make the attitudinal adjustment between expectations and reality. One School Administrator said that one of his BT1s was leaving because he “never knew

[he'd] have to work this hard. Let me get a job where I don't have to work this hard" (School Administrator, July, 2008). Another school administrator gave an example of a teacher who wanted to leave because she reacted defensively to suggestions made by the administration instead of having a "mindset that was willing and open" (School Administrator, June, 2008). An Induction Coordinator also commented that the administration's attempts to help struggling beginning teachers were sometimes met with defense when a teacher was unwilling to adapt and try new strategies for working with students: "They didn't know how to [work with their students], they wanted to be their friend. And no matter how much we talk to them, they don't believe that any of us knew anything" (Induction Coordinator, April, 2008).

Five Support Providers felt that one major difference between beginning teachers who chose to leave and teachers who chose to stay was an open disposition to adapting their approach, however necessary, in order to meet the needs of their students. A mentor said that teachers who were not "open and receptive" would not "make it as a teacher at our school . . . one of the things I try to do is get them to open up and not only open up within themselves and as colleagues . . . but as far as understanding, whether they like it or not, it's just the time in society where we adults have to respect the children" (Mentor, June, 2008). Another Support Provider said that she admired teachers who were able to "revamp and stay in it" (District Administrator, July, 2008). A school administrator said that teachers who were able to "stay the course" had to "evolve into [their] own self" (School Administrator, July, 2008). Another school administrator concurred that successful teachers were committed and passionate about working with kids and felt "strongly about kids and understanding that the process can be open-ended in terms of teaching" (School Administrator, June, 2008). This administrator went on to say that teachers who successfully adapted were willing to ask "how do [I] make it work for kids? What do I have to do?"

Theme 3) Support Providers spoke about what factors influence a beginning teacher's decision to stay.

Five of the 13 Support Providers spoke about why they believe some beginning teachers choose to stay in the profession beyond their first year(s). Interestingly, all five focused on attitudinal and dispositional traits as factors that influenced decisions to stay, some even making it clear that teacher salary was not a major factor in decisions to stay *or* leave. Four of the five Support Providers felt that teachers stayed because they were able to persevere throughout the challenges of the first years and appreciate successes with their students. One mentor said that teachers

really are important. And if you get lucky enough to figure out how to teach, and hold it all together and work through the issues of the grading, the various aspects of the job, you do make connections with the students in a professional way. And it's just so, such a cliché, but when you see that they have really learned something, that you were the one who taught it to them, you see the light bulbs come on, like 'Oh, now I get it.' It's thrilling. It's still really great, and when it's particularly challenging. And so, that's why I think good teachers stay particularly, because we're so influential . . . because we're role models. (Mentor, June, 2008)

A school administrator notes that successes with kids are a daily form of encouragement that teachers are able to balance their duties *and* grow their students:

Not just graduation, but the daily little successes. That's what makes it worthwhile. The good ones see all of that success . . . But when you can do it all and without being schizophrenic, the AP Calc kids walk out and the lowest level geometry kids walk in, and you're doing it, you just go 'Wow!' (School Administrator, June, 2008)

A mentor pointed out that, based on her own experiences as a teacher, beginning teachers who chose to stay were able to see beyond the challenges and feeling of failure if some of their students did not succeed and focus on and celebrate the successes of each and every child.

"There's an awful lot of good kids. And when you have a success story, you have a real success

story here. When you have a failure, everybody hears about it . . . So I think I came to love those challenges . . . I have had the successes . . . and that's why I stay" (Mentor, April, 2008). Thus, Support Providers felt that a passion for kids, a winning attitude, and an excitement for successes were all important qualities of teachers who chose to stay.

Theme 4) Support Providers commented about what Principals look for when hiring a beginning teacher.

Based on their knowledge of what factors influence a beginning teacher's decision to leave the profession or stay, all four school administrators interviewed in this study were able to comment on what skills or qualities they look for in a beginning teacher applicant.

All four administrators felt that the proper "paperwork and the credentials" should be in place prior to hiring a candidate (School Administrator, June, 2008). Beyond that, and particularly for teachers entering through an alternative licensure program, these administrators said that they looked for certain skills or characteristics that would prove important in a classroom setting. One administrator wanted to see if teachers "had taught before" in an educational setting (July, 2008). She went on to add that she also wanted to know if her prospective teachers could "develop a lesson plan" and "build that bridge from home to school, which is very important" (School Administrator, July, 2008). Another school administrator looked for organization in her candidates: "I also look for the organizational piece . . . like when you interview a BT, they always come in with very nice portfolios. And those are tell-tale signs, it shows a lot of times how organized people are. But I've also had the opportunity to interview people, and they don't have one. But you can go in their room, and they have stacks [of papers], but they can pull out and produce [what they need]" (School Administrator, July, 2008).

Many times, school administrators are not able to hire teachers with past experience or traditional certification. In those cases, school administrators suggested that they looked for

personality traits that would be positive for a classroom setting. One said that he wanted to find “the kind of person who really wants to be creative in the ways that are going to help kids succeed” (School Administrator, June, 2008). Another said that she looked for teachers who “can be adaptable,” and another said that she wanted “team people, team players . . . [people who were] willing to go that extra mile to ensure the success of students” (School Administrator, July, 2008). And the last administrator said that she looked for teachers who displayed “enthusiasm . . . because I just think that teaching and learning is just so rewarding and so important” (School Administrator, July, 2008).

All of these Support Providers tended to agree that the success of a beginning teacher went far beyond their educational background and ability to produce lessons, though these factors are also very important. Beginning teachers also need to display some degree of enthusiasm and passion for working with kids and be able to adapt in situations when their methods are not successful. Beginning teachers also need a lot of support, in a variety of ways. Some need more encouragement, and some need more specific instructional support. Support Providers agree that their support systems are not perfect, but that they have a committed staff willing to help beginning teachers in a variety of ways, if the beginning teacher is willing to reach out and accept the help.

### **Beginning Teachers (25 BTs)**

Research Question 1: How do beginning teachers perceive support at their schools?

When beginning teachers were asked about what kinds of support they received and where that support came from, four main sources of induction-based support arose: administrator support, mentor support, and district level support. Codes were classified into four main themes that highlight major findings regarding the support areas mentioned.

**Table 4.1. Beginning Teacher Participant Matrix**

School	Number of Participants	BT1	BT2	Stayer	Stayer LE	Leaver	Leaver LE	Total TE	Total Lateral Entry
School A	7	4	3	5	3/7	2	0/2	4	3/7 (1 of the three went full time during student teaching)
School B	4	2	2	2	2/4	2	2/2	0	4/4 (All four teachers LE)
School C	8	4	4	6	4/5	2	1/2	3	5/8 – (1 of the six went full time during student teaching)
School D	6	1	5	4	2/4	2	2/2	2	4/6
<b>Totals</b>	25	14	11	17	12	8	5	8	17

LE: Lateral Entry (Alternative Licensure)

TE: Teacher Education Program

BT1: first year beginning teacher

BT2: second year beginning teacher

- How do beginning teachers perceive the implementation of induction policies and practices at their schools?

Similar to Support Providers, beginning teachers also cited school administration, mentors, district support, and colleagues as important sources of support. Perceptions of these sources of support are laid out by each school when findings warrant a more detailed conversation about the relationship between support and the individual school context. Findings that are typically across all four participating schools have been grouped for this discussion.

Theme 1) Beginning Teachers talk about school-based support in terms of administration and implementation of induction policies and practices.

Over the course of the study, there were 74 responses from the 25 teacher-participants regarding support and the school administration. Eighteen of the 25 teachers participated in pre- and post-study interviews, and received several check-in visits between interviews. The

conversation regarding administration and school-based support with beginning teachers can be broken into four major categories: management of the school, professional relationships, direct support for classroom management and instructional needs, and evaluation and feedback.

#### School A

Seven beginning teachers were interviewed at School A. Teachers on the whole felt that administrative support was well-intentioned but lacked unity and consistency in their delivery of support. Six out of seven teachers interviewed cited their administration as being “friendly” but generally disorganized in its management of the school (BT2, March, 2008). Three of the teachers who were BT2s and saw the transition to a new administrator at the beginning of the year were most vocal regarding the change in management at the school during the year. One said that central leadership “has just been less than it was last year. That’s the biggest difference from last year to this year . . . and that’s translated to the kids knowing that they can take advantage of certain situations” (BT2, May, 2008).

The transition also connected to teachers’ sense of support with classroom management and instructional concerns. Some teachers commented on how administrators were helpful with specific management needs, such as reducing class load and assistance at times with enforcement of student behavior. One BT1 pointed out that “In the beginning of the year, I had some problems, and they made my classes a bit smaller to even them out” (June, 2008). However, most conveyed a general feeling that teachers felt unsupported with classroom management concerns. Six of seven teachers commented that student behavior at the school had deteriorated and that teachers did not feel that they had the backup needed to enforce classroom rules. One teacher commented that “having a new administrative group has led to, the inmates running the jail, somewhat. They let the kids dictate a lot of things . . . which is good for school spirit . . . but [there are] kids running wild” (BT2, March, 2008). Another participant cited that policies were

not routinely enforced, which gave students the impression that rules could be broken: “If [administration] would follow through. Because last semester they instituted a tardy policy . . . And we hadn’t had one. It had been per teacher, but . . . we never had a school-wide policy” (BT1, March, 2008). A BT2 commented that she had:

written student’s up, and nothing’s happened to them, whereas last year, I didn’t write students up very often. It seems like when I do, usually something happens. This year, I had a student call me a ‘dumbass’ to my face. I wrote them up, and nothing happened. And so, I think that, in that respect, it’s more challenging, just because I feel like there’s a bit of power struggle in some of my classes. (BT2, March, 2008)

Thus, teachers felt that administrative backing on school policies at School A would have improved their authority with their students.

Most participants did not talk extensively about professional relationships, but six of seven participants cited positive or neutral relationships with their administrators. One participant felt that he could not gain favor with his administrators, citing that he “started off on the wrong foot” when he had personal problems, thus losing their confidence (BT1, June, 2008). This teacher has since chosen to leave the school. Even with positive intentions, most beginning teachers felt that relationships were not cultivated on the level at which they needed. Another teacher, who also chose to leave the school, had the opposite experience from the first, stating that administrators lacked visibility: “It wasn’t really there. Like when I’d see them in the hall and they’d be like, ‘how are you?’” (BT1, June, 2008). Another teacher concurred with lack of visibility, noting that:

literal physical support would be helpful. It’s funny because in training, everybody’s so positive, and that was fantastic, it was a great way to start . . . And then when school starts, you kind of feel like you’re all alone . . . it’s not like somebody’s really sitting down with you and saying ‘Okay, well here’s some ideas, and this is a problem I’m having. Do you have any ideas to help me?’ In other words there isn’t a level of support. (BT1, March, 2008)



Overall, however, teachers at School A were relatively neutral about relationships.

Participants did speak about observation, feedback, and evaluation. Some spoke about positive observations and encouragement received by administrators. Some felt that observations between administrators were inconsistent. One teacher felt that because the administration was “stretched thin” there were some district level administrators conducting observations, which tended to be less personalized, because they aren’t “familiar with me and my style of teaching . . . it would just benefit me more in the suggestions that they have” (BT2, May, 2008). Another teacher said that he was “observed a lot. [I] was observed something like 14 times in October. Just people walking in and out a lot” (BT1, June, 2008). It is unclear as to whether this participant was referring to informal observations in addition to formal observations, but overall, the participant felt that his feedback was inconsistent.

#### School B

The four beginning teacher participants at School B commented on administrative support in terms of management of the school, professional relationships, direct support for classroom management and instructional needs, and evaluation and feedback.

Similar to School A, there was an administrative shift at School B during the year that these data were collected. Thus, the teachers were hired under another administrator. Further, the school moved into a new location during the 2007-2008 school year, which inevitably meant that there would be some transition priorities which might impact beginning teacher support. Two of the four participants spoke at length about the management of the school and shared a sense of frustration that classes were not meeting the needs of students because of scheduling and other restrictions. Both of these teachers were BT2s and both left the school at the end of the year. One teacher felt that the restructuring of courses due to enrollments left many of his students at a disadvantage: “I don’t know how to put it out there for others to understand after seeing the anger

of these kids after they find out what they're not going to be eligible for" (BT2, June, 2008).

Another participant gave the example of students being placed in courses they were not prepared for due to scheduling conflicts, and pointed out the frustration of the students in trying to succeed and his frustration in trying to adapt the curriculum to their level:

They took freshmen and put them in my class which was designed for juniors. It was an Honors class. The freshmen couldn't even pass algebra, and we are talking about geometry and trigonometry in that class . . . and none of them can read on grade level . . . and the textbooks that I had to use were college level texts . . . I had a conflict with the principal over that, and she said there was nothing that could be done because of the model of the school and the numbers of the school and the number of classes that could be offered. (BT2, June, 2008)

All four BTs were able to comment about professional relationships. Three of the four responded negatively about relationships with administrators, and one responded neutrally. The one who responded neutrally commented that she was unsure about administrative support:

Because our first principal who was here, who hired me, it seemed like she was really into relationships and relationship-building. But again, I didn't really see her, or the interim principal very much when we were over at the other building. Our current principal, I just feel like she has a lot to do with getting us into this building and everything . . . There's not too much personal interaction. (BT1, March, 2008)

Of the three who responded negatively, one teacher felt that the relationship improved over time. Initially, she called the administration's style "micromanagement" (BT1, April, 2008). This participant commented in a later interview that her relationship with the administrator had improved because she had "backed off" a bit (BT2, May, 2008). The other two had concerns regarding administrative management of human personnel which resulted in their ultimate decisions to leave the school. One leaver felt that he was let go because he "stuck his neck out" for his students and because he felt that his actions in "telling kids what they need to succeed in

this life . . . was misconstrued” (BT2, June, 2008). Another felt that the lead administrator was “a bright person, but not a good manager. She rubs people the wrong way” (BT2, June, 2008).

Because the school was both physically new and utilized a special curriculum designed around its magnet-school focus, all four teachers felt that while some direct support for classroom management and instructional needs was available, most of the time, they were left to find their own support. All four teachers entered the school through the lateral entry route, taking classes while learning how to teach on the job. One teacher felt that she needed far more direct support from administration in the first months of teaching:

Never taught a day in my life. So, I took over the class, I had to be taught how to do the grading system, everything . . . You know, I’m learning lesson plans for teachers . . . The other language we spoke was the INTASC stuff. Standards, you know all of those things. You are expected to know and understand and operate out of, and haven’t been taught. (BT1, March, 2008)

Having less experience with the fundamentals with teaching meant that these lateral entry teachers relied on the guidance of school leaders for instructional support. However, all four noted that with the small size of the administration and the large number of alternatively licensed teachers at the school, there was limited direct help at the school level. Induction policies dictated that BTs receive a mentor and an Induction Coordinator in addition to monthly induction meetings held at their school. However, because the school was new, all of these supports were located at a neighboring school, making it inconvenient for teachers to seek out this support. One BT said that that “we didn’t even know about” the first few monthly meetings held at the other school. “So I wasn’t going to [the meetings]” (BT1, March, 2008). Another teacher voiced frustration regarding her isolation in learning the job: “I am here at 7:00 when the building opens up. I’m here until 6 or 7:00 at night. Because I’m trying to get myself together, I’m trying to be the best teacher that I can be. But [I’m] not given any kind of instruction” (BT1, March, 2008).

Another teacher felt that the administration was not properly trained in the school's career and technical curriculum. "She doesn't understand career/technical education at all . . . She just didn't understand any of the other stuff we were trying to do . . . So she really didn't have any respect for her program" (BT2, June, 2008).

Three of the four teachers responded negatively regarding evaluation and feedback, and one responded positively. The teacher who felt positive about evaluations said that her administrator was supportive of her and gave her post-observation feedback: "We've gone over some things, and the same piece that I've identified is what she's identified, the classroom management piece. And you know, she has given me good feedback. She sees the growth in my [teaching since] last semester" (BT1, March, 2008). However, one of the three who responded negatively suggested that administration did not clearly share evaluation criteria with teachers prior to observation:

They did an observation on me, and you know, in my little part that I had to do, and I remember putting in [my plan] that students will be able to demonstrate and verbalize at 90% . . . And then I'm told, 'Oh, we don't do that anymore. We don't use that kind of criteria' . . . Nobody's really telling me what you need to use. (BT1, March, 2008)

This teacher advocated for an evaluation matched to her level of experience, "understand that this person hasn't been here, and evaluate accordingly" (BT1, March, 2008). However, this teacher changed her opinion over time regarding feedback, reporting her surprise at receiving a positive evaluation later that semester complimenting her on her "good classroom management" (BT1, June, 2008). A teacher who chose to leave the school did not have this experience, however. He shared that administrator evaluation had not been supportive of his methods, and expressed frustration in being given a negative evaluation by a new administrator unaware of his teaching methods, "The principal had only been there since January, and made an evaluation over one semester, so, that's her prerogative" (BT2, June, 2008).

### School C

The eight beginning teacher participants at School C did not talk at length about the administration's management of the school, but they did comment more on professional relationships, direct support for classroom management and instructional needs, and evaluation and feedback. One beginning teacher did feel that the administration's management of the school was relatively stable: "They are all overworked and stressed . . . but they are not actively obstructionists or malicious. They are all friendly and generally feel that they are part of the same team. That's very hard to find" (BT2, April, 2008). In general, however, most participants were relatively neutral about administrative support, commenting that the school was overall a positive place to work.

Seven of the eight participants at School C had positive feedback regarding professional relationships with administrators. One BT2 felt that compared to the school environment she was in last year, the administration at School C was very helpful: "I had no problem with the students [last year]; my problem was with the administration. And this year, it's just wonderful" (BT2, April, 2008). The one participant who had negative feedback felt that relationship improved over time. Initially she had several run-ins with administrators over school policies and felt that she had not been treated professionally in several situations. She commented that one administrator had responded to a request "in a tone that wasn't inviting" and felt that administrators would tell her that they "stood behind you but you get ignored, and you get chastised when you are off" (BT1, April, 2008). By the end of the school year, the teacher felt more positively about the relationship with her administrators, but she also felt that "throughout all that chaos, they were watching me big-time. Every little thing I did" (BT1, May, 2008). She commented that she kept a positive attitude and focused on instruction, and eventually her EOC scores bore her out: "I guess

the AP was surprised [at her students' good EOC scores]. I don't have anybody hounding me, and I'm grateful for that" (BT1, May, 2008).

Another teacher felt that she knew which administrators to approach for different needs, but in general she knew that "they are extremely busy, so [she is] really not going to go and bother them with things [she] can figure out herself" (BT1, April, 2008). She felt that while most of her relationships were very positive, there was "one [administrator] that I'm like, I don't want to deal with her. She scares me. And she's helped me out too, so." (BT1, April, 2008). Another teacher responded similarly, commenting that while administrators were on site for support, they were not always available, "We had an Induction Coach, and she only came once a month. And when she came, she wasn't really there to help you out. You might have seen her that once a month, so [there needs to be more support]" (BT2, July, 2008).

Six of the eight teachers' responses regarding direct support for classroom management and instructional needs were mixed. One beginning teacher felt that the administration was not as supportive in responding to student behavior concerns in the classroom. ". . . the kids take everything as a joke" (BT1, May, 2008) noting that she needed backup and putting students in In-School-Suspension (ISS) as a punishment was ineffective. Another teacher felt that instructional support for her curriculum went away as the semester progressed, "There was more [support] at the beginning and then I don't know exactly how it all went through, but by the time that administration started to see that my benchmark scores were not going to improve to where they wanted them to be, my support kind of left" (BT2, April, 2008). This teacher concluded that support from administration varied depending on:

what you teach. If you teach an EOC class, administration is on you constantly. Whether or not you see it as support, they call it support. But they're on you all the time. They stay on you. You get emails every day, you hear from them constantly. Good or bad, you always hear from them. But [now] that I'm in [a non-EOC] class, I haven't seen my

technical administrator since I've been here because it's not an EOC class. (BT2, April, 2008)

Another teacher, who ultimately chose to leave the school, felt similarly that support from administration varied according to the courses taught. Because she was a special education teacher, she felt that she could gain access to the same resources and professional development opportunities that her regular education colleagues were receiving at the school:

Like, for my experience, I was a special education teacher and I was held to the same standards [I taught math] as a normal math teacher, yet, I didn't get any of the same support as the other math teachers did, as far as, they had special workshops they could go to, to better their instructional piece, whereas I wasn't invited to those workshops. And they had extra instructional materials that were given to them and once again, I didn't get those materials. There's a big thing in special ed where there's No Child Left Behind, and the big thing for me is that there should be no teacher left behind, and that was one thing I spoke about as far as finding a new superintendent, because special ed is a big area where the teachers are always left behind. (BT2, June, 2008)

Another teacher felt positively about administrator support, but she commented that she often approached her administrators when she had specific needs. She pointed out that when she needed help they would provide, "as long as I've been with them, if I needed them to handle something, they did take care of it, and they did take care of me" (BT1, April, 2008).

Two teachers felt that the support from an administrator, the Curriculum Facilitator (CF) was critical to her initial survival as a lateral entry teacher entering the school midyear. She spoke of how this individual went to extreme lengths to offer direct instructional support and encouragement:

I got help through our curriculum facilitators, who were very helpful. The lady from last year . . . I spent a lot of time with her, after school, she would help me with making lesson plans. She would instruct us on how to use Bloom's taxonomies and why it was important and how to really use them effectively. She would help us with activities, she'd help me understand how to navigate the computers to um, find herself work in activities, to work with the kids, because I'm just like, I was an idiot, I know, I just assumed that I'd walk in here and everybody has this big book of lesson plans. If you're teaching Earth

Science, here's the lesson plans. If you are teaching this class, here's the lesson plans, and that doesn't exist at all! So, um, you know, once I got over that shock. And then she helped me actually understand how to talk to the kids and not to be so authoritarian or whatever, but still make sure, you know, make your presence known that you are to be respected. And that was probably, the management part of it, is probably the hardest, and I'm still learning that. (BT1, April, 2008)

Another lateral entry teacher responded similarly, commenting that her CF was extremely helpful:

So, I had a curriculum facilitator who was really helpful that first year. She'd check on me and make suggestions, she'll say, okay, let's call parents, and I'd say, 'I don't know how.' You know, and then she'll help me. She'd get on the phone and call for me, she would take me on the website and show me lesson plans that were already created that I didn't have to try to create them. I didn't know how to write a lesson plan. All of that. She was a math teacher also, so she helped me understand how to frame information better so that they would get it. Because of her I had posters everywhere. (BT2, August, 2008)

This direct intervention indicated that the administration understood lateral entry teachers need for specific kinds of support to help them initially organize their classrooms and develop lesson plans. Lateral entry teachers reported that they needed help with the most basic concerns, such as calling parents, and they felt extremely supported by the outreach of their CF.

In general teachers at School C did not comment on observation and feedback. Only two of the eight teachers spoke about observations and feedback specifically from their administrators. One teacher, who taught an EOC course, felt that her initial observation had come too late for her to make significant changes in the way she taught the curriculum:

I wasn't observed until about two and a half months in, like actual formal observation. So, by then it was kind of like 'Well, we've already gone through four goals on the Standard Course of Study and now you're telling me I need to change what I'm doing? How am I supposed to make up for that difference?' (BT2, April, 2008)

Another teacher felt that observations were often punitive and feedback lacked a supportive tone:



Maybe I don't know what's on the line here. Maybe I don't realize the school's reputation is on the line. Okay, tell me that. I'm new. Clue me in. Don't beat me to a pulp because I don't know. Don't come in my class and criticize everything that's wrong when I've never done this before. Don't pat me on the back and tell me everything's okay when it's all falling apart either. I feel like administration can be honest but encouraging at the same time. I'm honest with my kids. You don't know this information, but you can. I feel like the same strategies and ways we are taught to approach teaching, to be encouraging to praise, positive things, to celebrate the little things that we do, if we were to actually apply those in instructional leadership, I think we'd have better teachers, happier teachers. I feel like my creativity was suffocating because of fear and anxiety. I've spent more time being afraid of someone coming in my room and seeing something that they don't like. Then I realize, I DON'T know what I'm doing, and until somebody comes in here and tells me how to do it, or helps me do it, or shows me how to do it, I'm just going to have to figure it out on my own. And I'm going to make mistakes. So I had to just resolve, almost like I didn't care what they thought. And I don't like to say that, but that's the attitude that I had to take on, just to be able to do what's best for the kids. So, I think support in the way of encouragement. I'm not asking for them to sugar coat things, like, oh, it's really bad and the kids aren't learning anything. I don't want sugar coating. Teach me how. Constructive criticism—'Okay, that was good, but let's figure out a way to make it more effective.' (BT2, July, 2008)

#### School D

The six participants at School D also talked about administrative support in terms of management of the school, professional relationships, direct support for classroom management and instructional needs, and evaluation and feedback.

Four of the six participants commented on the relationship between the management of the school and beginning teacher support. Most teachers felt that the state mandate that the school meet AYP resulted in leadership decisions that added additional paperwork to their jobs and imposed undue pressure on teachers to raise student achievement scores. One BT2 noted a marked difference in tone from her first year to the second when the school did not meet expected growth:

When the goals were not met, that [the principal] and the state set for us, all of a sudden, it's like, we went into panic mode. The first couple of days of our workdays, were filled with workshops and requirements for things that we had to do just to be prepared for the year. But then we were of course, underprepared, because we hadn't had time to do any of the planning that we should have been given those first days. (BT2, March, 2008)

Of the six participants, one reported a positive relationship with administrators, four had mixed responses regarding relationships, and one did not respond. All participants felt that there were pockets of supports throughout the school, such as with their IC, CF or mentor. However, with regard to lead administrator support, participants' views were mixed. Three participants felt that because they worked hard and displayed instructional competence, they had the full support of their administrators. One said:

The administration, to me, personally, has always been supportive, enthusiastic, positive, and nobody has ever, like none of the administration has ever 'attacked' me. Like I've heard that they sometimes do that to other colleagues of mine. But for me, personally, they always approve. I could have said, that I'm going to dance on table tops tomorrow and they would have said 'Okay, that's great.' (BT2, March, 2008)

Several participants reported that while relationships with one or two administrators were relatively positive, they had "run-ins" with other administrators over issues such as dress code, student behavior, and filling out paperwork. These teachers felt that they had been dealt with unprofessionally at times, and commented that they needed more encouragement and moral support from their administrators. One noted that her relationship to one administrator had improved slightly over the course of the year, but that there were still occasional confrontations:

I just cannot stay out of her way . . . The last time I had any kind of words with her maybe a couple of days ago, when I had a pair of jeans on. Because if we pay \$10, we can wear jeans from now until the end of the school year to raise money for the senior cookout . . . And she said something about that and that's when I let her know 'Well we can wear jeans if you pay for the cookout' and she said 'Well I'm not aware of that.' I said 'there was an email' and that's the last exchange of conversation I've had with her. (BT2, May, 2008)

A BT2 who left the school commented that she had a very positive relationship with her lead administrator, but often felt that some day-to-day concerns were thwarted through unprofessional dealings with other administrators:

I love [our principal] . . . [he] is like, ‘You are an awesome teacher’ . . . but some of those APs are completely unprofessional. If everyone is supposed to be on the same page, why is it that one AP is telling me this, [our principal] would come up to me and say ‘Whatever [this AP] tells you, just let it go through one ear and out the other. You do not work for her. You work for me’ . . . Why don’t you address that issue? Harassment or what not. I just let it continue on. All I can do is document and keep on moving about my day. (BT2, July, 2008)

Another BT2 shared about administrators who were the “opposite extreme . . . waiting for you to do the wrong thing so they could beat you over the head, [send out] hateful emails, and [be] very tactless . . .” (BT2, March, 2008) often overshadowed other support staff, such as the IC and content area coaches who could be very helpful and encouraging.

Five participants commented that the school does provide some direct support for classroom management and instructional needs. One pointed out one of the subject area coaches were extremely helpful, “The [subject area] support person was there looking for anything he could do to make your job easier and he was extremely gentle about correction and suggesting another path” (BT2, March, 2008). However, three participants commented that administrators were not always responsive to their classroom management concerns. One BT1 who left the school midyear noted that his students were “out of control and the administration did not help” (BT1, June, 2008). Another BT2 commented that she could use “encouragement. Just encouragement or coming along to just ask me if I needed anything as far as my 3<sup>rd</sup> period classroom management problem . . . [instead of] coming down on me, but not helping me in this area” (BT2, May, 2008). Another noted that teachers could use more consistency from administrators regarding student behavior: “And when teachers do write them up, then they get put on a contract, because they can’t discipline the kids. So, when they’re writing kids up, they’re not getting ISS. They’re not getting detention consistently. It’s really about consistency” (BT2, May, 2008).

In terms of observation and evaluation, most participants at School D did not comment. However, some participants noted that it was common to have frequent visitors to their room each day. These visitors were sometimes school, district, and even state administrators. One said that her administrator was slow to deliver feedback:

They gave me an observation in December . . . And I didn't get feedback from my observation for a month, which to me, doesn't make sense. If you want me to improve, then give me the resources to improve. And then if you give me the resources and I don't use them, then talk to me about that, but don't give me, say 'Here's what you need to do –We need your scores to go up. Okay, we'll see you in June, and we'll check on that.' Because clearly I didn't get the scores. (BT2, May, 2008)

Theme 2) Beginning teachers talk about school-based support in terms of their mentor-mentee matches.

Eighteen of the twenty five beginning teacher participants spoke about mentors as a source of school-based induction support. The highest frequency of responses regarding mentoring had to do with the mentor-mentee match. Participants talked about their mentor-mentee matches in terms of the subject area fit, common beliefs about teaching pedagogy, and mentor availability/commitment. Some findings regarding mentor-mentee matches were common to all participants, and some were more specific to the individual teaching contexts of the beginning teachers.

#### School A

Six out of seven teachers spoke about mentor-mentee match at School A. One of the seven felt that his mentor was not a good match because they had different teaching philosophies and their personalities did not mesh. “It wasn't working out . . . We didn't get along. We actually do, but as an advisor/advisory position. I just don't agree with her pedagogical theory” (BT1, March, 2008). This teacher had respect for this mentor, but wanted to find a new mentor the following year.

Five teachers talked about their mentors in terms of content area matches. Three mentioned that their mentor was a good match, but in general they were self-reliant and turned to their mentors on an “as needed” basis. One BT2 said that his first-year mentor was a better fit because he taught the same subject area, but this year’s mentor was not as strong a fit because it has been over six years since he taught that BT’s curriculum. Another BT2 said that she was “pretty independent. I don’t need my mentor probably as much as we are supposed to. But if I have questions, I know I can talk to her . . .” (BT2, June, 2008).

Two of the five felt that they would have had more support if their mentors were in the same subject area. One BT1, who left the school, felt that his mentor was a very poor match, because she taught an entirely different subject: “My mentor is a science teacher . . . I just feel like her experience is pretty removed from mine. And she conducts her class pretty different from mine, with experiments and stuff” (BT1, June, 2008). Another BT1 said that because her mentor taught another subject area, she was unable to help locate resources for her course in a timely way. “In one of my courses I didn’t find out that the course was [available] online until five weeks into the class. So I was creating curriculum and lesson plans and everything for five weeks and digging and going ‘Okay, there’s gotta be more’ and then found out the whole class was online. But my mentor was like ‘Well I never taught that class and so-and-so did it, and she never talked to me, and so I can’t help you’” (BT1, May, 2008).

#### School B

All four teachers at School B mentioned their mentor as a source of support; however, only two mentioned their mentor in terms of a good mentor-mentee match. The other two pointed out that they did have a mentor, but they did not elaborate on what kinds of support they received or the degree to which that support was helpful. One said her mentor match was not supportive because the mentor was located at a different school and taught another subject matter: “[At first]

I hadn't been assigned a mentor. And so I just kind of didn't know. So, finally, they got something pulled together . . . and I was assigned a mentor. But the mentor, who is at [the other school], is not in my subject area at all, and I don't see her very often" (BT1, March, 2008). The other BT mentioned a similar problem with her mentor being located at another school: "the mentor I had as at [the other school]. [I] never really got a chance to meet her. [She] wasn't in [my content area]. I really don't even know what she did, because I never got a chance to meet her" (BT1, March, 2008). This BT was able to locate a better matching mentor at her own school, but found that she had to do that on her own volition: "So, Mrs. [X], who is a veteran teacher, and she is also [in my content area] . . . so I said 'How come she can't be my mentor, she's already here.' . . . so they said 'Okay, fine. You can have Mrs. [X].'"

#### School C

Five out of eight teachers at School C spoke about their mentor-mentee match in terms of induction-related support. Several teachers mentioned the importance of a content area match and the importance of mentor availability and commitment when they considered what made a good mentor-mentee match.

76 Two teachers had negative experiences in terms of their mentor-mentee match. One teacher felt that her mentor was "only so helpful to me" because she taught in another content area and because she was new to the school:

She had never been at the school; she couldn't help me because she was so stressed out. She didn't know what to expect. So that made it hard. It's like on paper, you have a mentor. 'Why don't you talk to your mentor?' Well, I don't want to put her on my list because she's stressed out. (BT2, June, 2008)

Another BT felt that while her mentor taught in the same content area, she was not as committed to offering help as the BT expected:

My mentor, she is my actual mentor, she's not like that. [lowers voice] She's sat in on my classes to see how I was teaching. Enough said. I'm not saying there's anything wrong with that, but I thought that I was supposed to be getting [help]. (BT2, June, 2008)

Three teachers had positive experiences with their mentor-mentee match. One BT felt that her mentor was a good part of the overall support she received from her colleagues, and she appreciated that her mentor taught in the same subject area: "She's teaching [my subject] for the first time too . . . I meet with her a lot" (BT1, June, 2008). Two BTs felt that the strong mentor-mentee match was a critical factor in their survival the first few days of teaching. One mentor was able to offer 'just in time' support in the content area because she taught a similar course: "She kind of took over . . . She started handing out things, and she gave me an answer key" (BT1, May, 2008). Another BT said, "It was wonderful. She was very patient with me. And I'm that type of person, I don't like to bother people. She was very patient with me, and I appreciated that" (BT1, May, 2008).

#### School D

Four out of six teachers at School D gave mixed reviews of their mentor-mentee match. Two of the teachers felt they had very strong mentor matches, and two responded negatively about their matches. The two who responded negatively felt that they had been assigned a mentor who was not well-matched to their needs and who was not committed to serving in that capacity. One teacher's mentor stepped down from her post mid-year, and she was assigned a new mentor. She reported that the second mentor was hard to meet with due to different planning periods, "so there's really no time for us to engage in any kind of conversation . . . So we haven't been able to talk or work together or anything" (BT2, June, 2008). She felt that while the district and the school mandated that she have a mentor and a buddy, that in reality, neither of these supports were available for her to use. "They said I had a mentor and they said I had a buddy. But neither of those went through" (BT2, June, 2008). The other teacher felt that the mentors that she

received both her first and second years of teaching were uncommitted to the role and unavailable for help:

In the same department, one mentor told me that the best advice they could give me was to get the H-E-double hockey sticks out of there as fast as I could. My mentor told me this, and that was last year. And mind you, I only met with him once. This year, my mentor was [X], last year it was [Y]; he taught science. This year, it was [X], and I haven't met up with [X] either. Maybe it was because she was asking me a thousand questions about, 'Where did you get this for your classroom?' She was like making up false information. Yeah we met this day, so she could get credit, because if you turn in a certain log sheet, I guess you can get compensated that you mentored a new teacher. So, stuff like that is what made it challenging. (BT2, July, 2008)

The other two BTs felt that their mentor-mentee match was well-suited to their subject area and needs, and that their mentors were highly committed to the role. One BT commented that her initial mentor her first year of teaching was a strong match in terms of subject area, but a weak match in terms of teaching philosophy. As a result, she asked for a new mentor her second year, and while this mentor was not in her content area, she did share a common instructional philosophy and strong commitment to the role:

She's an EC teacher and she is a veteran teacher . . . She has been a very good system of support. She would listen to anything I had to say, she wouldn't talk about what I said. I did not have a good mentor last year . . . Somebody who just had a very different teaching style. Which is interesting because she was in my department; she taught the same subjects that I did, but we disagreed a little bit on discipline and things like that. I requested to have a different mentor this year. I said 'I don't really care who my mentor is, I just don't want it to be the person I had last year'. Because I went from somebody that was extremely unhelpful – she wasn't very helpful with anything I needed – and it was almost like we just met just to check it off the sheet. But [new mentor] has been really good and checking in with me at least once a day almost, and also being there if I needed to talk or whatever, and she would literally walk out of her room and if I walked to her with a concerned look on my face she would address that so it's really nice. (BT2, June, 2008)

Another teacher said that her mentor was extremely helpful because she was both committed to the role and because she shared the same content area. This teacher benefitted from the



experience of her mentor in terms of understanding her roles and obligations and benefitted from the opportunity to collaborate with a peer:

You have a mentor teacher in your department and you have a mentor and a buddy. Now I don't really see my buddy too much, but my mentor is a person who really knows the answer to about any question I would have or knows the resources, because she's been in the system a long time. And she's willing to share information and you know. Like last year, that was not so much the case, and I found that in a coworker as opposed to my department chair, who I think perceived me as a threat for some reason. I don't know quite why, but was very unwilling to answer questions or you know, it was like, 'Well, it's your job' . . . And this year, I've felt way better with somebody who's willing to answer the question, doesn't feel threatened. (BT2, March, 2008)

Theme 3) Beginning teachers talk about school-based support in terms of the *types* of support that they receive from their mentors.

Nine out of the twenty five teachers cited the types of support they received from their mentor. Most of the teachers mentioned that they had a mentor, but some of them cited either negative experiences with their mentor or they did not elaborate as to what types of support their mentor provided. Those participants who did talk about support stated that they received most of their assistance with instructional design and implementation, school policies and procedures, and specific questions. Because there are fewer teachers who elaborated on support, this section will focus on teachers' perceptions across all four school sites.

Five out of nine teachers commented that their mentors were a source of support with regard to their specific instructional needs. Some of the lateral entry teachers needed large amounts of support initially with setting up their classrooms, designing their curriculum, and classroom management. These teachers spoke of their mentors as providing support that went far beyond their expectations, noting that the support was invaluable in the first months of teaching. One lateral entry teacher tells of how she entered the classroom as a late hire and was told that she would receive ten days of time to orient to the school and set up her classroom while a hired

substitute managed her students. However, she found that when she arrived at school on her first day, she was asked to teach. Having no materials prepared, she turned to her mentor for instructional support:

I ran to my mentor. I didn't even remember her name, because I was just introduced to her, probably 10 minutes prior. But I ran to her, I let her know what happened, and she came in with stuff. She kind of took over. She was like, you guys, ya'll know you're supposed to be doing this, this, and this, and so she started handing out things, and she gave me an answer key and said, um, when they ask you questions, just tell them what the answer was. If you understand how to give them the process of how to get to that answer, go for it. If you don't, just tell them the answer and look it up in your book. (BT1, March, 2008)

Another lateral entry teacher reported a similar experience in having very hands-on instructional support from her mentor.

If you can imagine, in one day, how my mind was racing. My mentor, the young lady that did help me, her name was [X], and they actually made her my mentor. And she helped me get my classroom set up and everything until she was like, at least get your board up. You know, display board and everything. 'Course outline, where's your course outline?' I was doing a lot of copying! So, she helped me get my copies ready, she was like 'Do you have any paper?' She let me use her paper. It was just crazy, but with her help, it was wonderful. (BT1, April, 2008)

Three other teachers spoke about how their mentors were able to offer them instructional help both at the beginning of their first year and throughout. Some mentors checked in frequently with their mentees and offered help where needed, and others were highly collaborative with their mentees, particularly when mentors and mentees shared a common content area. One BT said that her mentor "gave her a lot of ideas in terms of class discipline issues" (BT1, March, 2008). Two BTs said that they frequently collaborated with their mentors. One said that she "met with her a lot. She's teaching [my subject] for the first time too, so she's been actually coming to me to get some information" (BT1, April, 2008). Another said that her mentor has been a good sounding

board and advocate and their relationship was very collaborative; her mentor understands the legalities of working with Exceptional Children, but that she could offer technical support:

I have a new mentor this year, and she's just been absolutely wonderful. She knows the ins and outs of the law, she knows the system, and she's just a good teacher. You know, some of it may change names and classifications and things. I'm like, 'okay.' And we changed, actually, computer systems. I'm good at the computer systems, so I've been able to help with the technical end of it, putting the information that we've used forever into a different format. You know whatever you can bring to the table is a good thing, and I think that for me that kind of saved my life. And she's also been there for the situations where I felt like I was getting an ugly deal – I didn't know better. So, there were times I felt like I was taken advantage of, she's like, uh, 'You know, you're getting taken advantage of' [laughter]. If you don't know, you know, oh okay, I can roll with this. But, you know what's really happening here. And it's good to have her as a sounding board. That's been very helpful. (BT2, March, 2008)

Four out of nine teachers felt that while they were fairly self-sufficient; they appreciated the having the support of their mentors when they had specific questions. One said that while she was independent, she knew “[she] could talk to her [mentor]” (BT2, March, 2008) and another said that “several times a week I go in there and ask her a question . . . she shares resources with me and helps me fine tune my pacing and stuff like that” (BT2, March, 2008). Another BT said that her mentor “has been really good and checking in with me at least once a day almost, and also being there if I needed to talk” (BT2, June, 2008).

Theme 4) Beginning teachers talk about school-based support in terms of district level implementation of induction policies and practices.

When asked about what kinds of induction support the district offers teachers, twenty-one responses from eight teacher participants related to direct support from district administrators such as the Induction Coaches and the IIO as well as orientation and professional development activities geared to helping beginning teachers make the transition into their school. There were a few responses related to district support with regard to change in placement and licensure; however, the frequency of responses was too low to warrant comment.

In terms of district support, seven teachers spoke about the variety of supports meant to address both school-wide and beginning teacher concerns. Their reviews of this support were mixed; teachers indicated areas in which specific supports were quite helpful, such as some school-wide professional development initiatives and the direct feedback from Induction Coaches. However, in some cases, teachers felt that district support was well-intended but sometimes cumbersome when coupled with other initiatives taking place at their schools.

Three teachers spoke about professional development resources and activities offered by the district that they undertook on their own volition in order to have better classroom success. One took “a class management class . . . They offer it through [X] County. But it is class management, because I felt like, you know, the knowledge base was there, but it’s just trying to understand and deal with class management” (BT1, April, 2008). Another teacher took advantage of some of the more content-specific types of professional development activities and found them to be quite helpful: “They do have some awesome writing workshops, but I feel like they need more 9<sup>th</sup> grade comprehension stuff, because the 9<sup>th</sup> grade EOC is like 70% editing and the rest comprehension” (BT1, March, 2008). Another teacher appreciated the district’s provision of a “planning guide” for his curriculum, which “made it a little bit easier this year” (BT2, March, 2008).

Seven teachers mentioned induction-related orientation and monthly meetings as a source of support. Four of these teachers commented that they missed induction orientation because they were hired after the school year. They noted that they would have appreciated the time to plan and learn about school and district policies and practices prior to entering the classroom. One teacher commented that while she benefited from the district orientation, she would have liked more time to work in smaller groups rather than with a:

hundred and fifty lateral entry teachers. Maybe [have] four or five [teachers] and one teacher who maybe just through their first year or within their first couple of years who could sit down and give you like ‘this is how it really goes. This is like real life, this is what I’ve seen. (BT1, March, 2008)

Three of the seven gave mixed comments regarding induction-related professional development activities which BTs were required to attend throughout the year. One BT felt that while some of the professional development activities were redundant or unnecessary, she found some of them to be very informative, especially those which were closely connected to the needs of the staff and the school:

At the beginning of the year, [X County] brought in an EC specialist, and she was probably one of the most insightful and wonderful speakers that we’ve heard. She spoke about learning styles and about people who kind of learn linearly, and the people who MapQuest directions to where they’re going . . . She just did a fantastic presentation. She was talking a lot about that tone and pitch and she used a train whistle. Like the little toy. That has a very distinctive tone and it did get everyone’s attention. [She] worked with music and some other things. She provided a world of information. The workshop itself was on inclusion and that’s where we talked about the physical space as well. (BT2, May, 2008)

Another BT who was traditionally certified noted that he “hates those staff development things. Like our monthly ILT meetings, I get nothing out of that at all” (BT1, March, 2008).

Four teachers spoke about the support from their district administrators/coaches. Two teachers from School C were very complimentary about the district Induction Coach. One said that “District support has been very positive . . . [they are an excellent sounding board” (BT1, March, 2008). Another teacher appreciated both the content specific support and the moral encouragement that her Induction Coach provided:

[He] has been very helpful. Now I don’t know if everybody has had this same experience with their coach, but he has come in . . . and he has given me some great pointers, great ideas. You know, I asked for help for my last semester, third block, and he would come in and tell me some things that I could do. And really, just the little bits of time that he spent with me, helped me be ready for this semester . . . he’s come in and observed me

and then he'd get back with me and give me feedback . . . even this semester he's helped me. (BT1, March, 2008)

One appreciated the help of curriculum area coaches. "There's great district-level support. . . . my cooperating teacher is [a content curriculum] person for the county. So that's really nice . . ."

(BT2, March, 2008).

Three beginning teachers spoke about how district initiatives were sometimes disconnected from the needs of teachers and the schools. She commented that because her school was considered underperforming, there were additional district and state-level supports put into place in addition to the programs already present. She felt that in many ways the abundance, but lack of cohesion of the resources was overwhelming for beginning teachers:

And I always equate our school to closing your eyes, and me giving you 15 darts and asking you to hit a dart board 20' away, but if I let you open your eyes and have only one dart, there's a much greater chance that you're going to hit the dartboard. But that's kind of what we do, we just try 20 different things and hope that one thing's going to work. So then some teachers just choose what they're going to do, what they're not going to do. I take it upon myself to try to do everything, you know. (BT2, March, 2008)

Two other teachers commented that the numerous supports were sometimes burdensome, especially when coupled with their licensure requirements:

I think [X] County as a whole has done a great job as far as support. I think they've let some of the burden fall upon the schools that are not doing as well, and that's where the beginning teachers begin to suffer because not only are we trying to fulfill all of our beginning teacher requirements, but we also have other additional workshops and things and are not quite as cohesive as I feel like they should be . . . (BT2, March, 2008)

Another teacher, at a high priority school, agreed that the numerous supports were often overwhelming and a distraction from instructional priorities:

I was in so many meetings last semester. I couldn't keep the days straight. I had meetings every single week. Every Tuesday and every Wednesday I had a meeting at 8:00 in the

morning, and if they needed it to be earlier, it would be earlier than that. And then we would go, and we'd sit down, and I'd sit down with all the [content area] teachers on whatever day and all the [content area] teacher the other day. And it was basically supposed to be 'Where are you with the Standard Course of Study? Tips, concerns; which part do you struggle with? How can we help each other out?' That's what it was supposed to be. What it basically was was 'Here's the benchmark data. Ms. [X], you are at this percentage in your classes. This teacher is at this percentage. Why is there that gap? How are we going to close that gap?' And I'm sitting there like 'I don't know. I've never taught [this course] before.' So if you have any suggestions for telling me how to teach the [subject], please pour them my way. (BT2, April, 2008)

- How do teachers perceive other types of support at their schools?

In addition to more formal sources of support provided through induction, such as administration, mentor, and district-based support, beginning teachers noted that their colleagues were also important interventions. When beginning teachers were asked where they turned for support outside of induction, sixteen out of the twenty-five teachers listed their colleagues as major sources of support. Most of the teachers spoke about collegial support in terms of proximity, content area, experience level, and types of support.

Theme 1) Teachers talk about colleagues as a source of support for beginning teachers.

#### School A

Six out of seven teachers at School A reported that their colleagues served a role in providing support during their first year(s) of teaching. One teacher mentioned that colleagues were supportive, but did not provide specifics with regard to the types of support they received: "Staff was great to work with. Very accomplished people" (BT1, June, 2008). The five other teachers commented that they received both physical and emotional support from different kinds of colleagues.

Four teachers turned to veteran colleagues within their department, primarily because of the close proximity of teachers and the ability to collaborate on specific curricular issues. One BT1 felt most supported by her team, and in particular the head of her department. She felt that

they supported her both in terms of responding to specific day-to-day needs and through providing leadership and guidance with regard to implementing her curriculum:

Overall I feel very supported in terms of the leadership of in my class support team . . . the leader, the head of the department. I feel very supported . . . They're seasoned employees; they're later-life stage people like me, and they just have a really good balance and perspective on things. (BT1, March, 2008)

Another BT2 stated that he collaborated with another teacher the same subject matter: “[I] actually started working with [X] down the hallway, because she is the [same subject area] coordinator. And she helps direct the four [subject area] teachers, and I’ve stepped into more of a leadership role with her . . .” (BT2, March, 2008). Another BT felt that his biggest support was a veteran teacher who taught across the hall:

[Support is] in the [content area] department. Usually it’s something that I had to do on my own. If I had questions, I would just go ask them. You know I feel like the support system that I need, needs to be other [content area] teachers. . . . I get some help from the teacher across the hall, the department head, and I feel like I will spread it around [my questions]. (BT1, June, 2008)

Another BT1 found a similar source of support through a more formal grouping of colleagues, in his Professional Learning Community (PLC):

The one thing that we did do that helped the most were our PLCs—our Professional Learning Communities. And so it was a group of people who taught a lot of the same classes, and we would go out to [a restaurant] and stuff once a month, and talk about what’s going on, is there anything that y’all need lesson plan-wise . . . And it was very good, because I had [X classes] this year, so it really helped to get materials and good ideas. (BT1, March, 2008)

One teacher commented that he benefited from working with other teachers with similar levels of experience, because they offered moral support and an optimistic outlook about teaching:



Honestly, the most support that I got this year, came from a small handful of relatively young teachers in the first 4-8 years of their career. So, relatively new, not entrenched traditional teachers. It's almost more social than professional. I don't hang out with a lot of teachers outside of school much, but there is a small group of teachers who say 'Hey, we're all really starting to get down. Let's go have a bitch session and have a pint of beer.' And it turns into not a bitch session. It's pretty positive, and if we talk about school, which we do, it's totally in an environment of supportive, 'Let's come up with ideas together for what could help you with problem X', or just throw ideas around. (BT2, March, 2008)

### School B

Two of the four teachers at School B stated that their colleagues were a critical form of support. Both teachers felt that they benefited from instructional collaboration with teachers in their same subject area:

I will say, being at [the old school before the new school moved into its building] helped a lot the first semester, because I was teaching in the [subject area] classroom, so I was able to get some additional help and some ideas and suggestions from [subject area] teachers there. (BT1, March, 2008)

Both teachers from School B stated that they also found lots of support from working with colleagues who had similar levels of experience. Most teachers at School B were novice teachers, and so they were able to offer moral support and collaborate over similar sets of needs. One BT said:

Well, I talked to one of my coworkers, because this staff is pretty much new teachers. We only have a couple of people who have been teaching for more than two years. So I talked to some of them. So I was like 'Okay, I can do that. And what do you think I should do?' And that kind of helped me. (BT1, March, 2008)

Another first year teacher found support in a colleague in her same subject who had just one year of experience prior:

Okay, so the only person that I had to rely on, which was a godsend, was my friend, [X]. And I mean, she taught me everything that she knew, but then she had only been here

[the other teacher in that subject] a year herself. So she was still learning, yet she tried to teach me everything she knew. (BT1, March, 2008)

#### School C

Four out of eight teachers at School C included colleagues in their list of important supports. Several teachers found great support through their teams and individual colleagues working in the same subject area. One gave a general summation of support, noting that his colleagues “are all friendly and generally feel that they are part of the same team. That’s very hard to find” (BT2, June, 2008). One lateral entry teacher reported that her subject-area colleagues provided both material resources and instructional support during her first year. These teachers even served as instructional role-models for this novice teacher:

I had a really strong team. I didn’t have to do a lot of work to find the resources. The lesson plans are already on the county website for [my subject] for the entire semester. So if I couldn’t find anything else, I just did what they did. And then the other two teachers, one had been teaching for thirty years, so she was just a gold mine. And the other girl, she’d been teaching maybe four or five years very successfully and had worked with the thirty year lady, and so their relationship was very tight, and I would go observe them teach the very same lesson that I was getting ready to teach. I’d watch them do it, and then I’d go do it. That’s the only thing I needed . . . I was doing it all the time because we’re teaching the exact same thing. I’m just going to be a day behind on everything. They give me their worksheets, they give me their activities, that helped me get through the year. (BT2, July, 2008)

Two BTs commented that their collegial support was collaborative and that teachers could rely upon one another for both physical and moral support. One BT found that during her first year, she appreciated having other novice teachers to turn to because she felt it was a safe environment to share questions and concerns. Like the novice teacher from School A, this BT also found that her novice colleagues carried a similar level of optimism and exuberance for their role:

There are a lot of beginning teachers at [School D], a lot of new teachers. So we could sit down and discuss something and try to find solutions together. And I liked going to beginning teachers as opposed to many of the experienced teachers because a lot of them like to gripe [older teachers] about the students, and that wasn't going to help me. We are all trying to figure this out together. It was through the experience of just trying to get it right and talking to other people that helped me from not having to go to principals. (BT1, April, 2008)

Another BT2 made similar comments regarding collaborative support with colleagues who shared a similar set of experiences:

I've worked with another teacher, and by working with her, I've learned a lot. And it's been nice, because some things we learned together. And the main thing that we work on, is not only on a professional level but also a personal level. If she sees something it's like 'What?' She sees things the way I do. We have a background that's kind of similar, so we have that. (BT2, March, 2008)

#### School D

Four of the six teachers at School D noted that their colleagues were an important source of support. Teachers felt that their colleagues served as sources of moral support in addition to serving as instructional resources. Two teachers commented that they were able to turn to colleagues for moral support. One noted that collegial support had been a mixed bag for her. Her first year at another school, she had some unprofessional confrontations with several colleagues, resulting in her tendency to isolate herself at her new school. So she was surprised to find that some of her colleagues took steps to empathize with her frustrations and offer both moral and physical support:

Some of the teachers knew that I was kind of facing [an issue with an administrator]. So one day a couple of months ago, they knew and they kind of brought me over to their table, while we were having a little social. And they were asking me what was wrong, and I talked to them, and I kind of broke down. And then that's when they let me know 'Hey I'm here for you. If you need anything.' I really kind of keep to myself in a way because I don't want to say, I don't trust people, but just the teachers. But I know that if I ever needed anything, I know I could go next door and no problem. (BT2, May, 2008)

Two teachers felt that veteran teachers were highly supportive for her because they can “share information . . . [and] answer questions” (BT2, May, 2008). One said that the opportunity to team teach with a veteran teacher from another subject area during her first year helped her tremendously:

I team taught with an [English] teacher for the 11 grade course that I had for the [History] courses that I taught last year. And she was extremely supportive. Um, anything that I needed or wanted or anything, she was right there for me. And she was an experienced teacher. I think she was in her fifth or sixth year of teaching. So, for our school, that’s very experienced. We have so much turn-over . . . And so she really supported me a lot . . . and she was a real advocate for me, and for the entire [program] as a whole. So that was very helpful. (BT2, March, 2008)

Research Question Two: Why do some beginning teachers choose to leave, and why do some beginning teachers choose to stay in their schools?

The original design for the study was to include participants who were choosing to remain in their respective schools after their first and second year(s) of teaching (stayers) and at least two participants who were choosing to leave their respective school after their first and/or second year (leavers/movers). The intent of the study was to interview four stayers (two BT1s and two BT2s) from each school at least two times with check-in visits between each interview and to interview two leavers (BT1s and/or BTs) from each school one time. Two leavers from each school were located and interviewed according to the research design. However, the number and types of stayers (BT1s and BT2s) varied somewhat at each school as a result of convenience sampling which yielded participants who volunteered to take part in the study. While all of the *original* stayers (N=19) were in their respective schools at the time of this study, some have since moved or left their school at the end of the school year in which this study took place (N=4). The beginning teacher participant matrix (above) tracks the status of *all* participants (N=25) at the end of the school year in which the teachers took part in this study. Thus, the total number of leavers

(N=10) includes those leavers originally selected for the study, and those who left their school at the conclusion of the study in the spring/summer of 2008. Table 4.2 describes the beginning teachers in this study and presents a comparison of retention numbers between BT1s and BT2s from the study and BT1s and BT2s from X County. The table also compares retention numbers between BTs with teacher-education licensure (TE) and Lateral Entry licensure (LE).

**Table 4.2. Beginning Teacher Participant Matrix**

<b>2007-2008 Data</b>	<b>BT1</b>		<b>BT2</b>		<b>BT3</b>	
<b>X County</b>	<b>TE</b>	<b>LE</b>	<b>TE</b>	<b>LE</b>	<b>TE</b>	<b>LE</b>
<b>No. of BTs</b>	285	184	313	155	265	48
<b>No. of BTs not returning to LEA</b>	54 (19%)	55 (30%)	62 (20%)	35 (23%)	39 (15%)	10 (21%)
<b>Study</b>	<b>TE</b>	<b>LE</b>	<b>TE</b>	<b>LE</b>	<b>TE</b>	<b>LE</b>
<b>No. of BTs</b>	3	7	6	9	NA	NA
<b>No. of BTs not returning to LEA</b>	2 (67%)	2 (29%)	1 (17%)	5 (56%)	NA	NA
<b>Of GCS Employees NOT returning to the LEA, how many:</b>						
<b>Not Rehired by LEA</b>	1	36	2	24	0	6
<b>Reduction in Force</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Resigned to Family Responsibilities</b>	1	2	5	1	4	0
<b>Resigned to Teach in another NC LEA</b>	16	4	13	1	13	1
<b>Dissatisfied with Teaching or Career Change</b>	3	2	4	5	2	0
<b>Of those study participants NOT returning to their schools, how many:</b>						
<b>Not Rehired by LEA</b>	1 (School A)	0	0	1 (School B)	NA	NA
<b>Resigned to Family Responsibilities</b>	0	0	0	1 (School D)	NA	NA
<b>Transfer to Another School Within LEA</b>	0	1 (School C)	1 (School C)	3 (School B/C/D)	NA	NA
<b>Dissatisfied with Teaching or Career Change</b>	1 (School A)	1 (School D)	0	0	NA	NA

- How do teachers perceive support needs in relationship to the unique needs of their school?

As previous findings suggest, implementation of beginning teacher support varied to some extent within each school context. Beginning teachers spoke about the unique characteristics of their schools and how their school context influences the kinds of support they need. Beginning teachers also discussed what kinds of collaboration would build a better system of support in their schools. These findings set the stage for discussion about beginning teacher retention.

Theme 1) Teachers spoke about the uniqueness of their schools.

#### School A

Four teachers at School A commented on three areas in which their school was unique: reputation, teaching quality, and population transition. The public perception of School A is its “tradition of excellence” in academics and superior teaching (BT2, March, 2008). One BT called it a “flagship school” denoting that the school is the oldest public secondary institution in the district and historically, a model for other schools (BT1, March, 2008). Two other teachers commented that obtaining a position at School A was a competitive process, because the school was viewed by the public as a destination. One teacher commented that he chose to teach at School A because it had a reputation as a “high performing school” and he found the staff to be “very accomplished people” (BT1, July, 2008), and another said:

I know [its] reputation, and I know it’s tough to get a job here as a first year teacher. And that Teaching Fellows didn’t want to put any of us because they didn’t think it was like a real experience. So I did have expectations about the student body. (BT1, June, 2008)

Ironically, the reputation of consistent academic success at the school is juxtaposed with its current transition in student body and staff. For example, due to redistricting, the student body has become more diverse in the last five years, bringing in more students with special needs. Leadership has also changed hands several times over the past few years, making it more difficult

to provide consistent guidance and support to staff and students. Four teachers commented on the needs of their students and the lack of support in setting consistent policies for expected behavior. One BT1 said that he didn't expect there to be such a "racial divide" between the students at the school, and another BT2 commented:

We don't have strong overall leadership from our main administrator. He's new . . . well when he first got here, they talked about the tradition of excellence here at [School A] academically. Which it does have that tradition, but it's very much a school in transition, we have redistricting . . . we have a very diverse population of students here, and I don't think that he was necessarily prepared to deal with some of the discipline problems. He hasn't really had a strong leadership and he hasn't been consistent in his approach to discipline. (BT2, April, 2008)

The transition of the school has had some internal effect on teacher morale, particularly because some have reported to have lost confidence in their ability to maintain authority in what they used to see as a "no problem" high school. One beginning teacher said he wasn't adequately prepared for that reality: "I think it's just the administration, because at the beginning of the year, they completely relinquished power from us and from themselves" (BT1, April, 2008).

#### School B

Three beginning teachers at School B commented that they chose to teach at the school because of its unique curricular focus. The school was started in the 2006-2007 school year to serve as a magnet school in math and science which offers students a choice in two career pathways, medical careers and construction technology, in addition to the option to earn dual credits at the local community college their senior year. The three lateral entry teachers entered the school mid-career because they thought it would be "a way to give something back to the community" (BT2, June, 2008). All three teachers had expertise in a medical or construction-related field and wanted to share their knowledge and passion for their careers with students. One BT said:

I knew there was a lack of opportunity for minority kids, especially in architecture and engineering . . . I'll take a job over there and I'll teach the kids what I know, and maybe some of them will be inspired to become architectural engineers. (BT2, June, 2008)

Another teacher said:

they decided to hire people out of the main stream of work. I was teaching electrical and I was an electrician for about 15 years . . . And all these years I've learned my trade—I want to pass this knowledge on to the upcoming generation. (BT2, August, 2008)

However, all three felt that there were many kinks at the school that needed ironing out, particularly with regard to securing stable leadership, consistent enrollment, and experienced staff. One BT pointed out that in his two years at the school leadership changed hands three times, and that the newest leader uprooted many of the teachers and staff: “I think coming in January and firing most of your faculty is not beneficial to your students” (BT2, August, 2008). Another BT felt that the newest administrator was unfamiliar with the technical curriculum and did not give authority to the teachers to implement it: “She didn't understand any of the other stuff we were trying to do – construction, trades, or architecture . . . And when I would talk to her, I wouldn't get any response” (BT2, July, 2008). Further, the enrollment of the school shifted during 2007-2008 to meet allotment requirements, thus putting a strain on teachers to accommodate younger students in their more advanced courses:

An example of that would be, they took freshman and put them in my class which was designed for juniors. It was an honors class. . . . and I had a conflict with the principal over that, and she said there was nothing that can be done because of the model of the school and the numbers of the school, and the number of the classes that could be offered, etc. etc. (BT2, July, 2008)

Another teacher commented on the frustration she had in finding a school that was still undergoing a lot of growing pains:



Um, a lot of things that I was told that number one the kids were here at this particular academy was because they wanted to be here. That is not true. I was told that they had to have a certain average to come here. I understand now, that's not true. I was told that discipline problems were few. That is not true. If I'm sounding a little bit frustrated, I am. And I'm pretty much disappointed, because I quit a job I could pretty much do, blindfolded. (BT1, April, 2008)

### School C

Five teachers commented that their school was unique because of its external perception as a high-need school. The school is a “predominantly black school . . . where 90-95% [students] are on free and reduced lunch” (BT2, April, 2008). Four teachers pointed out that the school's reputation was for having challenging students, but that in reality, the students were eager for role models who could relate to their experiences. Part of this reputation comes from the school's designation as a “Mission Possible” school, which receives services to recruit teachers to work in schools with critical needs (BT2, April, 2008). One teacher said there was a “mentality that [the school] is different because of the ethnic background of our students and the stigma behind that, but when it comes down to it, they're kids” (BT2, April, 2008) Another teacher agreed noting that many of her students were misunderstood by the public, at large:

You have to understand the psychology of how to work with these kids at this point in their lives, because . . . you don't know what they're dealing with. Like, I didn't have to raise another sibling. I didn't have to work a job. I didn't have to do any of that stuff . . . So, some of these kids are struggling with, I have no food to eat, I had to go home and raise this child, I'm the only person in this house with a car, I man, all this stuff is just mind boggling, and how to reel that in and still say, ‘Yeah, I'm so sorry for all of that, but you have to do my work, and you have to do it well in order to pass this class’ . . . The thing is, [School C], they try to give this persona that they are all ghetto kids, but no. We have some of the brightest minds here. (BT2, April, 2008)

Another teacher commented that teachers in the school needed to see this potential for success:

I think it's low performing . . . [but] it depends on what you buy into. You can buy into . . . this is the way that it is, and just conform . . . or you can buy into the school of

thought that we need to have change . . . because we can get out of this slump. (BT1, March, 2008)

#### School D

School D is also a Mission Possible School, known externally for its diverse student body and sometimes negative external reputation as a challenging environment for teaching. One teacher said that the school was unique in its diversity: “There’s not a middle or an upper class at this school. It’s all mostly low to middle class . . . It’s predominantly African American . . . but [We have] Hispanics, and we have a large Asian population” (BT2, March, 2008).

Four teachers spoke about the challenges of working in School D and differences between the external reputation and the internal reality of teaching there. Externally, teachers reported that there was a negative connotation associated with School D. “Even when I go to classes as part of my requirements, we would have to introduce ourselves. ‘Hi, my name is [X] and I work at School D.’ ‘Oh, bless your heart!’ So that already has that reputation” (BT2, March, 2008).

Another teacher spoke to the differences of perceptions outside the school to her actual experience:

This is a unique setting, and there’s a reputation outside of [the school], and [it] is considered a bad school, both in and out, but for different reasons. When I’m outside of [School D] and I say I teach [there], people are like, ‘Uhh, aren’t you afraid? Aren’t you gonna get shot? Aren’t you scared of the kids?’ I’m not scared of the kids. I think the misconception about [it] being a bad school is that it’s got bad kids. Every school has bad kids. I think our kids are disadvantaged, they’re not bad kids. If you can reach the kid, and you don’t treat them like bad kids, then they’ll respond really well to that. And I think that’s helped me as a teacher. I know that if I was to leave [the school], move somewhere else, then I’ll be able to teach anybody because I could teach here. But the reputation inside [here], once you get here, it’s not the kids who run teachers out, it’s the administration. (BT2, May, 2008)

These perceptions influenced one teacher who said she was not sure about coming to the school because of its reputation for being dangerous: “My fear was that it was violent, and that was not the case, but that was the fear, my husband’s fear as well, was that somehow that it was an environment that was dangerous” (BT2, March, 2008).

Two other teachers commented though that in most cases the external reputation, which implied that students were tough, was incorrect. The challenges of teaching within School D were far more complicated. One teacher commented that the students were not the “problem”:

But the kids . . . they are actually really smart kids. It’s not like they’re dumb at all. You’re just going to have some challenges, tricking them to do their work, or to learn something. You just have to do that . . . there are teachers there that don’t want to teach. It was amazing how many times I’d walk into the building and teachers would be watching movies or playing cards . . . that is crazy, you know? (BT2, July, 2008)

Another teacher gave a similar response: “And when I came here, kids fist-fight and it’s because they have no social skills, it’s a different kind of problem than the way it looks in the media, and so . . . Even still, having been here, occasionally things happen, but they happen everywhere” (BT2, March, 2008).

All four teachers commented that challenges of teaching at School D consisted of a combination of factors including reputation, pressure to meet expected academic growth, and poor communication between some of the administrators and teachers. One teacher felt that the pressure to meet AYP was the real cause for some of the internal challenges: “Things were a little chaotic and that the place was operating in crisis mode all the time” (BT2, March, 2008).

Beginning teachers in all four schools felt that their school was unique, but unique in different ways. Each school presents a particular set of strengths and challenges which mediates the experience of the beginning teacher. While each teacher participant is unique in terms of their background, dispositions, and preparations, their experiences as novice teacher in their schools

helps to frame their perceptions regarding support needs and ultimately their beliefs about teacher retention.

Theme 2) Teachers spoke about the perceived need for better collaboration.

When asked about what kinds of support that would augment what is currently available, fifteen teachers made a total of 20 comments that were coded as being about the need for better collaboration. While teachers currently receive collaborative support from a variety of places, these teachers felt that collaboration was often insufficient due to the particular constraints presented in their school context or the timing of its availability.

#### School A

Four out of six beginning teachers spoke about the need for better collaboration at School A. All four spoke about the need for both early intervention when their needs were most critical and for continuing support throughout their first and second years. One said that at the beginning of the year, “everybody’s so positive . . . and very supportive” and after the start of the year “there isn’t a level of support . . . the physical support was not there” (BT1, March, 2008). Two teachers said that they would like to be trained in how to establish their presence at the beginning of the school year: “I’d be much tougher at the beginning of the year . . . [I’d like] something to happen when you send a kid to detention” (BT1, July, 2008). All four teachers spoke about the need for collaboration amongst colleagues and between colleagues and administration for the creation of school policies and consistent enforcement of behavior policies throughout the school. Further, teachers commented that they would benefit from more opportunities to interact with colleagues to discuss student needs and collaborate with instruction. One teacher said that collaboration would help her compare her practices to those of her colleagues, “More reality checks and ideas, you know. How kids are acting in other classes, how teachers are handling them, techniques they are using, even just facilitating a test or their own expectations of the kids”

(BT1, April, 2008). Another teacher felt that peer collaboration in addition to other collaboration would provide them important information regarding first-year teacher needs:

Stay in contact with other new teachers or maybe have 2<sup>nd</sup> year teachers meet with new teachers. Because . . . they tell you the things that [others] just don't tell you about like picture day madness . . . I feel like district people and veterans, they forget to tell you about all those little things like that and sometimes those are a big pain. (BT1, March, 2008)

One teacher pointed out that there needs to be structural support to create time for collaboration: “I feel like in our situation as new teachers, we’re inconveniencing the veteran teachers . . . It’s a problem too, because they don’t have the energy or the time to dedicate themselves to really helping new teachers get through” (BT1, June, 2008).

#### School B

All four teachers at School B spoke about the need for collaboration, particularly given the unique context of their school. All four teachers were lateral entry and mentioned that they were not teachers by trade or training, and subsequently they needed additional support at the start of the school year with setting up their classroom, instructional planning, and classroom management. One teacher said that he wanted administrators “to understand that teaching was not what I was trained to do” (BT2, July, 2008). Another said that while the orientation at the beginning of the year was a help, she wished she had received more support “before you actually come into the classroom . . . I had a bit of an idea, but I wish there would have been more, you know. Because you always think and from the presentation, oh, everything is going to go smoothly” (BT1, March, 2008). Another teacher suggested that it took time for a lateral entry teacher to adjust and that support should include both resources and physical help:

What I’m seeing is that you are going have to give people some time. They need time. You need people that are in place that understand. You need somebody that knows your

curriculum and how your curriculum works. If indeed, lesson plans are already available for lateral entry people. (BT1, March, 2008)

Two teachers spoke about the importance of licensure courses in giving them additional resources to teach and encouragement about their practices. One teacher felt that she was very successful in her courses and found some connections to her classroom in the kind of material she learned. Another teacher felt affirmed that “the classes helped. When I started reading and learning about some of the methods, I think they schooling helped me out a lot to know, ‘you’re doing it right’” (BT2, July, 2008).

Collegial support was relatively hard to come by at School B, because most teachers were novices and did not have the opportunity to collaborate with more experienced others. One teacher felt that even the support of a teacher with a couple of years experience would benefit him greatly in giving him an idea of what to expect as a new teacher: “Just having a teacher, maybe a four or five year teacher, the support of knowing what in incoming teacher has to go through, talking to the new teachers and letting them know what they went through” (BT2, July, 2008). Another teacher felt similarly, that there needed to be someone available to give the beginning teachers a sense of what to expect:

There was no one at [School B] and still isn’t that really understands what you have to do as a beginning teacher in terms of credits and things like that. If you ask one person, they will give you one answer, and another will give you another. They don’t seem to know who to ask about the bureaucratic workings for the county. (BT2, June, 2008)

### School C

Four of eight teachers at School C commented that collaboration amongst colleagues and between teachers and administrators would be helpful to them, particularly for high-stakes courses. Three teachers cited the need for increased collaboration on curriculum design and differentiated instruction, commenting that their lack of experience often left them searching for

ideas. One teacher mentioned that she wanted extra support with working with EC students: “If I’m a teacher, and I’m teaching math, I should be able to go to the same seminars, get the same extra help, learn how to teach the class and get the new technology, and all that stuff . . . and I don’t” (BT2, August, 2008). Another teacher, who was teaching several courses that she lacked experience in felt that collaboration would give her more options in developing lesson plans that would be relevant for her students:

[Questions] would have been, ‘What’s a different way to present this to the kids? What works for you, since you’ve been here longer than me, because I’m starting fresh as a teacher?’ Teaching sociology and psychology was always difficult to find activities for the kids to do, because it’s like ‘I’m looking at a model of a brain. That’s great.’ So how do I actually take the brain and teach the parts of the brain to the kids? And it would have been helpful to have someone say, ‘Ok, well you could do it this way, or you could do it this way, or we could leave it up to you.’ Something. (BT2, April, 2008)

In addition to needing instructional options, one teacher mentioned that even with traditional licensure, she was not prepared to know what to do in some situations, with both instruction and classroom management. “I would say classroom management, because you can’t have anything without that. Methods. So many different methods for different types of learners . . . different ways to teach, especially games and stuff like that . . . so I think more methods should be introduced” (BT1, May, 2008). All four teachers mentioned that they learned on the job, but increased support in their specific content area and in relation to teaching diverse learners would have given them more confidence in their lessons. One teacher said that there were times she did not feel confident that her instruction was adequate and that she would have appreciated “support in the way of encouragement” (BT2, August, 2008). She commented that even though supports were offered, many times she did not have access to them, because her Support Providers were often engaged in other work and unavailable:

You have someone, a mentor . . . but your mentor has as much responsibility as you have, and you don't want to bombard them with all of your problems . . . We had an Induction Coach, and she only came once a month. And when she came, she really wasn't there to help you out. (BT2, August, 2008)

#### School D

Three of six teachers at School D spoke about the need for structural changes that would support collaboration, protect teachers from additional duties, and increase positive encouragement between administrators and teachers. All three noted that while supports were offered at their school, there was often little time within the school day for teachers to collaborate with their Support Providers. One teacher suggested that Support Providers “align the mentors with the same planning period as I have so we could work together during that time, because there is no time to work together . . . They said I had a mentor and I had a buddy. But neither of those went through” (BT2, March, 2008). Further, because the school is considered under-performing, many beginning teachers are asked to take on additional responsibilities that most beginning teachers are not given. One beginning teacher said that because she was considered successful by her peers, she was asked to do more than the average beginning teacher:

And I talked to the Assistant Principal, and she was very complimentary of my preparedness going into the meeting and the information that I knew . . . but I've also been asked to do things, like be on the School Improvement Team again, and I've requested that I not be [on it] . . . now that I know those things are not required of me, [I] try to take a step back because I told one of the Assistant Principals . . . that I feel like I've been overburdened . . . I hope that doesn't mean a burden on anybody else, but at the same time, I feel like our department needs to have more shared responsibility. (BT2, May, 2008)

Another beginning teacher said that increased collaboration between colleagues would help teachers learn how to protect themselves from additional duties and know who to turn to for support: “They need to know who the go-to person is, and I think they also . . . need to know where the power and alliances lie . . . Navigating the bureaucracy is a different animal entirely”



(BT2, March, 2008). These teachers felt that additional collaboration would include help from peers and Support Providers in managing the multiple responsibilities and moral encouragement that affirmed that they were doing okay: “Just encouragement or coming along to just ask me if I needed anything” (BT2, March, 2008).

In summary, the need for collaboration was presented differently according to each participant’s experience within their unique school context. Teachers at Schools A, B, and D called for collaboration which created a better sense of institutional support at the school through unifying participants around common school policies and practices. Teachers at Schools C and D felt that collaboration was particularly important in improving student performance to meet state Annual Yearly Progress Goals. Teachers’ reasons for leaving and staying were in many ways tied a combination of factors including their experiences within their school environments and their beliefs about how these needs were met.

- How do beginning teachers perceive retention for beginning teachers at their schools?

All 25 beginning teachers who took part in the study were asked to give their reasons for either staying or leaving their schools and/or the profession entirely. Six teachers left their schools involuntarily due to changes in allotment or because they were not rehired by their school. Of those who left involuntarily, all were either considering or actively pursuing teaching positions in other schools. Of those who stayed in their schools, most teachers felt that their experience was positive on the whole. Three teachers, who were dissatisfied with support at their school, stayed in their school because they were unable to transfer. However, all three of these teachers attained some form of success which also encouraged them to stay: two received positive feedback from administrators and one chose to manage her work differently in order to relieve some stress.

Participants also gave their thoughts on why some beginning teachers stay and some teachers leave *voluntarily*. Similar to Support Providers beginning teachers tended frame the discussion within their personal experiences, but many of them also went on to share their thoughts on retention decisions in general. One teacher's comment aptly frames the context for this section on why beginning teachers stay or leave. He generalized that teachers made a decision based on a cost-benefit analysis of their work:

[The] correlation is that people change jobs because they don't feel like they're getting their money's worth for what they do. Or they are offered something better. Right now, an enormous amount of the return for teaching is warm fuzzies. And I see that here too [the warm fuzzies]. But honestly, if our financial situation were a bit more dire, I couldn't afford to do this. I am choosing to do this, because I made the decision that career gratification is more important to me. And I don't have certain financial obligations that other people do. But, it ends up being a very practical choice for many people; they can't afford to do this . . . If you want to retain teachers, you have a better structural support system, and you pay them something like 50% more. And then you don't have a retention problem. (BT2, May, 2008)

Not every teacher in the study spoke about salary as a factor in teacher retention, but many teachers *did* tend to believe that most who left their school or the profession entirely felt that, for them, the costs outweighed the benefits of teaching. Participants felt that some of the "costs" were a large workload, a lack of support, and a low salary, and the benefits of teaching were the impacts of their work on the success of kids and a passion for teaching.

I think a big part of it is your heart. Teaching is not a logical decision. It is not an A + B decision. You've really got to have a heart for the kids and helping people. If you don't like kids and don't want to help people, and you can't persevere through just difficult things, if you prefer a pretty picture every day in your life, teaching is not for you [laughs]. A lot of it is the heart decision, and then the head decision is your perseverance. How do you make things better, what can I do? How can I raise the bar for this student? How can I motivate somebody . . . So I think that they are the ones that stay, I hope they don't stay because they feel desperate for a job. I hope they stay because they really want to help other people and it works into their life. They can deal with the salary and the hours work for them, and whatever. If they've got family around them, it's a great place to be. (BT2, March, 2008)

Beginning-teacher perceptions of why novice teachers leave their schools and/or the teaching profession or stay shed light on beginning teachers' beliefs about the connections between teacher support, school context and retention.

Theme 1) When asked about recruitment and retention, beginning teachers shared their perceptions of why beginning teachers choose to leave.

All 25 teacher participants mentioned why teachers leave either their schools and/or the teaching profession in a total of 51 comments in their interviews coded as reasons for leaving. This section will explore the participants' opinions on factors that affect decisions to leave: workload, support, and other factors, such as salary and dispositions.

Nine of the 25 teachers considered workload to be a major factor in decisions to leave the profession. Most felt that teaching entailed far more work than classroom instruction. Many teachers found that additional responsibilities such as administrative paperwork, mandatory meetings, and grading to be too much. One BT commented that "People who leave . . . I think it's because they don't realize some of the difficult things . . . outside of actual teaching and students they have to deal with, like administration, like parents, paperwork, and grading are not going anywhere. You have to do it" (BT1, March, 2008). Another teacher felt that while she was staying in teaching for the time being, she would not continue for many years because she felt that the expectations to complete additional demands outside of teaching were overwhelming:

It's not the kids. It's really not the kids. It's the system and the expectations that are put on teachers from the system, really ruin the job. It, hands down, ruined my experience. I can have the best kids and the best time, and at the end of the day, you've got to file paperwork. You've got to call these people, you've got to make sure that you go through all the correct red tape. You've got to make sure that every 'I' is dotted, every 'T' is crossed or it's going to come back on you, and they're going to say, 'Well, why didn't you . . . you should have . . .' whether you knew it or not. It's still your responsibility to keep up with all of these demands from federal legislation that carries down into the state and into the county and into the school. But it's impossible. (BT2, April, 2008)

Lateral Entry BTs have the added responsibility of obtaining licensure while teaching.

One BT stated that lateral entry teachers encounter another level of stress:

At first, as a lateral entry teacher, it kind of sucks, because you have so much pressure on you, and the pressure's from downtown. Taking classes, making sure you have your six credits, making sure you pass this, making sure you do this, and you only have three years to do that. (BT2, June, 2008)

Four of the nine BTs mentioned that they took on additional responsibilities not technically required of them by the school in their first years. One mentioned that he coached a team sport because he enjoyed it. However, the other three teachers took on additional responsibilities because they felt pressured by administrators and fellow teachers. One took responsibility of a sports team when another coach left. She commented that the job was far more time-consuming and stressful than expected:

Ugh! [It] was going well initially, with the exception of the time commitment; however, three girls who were on varsity last year did not make the varsity squad. Their parents went to Central Office . . . and we were forced to allow them on the squad . . . Talk about negating teacher authority! (BT2, May, 2008)

Another teacher said:

But, the administration burdens the good teachers. Like [this teacher] is a second year teacher and she is fantastic, and they are running her out. I think she's staying now. They are overburdening her. They are asking her to be the department chair, run honors society, teach four upper level classes and an EOC, and they wonder why new teachers are leaving . . . So they just really put too much on us. Taking away our planning constantly for meetings . . . We're required to do after-school tutorials even though we don't get paid for them. And most of us would do it anyway . . . but the fact that we're required to is kind of an issue. (BT2, May, 2008)

Two teachers felt that beginning teachers were especially prone to becoming overburdened because they are “energetic and willing” and ultimately feel less authority to say no to additional demands: “The beginning teachers . . . who want so much to impress, are the ones that end up

overburdened and end up suffering. And that's . . . the ultimate reason I think teachers are leaving the profession" (BT2, March, 2008). Another teacher said that her life experience prior to entering teaching mid-career gave her an edge over beginning teachers who entered teaching as their first career. She felt that she understood office politics well and knew how to "play the game" in order to reduce her workload and survive:

I think it's a lot of life experience that, you know, I kind of live by the serenity prayer, figure out what I can change, what I can't change, and how that . . . what's hard and fast, and what's not, and helping other people question that. You know, 'Well, that's the rules.' Well, who made the rules? . . . You know, what does it cost me if I don't? And I was surprised to find that a lot of people don't ask that question. 'It's a rule, we've got to do it.' Well, maybe [laughs]. (BT2, March, 2008)

Eleven of the 25 beginning teachers cited support as a major factor in decisions to leaving teaching. Ten teachers commented that for such a demanding profession, there was a lack of encouragement and moral support from their administrators. One teacher felt that she received more negative feedback from her administration than positive feedback: "When I leave here, I'm always tired. I'm always drained. And then again, just the lack of encouragement . . . because it seems like you work so hard, but it's always something negative coming back instead of something positive" (BT2, June, 2008). Another teacher said that the lack of encouragement at her school:

bothers me to the point where that just in itself would be enough for me to leave . . . That tone is always, it's the teacher's fault . . . And that tone is set in our faculty meetings . . . most teachers at our school would be there until 8:00 at night if they knew that what they were doing was going to make a difference. But when you're being told that you have to? When you're not being given anything to support you, then what's the point in doing this? (BT2, April, 2008)

In some cases, the absence of positive encouragement was further compounded by negative dealings with administrators. One teacher said that some of administrators dealt with

teachers “unprofessionally” and other teachers gave specific instances when they felt marginalized by their administrators. One commented that she struggled a great deal her first year to get her head around the job, and debated whether or not she’d be able to continue. She was surprised when her administrator approached her for a decision regarding her status before the school year had ended:

She came to me the other day and asked me. She had heard rumors that I was leaving and that she wanted to check with me to make sure, because it was hard for our positions to be filled. And so, she wanted to get started before I even turned in a notice. Thank you. So, okay, then I guess not. I probably will not be back. That felt like a slap in the face. (BT1, April, 2008)

Teachers reported a disconnect between their need for encouragement and support and their administrators’ actions. One BT hypothesized that administrators were often more concerned with the “business” of managing their school, often overlooking their beginning teachers’ needs for affirmation and encouragement:

Most people are adequately prepared to teach their subject area. They are not adequately prepared to manage the craziness of a classroom and an administration that doesn’t have any particular regard for *you*. And I think that’s very harsh, because coming straight out of college, you have caring teachers, you have people around you, the idealized images, and it is harsh to turn around and come into this environment . . . (BT2, March, 2008)

Eight teachers cited a lack of physical support as a factor in teachers’ decisions to leave. Four teachers felt that a lack of support with student discipline was an important part of physical support needed. One lateral entry BT, who left his school midyear, complained that when his students acted up, there was no one to help him gain control of his class, and that ultimately he did not want to stay in an environment where students “did not want to learn” (BT1, July, 2008). Three other teachers felt that their administrators did not enforce behavior policies consistently or back them up when they needed to refer a student. One said, “if you write up a kid, they throw it

back and say give them detention yourself” (BT2, March, 2008). Another teacher commented that the lack of enforcement by administration undermined his authority in the classroom: “So, just overall in terms of the respect, and that does come from leadership, when they see the fact that certain things aren’t getting done, [the students] won’t respect it. So that’s probably the biggest problem” (BT2, April, 2008).

Four teachers felt that a lack of instructional support was another important factor in support. One said that teachers leave because

You are on your own a lot. You really are on your own when you get into that classroom. There’s no one there to support you in terms of coming in every day and saying ‘How’s it going today? What can I do for you? Can I make copies for you? Can I help you? I mean, there’s nobody there. (BT2, March, 2008)

Another teacher said that she was choosing to leave because she felt that she was not getting the instructional support and professional development that her colleagues were receiving. She wanted to go to another school where she felt she would receive more opportunities to attend professional development and receive more material resources for her class. “I think if the support was there, I would have stayed” (BT1, July, 2008). Another teacher complained that beginning teachers received less desirable teaching assignments, and attributed a lack of structural support from administration as a reason why some teachers leave.

In addition to workload and support, some participants cited other factors for leaving. Two cited teacher salary, three cited lack of success with students, one teacher cited family obligations, and one talked about lack of teacher commitment. These teachers tended to attribute reasons why teachers leave either their school or the profession entirely as a combination of factors rather than just one of these. One teacher reflected on his decision to leave his school after his first year of teaching:

Like there's so many attributes. It's kind of hard to answer that question. Not that it was a total disaster, but there are all these factors, it's really hard to get to one thing. So I guess, it's kind of deep. It's the time attachment and the emotional attachment. At my age, I don't know, like, in five years, how I'll feel. It's just right now, it's a little too much" (BT1, June, 2008).

Theme 2) When asked about recruitment and retention, beginning teachers shared their perceptions of why beginning teachers choose to stay.

The sentiment that teaching "is about the heart" given by the teacher at the beginning of this section reflects many of the participants' beliefs that teachers who stay in the field love their job and love their students. Twelve out of the 25 participants gave their opinion on why teachers stay. Eleven out of twelve suggested that their students were either a major factor in their own decision to continue teaching, some of whom commented that students should be a prime reason in any teacher's decision to stay. One of these teachers stated that the challenges she had encountered at her school caused her to consider pursuing employment at another school, but ultimately she saw herself as an advocate for her students: "I love the students. I love them. And that's the only reason why I am going to stay here" (BT2, May, 2008).

The one teacher who did NOT cite students as a reason for teaching left the school voluntarily after his first year. He stated that teachers stay in the role due to lack of other options. Three other teachers also cited a lack of other options as *one* factor in their decision to continue at their school, but all three of these teachers *also* expressed a commitment to working with students.

Eight teachers expressed that they stayed in teaching because they felt strong commitments to their students. Four of these teachers stated that they "loved" their students. One teacher said "This year, I loved my kids. It's going to be really hard next year, because everybody knows that the class of 2008 was just, the class" (BT2, May, 2008). Another said:



I think for me personally, I love my kids. No matter how much of an \*hole they are, I love my kids . . . I don't know, it's like I have 137 kids of my own. And when I came into it, I was like, 'Oh, I'd never love my kids! I'd never be someone who would LOVE my students. But it's completely opposite. You really do. (BT1, May, 2008)

Teachers stated that part of this “love” was a commitment to bettering the social welfare of the population of students they work with. One said:

If you give those kids a hug, it might be the only hug they get all day . . . because they aren't going to tell their parents about things. They hardly ever see their parents or don't have parents. Some of them don't have parents. That's it. (BT1, May, 2008)

Another teacher said that she was committed to teaching because:

The bottom line . . . is that I feel like our youth are in trouble. Really. Our nation of kids, it scares what I'm seeing with a lot of the kids. I'm going to be a senior citizen one day and they are going to be running the country. Leadership, responsibility, character, good morals . . . (BT1, March, 2008)

Another teacher said that the chief benefit of the job was:

to see kids change. To see them, because the kids that I work with, plenty of them don't have hope, they don't believe that good things are possible for them, they don't think that people in their situation should be like people on TV. They think that other people are better than them, and I don't like that. I went to a high school very much like [this school]. I have an engineering degree. And I would say that I'm successful. So I just feel like they are me. And I just needed someone like me come and teach in my school, who wasn't afraid to come and teach in my school, who wasn't afraid to get in my life. So that to me, when I get to express legitimate and sincere concern for them and their well-being through teaching, and then they turn around and they believe in themselves, they at least know that somebody cares, that is beneficial to me. If I can cause them to adjust the way they see themselves and adjust the way they think, then, even if they get an F in my class, then they are going to be successful in the next math class, and maybe not the very next class, but three math classes down the road, once their mindset is solidified about who they are, then they'll be successful the rest of their life. But if it takes one F and me loving you, even though you got an F in my class, I'm going to hold the standard that I still care about you and you're still valuable, if it takes that, then I'm still satisfied” (BT2, April, 2008).

Two teachers called the profession “a calling,” implying that while they believed that the job was not easy they found it to be extremely rewarding. One said that “you definitely have to be called to it. You have to have the heart for it . . . You’re not going to be a millionaire teaching . . . but I love my kids, and it’s really something I want to do” (BT1, March, 2008).

Six of the twelve teachers felt that a major factor in their decision to continue teaching was the gratification they felt in sharing their knowledge and seeing their students develop an interest in learning. One teacher said that he taught because:

I get to do this stuff, right? . . . I get to do anything I want. Even if I end up teaching [this subject] and had an EOC, I could do it from any perspective at all, and it’s nice, because I have the training and the background, and ultimately I work with students who end up being interested. (BT2, May, 2008)

Another teacher said “I love teaching, as crazy as it may be . . . And the reason I love it is I can see I am making them use their brain. I can see the changes in some of these students” (BT2, April, 2008). Another teacher commented that seeing her students learn provided the encouragement she needed to persevere in her first year:

I tell you the most gratifying thing I have gotten from being here is just from one student coming up to me and saying ‘You know what, Mrs. [X]? I learned something from your class.’ . . . That made me feel good. ‘Mrs. [X], so and so left. Don’t you leave.’ You know, that to me has been the most gratifying [thing]. All the other [challenges], I couldn’t deal with everything all at once. If you could have broken it up a little bit. Let me teach. (BT1, May, 2008)

### **Summary of Findings**

Findings for the first and second research questions were summarized from the two major participant groups, beginning teachers and Support Providers. In some cases there were clear differences to be found between major participants groups and in other cases, there were clear

differences amongst schools. The following is a brief summary of key points from each school and each participant group.

### ***School A***

School A is a flagship school, known throughout the district as a School of Distinction. Support Providers and Teachers note that the school has a competitive teaching environment and a strong parent base. School A is also a school in transition; the student population has shifted over the past few years and there have been several changes in leadership. When asked about support for teachers, Support Providers and teachers spoke about the inconsistencies of administration in providing institutional support, particularly with regard to school-wide behavior policies. Beginning teachers also reported a need for more institutional support in this area, and reported a lack of direct support from school leadership. They were able to find either colleagues or mentors to provide day-to-day services. Mentor support was mixed; on the whole, teachers at School A reported that they did not rely heavily on mentors for support.

### ***School B***

School B is distinctive from the other three schools in its history, size, and curricular focus. The school was in its second year at the time of this study, having moved to a new building during that time. The school also had new administration and new teachers, the majority of whom were mid-career lateral entry candidates. Perceptions of support were reflective of the very nature of the situation; teachers had little collegial support because their colleagues were also novice teachers. Mentors were also unavailable at the school and consequently beginning teachers were paired with mentors from other schools, sometimes in other subject areas. Further beginning teachers reported a lack of support from the new administration with regard to understanding the school's technical curriculum and addressing their instructional needs.

***School C***

Teachers and Support Providers in School C were consistent in their perceptions of administrative support. Most participants felt that the more veteran administration offered consistent institutional support and worked with teachers to either remove barriers to their classroom success or offer timely interventions. However, the pressure to meet yearly academic progress goals were pressing for all participants at School C. Teachers felt under scrutiny and overburdened with additional responsibilities particularly for courses that included a high-stakes test at the end of the term. Administrators were cognizant of the tension between giving novice teachers time and support to improve their craft while addressing pressing academic progress goals.

***School D***

Participants at School D also commented on the external pressure to raise student achievement scores. Unlike other schools in this study, School D's highly diverse student population challenged novice teachers to adapt instructional methods with few resources at hand. Many teacher participants at School D remarked that they felt overwhelmed at times and unappreciated at other times by some of their administrators. Their dedication to provide quality instruction was apparent, but they indicated that their commitment to their school wavered at times when they felt that communication from their superiors was negative. Several Support Providers noted that they also observed a negative tone at the school and indicated their desire to offer moral and physical support to beginning teachers. Mentor relationships at the school were mixed. Some teachers reported that their mentors were virtually nonexistent, indicating that non-participation was known on behalf of their administrators. Other teachers reported very positive mentor relationships. All teachers were able to rely on colleagues as a form of support even when their mentor relationships were not ideal.

### ***Support Providers and Teachers***

Support Providers and Teachers were generally consistent in their beliefs about the kinds of support that beginning teachers need and receive. All participants pointed out key sources of support for beginning teachers were colleagues, mentors, and school and district administrators. Support Providers perceived their role in support as providing beginning teachers to these sources of support, but noted challenges in protecting beginning teachers from other duties and academic performance pressure. They also noted the particular constraints inherent in their school contexts; in particular those Support Providers who were new to their schools admitted feeling that they were not able to offer the depth of support they would like to beginning teachers due to more pressing priorities. Teachers agreed that they turned to school leaders to support them instructionally and institutionally. They perceived support in terms of school management, instructional and moral support.

Both sets of participants agreed that beginning teachers stayed in teaching because of a deep commitment for working with children. Support Providers also commented that teachers must have the right mindset for teaching; they must be flexible and willing to take direction and able to cope with a degree of uncertainty in their roles. Beginning teachers also noted that teachers who stay choose to do so for their students, but they were also quick to point out that they would move to a new school environment if they felt that they were unable to perform their duties successfully due to a lack of support. Support Providers agreed that a supportive school environment factors in to a teacher's decision to stay or leave. However, Support Providers failed to cite the role in providing moral support and encouragement, a factor that beginning teachers cited as a critical type of support they desired from their schools.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION**

This chapter will discuss findings regarding participants' perceptions of support and factors that influence beginning teacher retention. The first section will discuss findings from sub-question 1: How do stakeholders perceive support for beginning teachers at their schools and the second section will discuss findings from sub-question 2: Why do some beginning teachers choose to stay and some beginning teachers choose to leave their schools? Each section will summarize and discuss key findings from each question and provide lessons learned regarding implications of these findings. The final section of this chapter will provide a summary of recommendations based on these lessons learned and implications for future study.

- 1) How do stakeholders perceive support for beginning teachers at their schools?

#### **Discussion of Support for Beginning Teachers at Schools**

From the start, X County Schools' involvement with teacher induction extended beyond the scope of the North Carolina mandated requirements. In addition to state policy that every BT1, BT2, and BT3 receive orientation, a mentor, and formative and summative evaluations, X County provided each BT a peer buddy and each school has a designated Induction Coordinator position to oversee mentors and hold monthly induction meetings. The district took an additional step by assigning full-release Induction Coaches to cohorts of schools for the purpose of direct support and advocacy for beginning teachers and to serve as a liaison between the schools and the district.

Each of these sources of support varied to some extent both among and within schools. In School B, for instance, where there was a dearth of veteran teachers, the Induction Coach played

a strong role by providing direct support to teachers. In School A, which had a strong existing veteran population and tightly woven departments, collegial relationships were a prime source of support. In School C, mentors and other departmental and school leaders played a critical role in support, particularly to those lateral entry teachers who had little prior knowledge about teaching. And in School D, where there was a degree of distrust for administration, teachers found pockets of support through select colleagues, mentors, and their Induction Coordinator, who served as both advocate and confidant.

- How do participants, including various Support Providers and beginning teachers, perceive the implementation of induction policies and practices and other forms of support at their schools?

Beginning teachers and Support Providers (district administrators, school administrators, Induction Coordinators, and mentors) pointed out several key sources of support for beginning teachers during their first years: administrator support, mentor support, collegial support, and professional development. Some forms of support provided by each source were formally articulated through induction policies. For instance, administrators have been given advice from district-level administrators to give beginning teachers a few months to settle into their roles before they begin formal observations. State mandate established that each school provide beginning teachers a mentor to serve as a regular source of veteran support, and the district encouraged collegial support through their creation of a buddy program, which pairs a novice teacher with another teacher within the school who can serve as critical friend. The district also offered beginning teachers formal professional development through their district-wide orientation and monthly induction meetings held at each school.

While Support Providers recognize these layers of support as important to beginning teacher success, there were many more informal and more nuanced ways in which beginning

teachers perceived support. For instance, beginning teachers looked to their administrators for support through their management of the school, in effect, by creating a school environment that facilitated teaching. Further, teachers perceived mentor support differently, according to their personal need for one-on-one help and according to their perceptions of their mentor's commitment and availability. And whether or not the teacher took advantage of their assigned buddy, nearly every teacher in this study spoke about their reliance on at least one other colleague within the school, be it another teacher, a Department Head, or their Induction Coordinator, to provide instructional resources and moral support. Beginning teachers had mixed reactions regarding both induction-specific professional development (PD) and other professional development activities taking place at their schools. Teachers connected more readily to PD topics that were timely and relevant to their instructional needs.

- *Administrator Support*

Ultimately teachers viewed their school administrators as their evaluators and as their instructional leaders. Most teachers did not rely on their administrators for direct instructional support, oftentimes because they did not want to infringe on their time and because they did not want to appear ineffective. However, teachers did feel that their administrators, as leaders of their school, served an *institutional* support role by creating a school culture that was conducive for learning. They saw administrators as school managers who set both the professional and emotional tone for students and teachers. Many times, teachers commented on administrator support in terms of course scheduling, enforcement of school policies and student discipline, school-based professional development, and mediation between district and state policies and the classroom.

Support Providers tended to believe that the administrator role in providing induction-based support was to provide a variety of resources for beginning teachers to utilize. Many cited



mentors, Induction Coordinators, colleagues, and departmental heads as forms of support. Similar to the teacher participants' beliefs, Support Providers viewed administrators as evaluators and site managers. However, Support Providers differed from teacher participants regarding the role of emotional support that administrators provide to teachers. That is, most Support Providers did not emphasize administrators as providing positive feedback and encouraging communication to teachers; however, teachers listed administration's role in setting a supportive tone throughout the school and in personal interaction as a key component of support.

A key challenge in providing institutional and instructional support from the administrative level was the constant turnover in leadership experienced at three out of the four schools in the study. Support Providers and teachers agreed leadership turnover meant constant changes in school-wide routines and practices and frustrations on the part of teachers in creating a sense of stability within their classrooms. Teachers in these situations found that they had to solve their classroom dilemmas "in house" particularly with regard to managing student behavior. They noted that institutional support was critical to long-term success in their school and hoped that there would be more school-wide unity in the future.

- *Mentor Support*

The scope and type of mentor support varied within each school in the study as a result of different players and different contexts. Mentors at their best went above and beyond their expected requirements, which were to meet at least once a month with the beginning teacher to discuss their needs. In some cases, the mentor literally stepped into beginning teachers' classrooms at the beginning of the school year to assist them with instruction, behavior management, organization of materials, and any other needs. Some beginning teachers entered the classroom through the lateral entry track and had no prior coursework or teaching experience.

For these teachers, the mentor acted as their lifeline, literally stepping into their classrooms and providing just-in-time support and feedback.

For about half of the teachers in this study, the mentor was not a strong match, due to differences in teaching experiences and philosophy, commitment, and availability. At times it was impossible to match a mentor to a mentee teaching the same course or even the same subject area. Even with good matches, other beginning teachers had difficulty finding common time to meet with their mentor during the day or found that their physical distance within the building made it difficult for them to just “pop in” for a quick question. At other times, teachers felt a sense of guilt about turning to their mentor, noting that they didn’t want to “bother them” because they felt they were too busy. In the most extreme cases, beginning teachers either never saw their mentor at all or found that their mentor was virtually non-compliant with the expectations of their role as a mentor. When this happened, these teachers turned to other colleagues to provide them with support.

Consequently, mentor-mentee matches varied greatly within all four schools participating in the study. Finding qualified teachers to serve as mentors in some school contexts was a particularly daunting exercise. Some of the schools had fewer “career” teachers who were qualified to serve as mentors due to high turn-over at the school or because of school restructuring. Lack of options for a diverse and qualified mentor pool also proved challenging in schools that had higher rates of teacher turnover. In some schools, matches could not be made within subject areas, or common planning times were not scheduled. As a result, convenient meeting times and locations were not always possible, and mentoring support in specific content areas for beginning teachers was not available.

The district Induction Coach acts in a similar fashion as the school mentor. The Induction Coach is essentially a full-release mentor with a case-load of several schools and the beginning

teaches within them. Induction Coaches check in with beginning teachers, conduct observations on an as-needed basis, and act as an advocate for the beginning teacher to the school administration. Beginning teachers had high praise for their Induction Coaches noting that they appreciated their pedagogical expertise and provision of timely resources and feedback during their first years of teaching.

The intention of full-release Induction Coaches was to provide another linkage between the district and the school and another layer of support for beginning teachers in their schools. While Induction Coaches sometimes have large cohorts of teachers and find it difficult to provide direct intervention for all on an on-going basis, there is evidence that Induction Coaches have impacted the practice of several beginning teachers participating in this study through direct intervention and support. For example, teachers in School B cited the support of their Induction Coach as particularly important in their development, noting that observations, coaching, and feedback were vital in their instructional growth and teaching confidence. Perhaps because teachers at School B did not have access to thorough mentor support, the Induction Coach was able to identify and target this school for close supervision.

However, a chief constraint for the District Coach is their large case-load. Often, because District Coaches are responsible for between 55-60 teachers, their work is limited to a meet-and-greet with each of their teachers at the beginning of the school year, and a more in-depth feedback with teachers exhibiting the greatest need. As a result, it is difficult to maintain the high level of observation and communication necessary to ensure that all beginning teachers are receiving their induction supports with fidelity.

- *Collegial, Induction Coordinator, and Departmental Support*

Teacher responses about mentor support were a mixed bag, but those who found mentors most helpful were appreciative of the kinds of trusting relationships they had formed and the

direct support they had with their day-to-day needs. Even in cases where mentor support was not optimal, teachers could point out at least one source of support. Oftentimes, teachers turned to like-minded colleagues, who generally were fellow teachers, but in some cases were Induction Coordinators, Departmental Heads, or Curriculum Facilitators. These colleagues assisted each other with thematic planning and played a vital role in teacher induction by helping new teachers learn the school curriculum. In addition to providing moral and instructional support, colleagues also provided valuable direction regarding school policies and procedures. At times, on-the-job situations occurred that the teachers were unsure how to handle. Colleagues helped them to decide how best to translate school policies and make concrete decisions about how to address specific situations.

While school and district administrators often conduct observations of beginning teachers, they noted that the role that they often played in their relationships was formal and evaluative. Both parties noted that they often felt that teachers seemed less secure in approaching them for help or feedback because they perceived their “weaknesses” as a threat to job security. Support providers noted that because mentors and Induction Coordinators were not responsible for beginning teacher evaluations, they were better positioned to provide day-to-day advice and feedback for their teachers. In turn, school and district administrators used the IC and the mentor to express concerns or successes regarding that new teacher.

In schools where administrator support was low, beginning teachers were especially reliant on colleagues for both moral support and for direct instructional support. For instance, at School A, where teachers felt that there was little administrative support regarding student misbehavior, teachers reported that their colleagues were willing to assist them by offering their rooms as an alternative place to send students who were being noncompliant. Further, beginning teachers supported each other in providing positive encouragement, especially in challenging

work environments where staff morale was low. At School D, two beginning teachers reported that they spent time with each other to avoid the negative tone often communicated by colleagues in the break rooms. Another teacher at School D found a like-minded colleague working next door, whom she felt comfortable confiding in and trusting with her concerns, even when she felt that she was under scrutiny by her administrators. Like-minded colleagues served a valuable role in collaboration about instructional ideas and in giving teachers a sense of community and trust within the school.

- *Professional Development*

Beginning teachers and Support Providers felt that the most timely and effective professional development support happened in-house, be it through informal collaboration with administrators and colleagues or more formal opportunities such as monthly Right Start meetings at their site and school-wide meetings. One of the most beneficial aspects of these meetings was the time for collaboration with peers. Teachers who pointed out the benefits of professional development appreciated learning more strategies for working with diverse students and for creating better lessons within their specific content areas. Additionally, PD that offered support with classroom management and help with understanding routine practices, such as setting up the online grade book, were helpful to beginning teachers in this study.

### **The Context for Support in Participating Schools**

One of the key findings of this study was that the degree to which beginning teachers felt supported and satisfied with their positions had just as much to do with *how* Support Providers enacted induction supports as *what* types of support were offered. These findings were consistent with SRI's evaluation of induction in Illinois and Ohio which found a relationship between school context, induction support, and beginning-teacher needs (Humphreys et al., 2008). The message that participants in this study articulated again and again was that induction plays out uniquely

within every school context. Consequently the types of support beginning teachers received or lacked related to their individual needs and the working conditions at their schools. Several key challenges arose at the participating schools that impacted the implementation of basic supports that are universal to most beginning teachers and the additional support needs which were more specific to the teachers in those schools. Key challenges that emerged in building supportive school environments are summarized below.

- *Changing contexts experienced by high-needs urban schools*

Teachers and Support Providers were able to attest to the pressures of teaching in schools that were considered under-performing by state standards. Three of the four participating schools in this study were considered high-priority schools, meaning that students were underperforming on the State's ABCs tests and that the state and district had implemented an intervention plan designed to raise student achievement scores. For many of these participants, the constant conversation about test scores permeated their daily instructional practices. The practice of changing the guard in the administration with the intent to find a leadership fit that would improve the school's performance also created a sense of unrest among teachers regarding their own job security, and a lack of institutional memory within their school to sustain consistent school-wide practices.

Many beginning teachers in these schools also dealt with a stream of visitors and observers in their classrooms and additional meetings and reminders for improving their students' academic performance on end-of-course exams. Beginning teachers commented that they often felt a lot of external pressure to "have the answers" for bringing up their students' scores, but they lacked experience and knowledge as to how to modify their instruction. Further, some noted that some of their meetings focused on analyzing and comparing scores between classes, but not on practical collaborations between teachers and Support Providers in determining possible

strategies to accomplish this. Conversely, school and district administrators also commented on external pressures to improve academic performance and the tension they felt between providing beginning teachers' time and support to learn and the immediate need to have results. As a result, finding ways to balance support with time-sensitive pressure was a balancing act that many participants struggled to maintain.

- *Maintaining induction-related support with other support initiatives was a challenge for beginning teachers*

Beginning teachers have a large workload initially and need constructive feedback, resources and support. Support Providers noted the benefits of induction-related support, but also noted that time was a scarcity for these teachers and support worked best when it was specific to their needs. All schools had their own professional development programs, and beginning teachers were required to attend these meetings in addition to Right Start induction meetings required by the district for all BTs. In low-performing schools, there were additional programs implemented by the district and the state with the intention of giving teachers training and resources to boost student achievement scores. However, due to multiple forms of professional development coming from multiple sources, Support Providers noted that the mandated induction meetings might be perceived as a burden given beginning teachers' limited time. Further, because of these multiple sources of support, it was difficult for district and school administrators to pinpoint which professional development activities were most helpful.

### **Introduction to Question Two**

Discussion of findings from Research Question One explains the impact of the induction policies and practices on overall support of beginning teachers. The role of teacher induction is to provide support to the emerging teacher with the goal of creating a well-trained professional who will continue teaching in their school. Research Question 2 addresses teacher and Support

Providers' perceptions of what impacts beginning-teachers' decisions to stay in their schools, move to other schools, or leave the teaching profession entirely. Findings from this study indicate that beginning teachers' retention decisions were a result of a variety of factors including preparation, workload and support, school working conditions, and school leadership. These findings are consistent with other similar studies that argue that beginning teacher retention is impacted by a variety of factors that extend beyond induction-based supports (Brock & Grady, 1997; Johnson et al., 2005; Tushnet et al., 2002).

1. Research Question 2: Why do some beginning teachers choose to leave, and why do some beginning teachers choose to stay in their schools?

#### **Discussion of Beginning Teacher Retention and School Characteristics**

Induction is that “systematic and organized plan for support and development of the new teacher” that aims to create a highly trained professional who will serve the school over time (Bartell, 2005). The small number of teachers who participated in this study prohibits the identification of generalizable patterns regarding retention. However, some patterns between teacher and Support Provider subgroups *across* the four schools indicate some similarities and differences in beliefs regarding why some beginning teachers choose to stay and some choose to leave. Most striking is that the induction experience of each teacher was mediated by changes in their school environment; each school was undergoing changes in staffing, students, and/or restructuring during this study.

At the end of the study period, spring 2008, ten of the twenty-five beginning teacher participants left their respective schools. Of those ten, two cited dissatisfaction with their school environment, five were transferring to other schools within the district, one was leaving to attend to family obligations, and two were not rehired by their schools. Of the five transfers, two were voluntary transfers and three were school-initiated transfers due to changes in staffing needs. All



ten leavers expressed an interest in teaching again; of the four who did not have teaching positions at the end of the study, one was considering teaching again after time off, two were actively looking for teaching positions, and one expressed interest in teaching in a school in her home community in the future.

An understanding of beginning teacher retention is informed not only by those who left, but also from those who have moved to other schools and stayed—i.e., what prompted them to question their commitment to return, as well as what factors most inspired them to remain in their schools. What is interesting among both the teachers who stayed and the teachers who left is the delicate balance between positive and negative experiences and the set of alternative options available that ultimately impacted final retention outcomes. Several teachers who cited dissatisfaction with their work environment, and who were actively looking for a transfer to another school within the district, had turnarounds that ultimately kept them in their schools. One teacher, for instance, who seemed very likely to leave her school based on a mid-term interview, experienced a total change of heart when she began to experience classroom success and experienced more positive interactions with her administrator. In contrast, several teachers who stayed were under threat of non-renewal during their spring months and worked under uncertain conditions. And, several teachers who wished to continue in their schools were not renewed due to staffing changes at their school. What is consistent for nearly every teacher who participated in the study was the desire to serve their students and the desire to achieve classroom success. Ultimately the retention outcomes came as a result of the interplay between affordances and constraints to classroom success.

- How do stakeholders (Beginning Teachers and a variety of Support Providers) perceive support needs in relationship to the unique needs of their school?

The ideal induction experience is one that offers beginning teachers a combination of instructional, emotional, and institutional support. However, in all four schools, differing priorities often impeded the implementation of one or more of these supports beyond what Support Providers intended. The findings of this study support the notion that there are general support needs common to nearly every beginning teacher, and there are support needs that arise within each teacher's work environment. Nearly every beginning teacher will need help understanding school routines and procedures, instructional support for classroom needs, moral encouragement, and ample time to adjust to their classroom roles free of additional duties.

As the study explored each participating school's context more deeply, it was apparent that there were more subtle ways in which beginning teachers needed support based on their particular school environment and their own individual level of preparation. For instance, teachers at Schools A, B, and D commented time and again about the need for better support at the institutional level. They desired a stable administration that would consistently hold students accountable to behavioral expectations and set school-wide practices in motion that would create a sense of day-to-day stability. Teachers at School C had less to say regarding institutional support, a finding that might be attributed to the school's more stable, veteran administration.

Because teachers at Schools B, C, and D worked with students considered underperforming, most teachers commented that they needed additional support working with diverse learners and assistance in how to remediate students to meet state standards. Beginning teachers in School B and School C were largely novice lateral entry teachers. While many of these teachers had extensive content-area expertise, they lacked some of the basic knowledge and skills to know how to set up their classrooms. These teachers needed far more instructional intervention initially in order to understand how best to perform their duties. Teachers at School B were especially cognizant of their need for the support from more experienced others, due to

the school's career and technical curriculum and lack of career teachers. These teachers were more isolated within their subject areas and less able to find colleagues with teaching experience to turn to.

Teachers in Schools C and D commented that their support needs rested largely on assistance with improving student performance on high-stakes tests and a need to reduce extraneous duties that competed with their time to plan. Further, teachers at these schools, and particularly at School D, remarked on how working in an environment that constantly emphasized improving test scores affected their overall morale. These teachers suggested that they needed additional moral encouragement and more autonomy in performing their professional duties. Novice teachers' experiences their first years of teaching rest on the complex interplay of personal factors and their teaching environments which ultimately impact their decisions to continue within their school or leave.

- How do stakeholders perceive retention for beginning teachers at their schools?

In a sense, the retention numbers for this study speak volumes. The high rate of turnover (about 40%) warrants further investigation as to why teachers stay or leave, and how school-based factors impact retention. It could be argued these decisions result from a combination of candidate screening, pre-service and induction support, and school context factors, including school leadership. All participants pointed out that two of the major reasons why some teachers left within their first years had to do with the large workload and a perceived lack of support. Support Providers also indicated that the high turnover rate may be due, in part, to the dispositions of the interns who were specifically recruited to schools as well as the level of ongoing support given to teachers throughout their initial years of teaching. This assumption is supported by the "can do" attitude expressed by the beginning teachers who stayed in their schools (60% in this study), because these teachers were proactive in seeking resources to

improve their teaching environment. Further they all expressed an unshakable commitment to their students which at times superseded any other challenges they encountered.

- *Workload and Support*

Beginning teachers and Support Providers pointed to workload and lack of support as major factors in teachers' decisions to stay or leave. The intention of support during the induction period is to protect beginning teachers from additional responsibilities, including the pressures of teaching a high-stakes course, while learning the ins and outs of their profession. Two of the three schools encountered difficulty in protecting beginning teachers from additional responsibilities due to external pressures to improve student achievement scores on state mandated tests.

Beginning teachers at these schools were besieged with additional responsibilities, such as morning and afterschool meetings, that often conflicted with their scheduled time to plan and grade. Further, in some situations, the lack of veteran teachers at these schools meant that there were fewer able staff members to lead school improvement initiatives. In these cases, some beginning teachers were being asked to take on leadership roles in *addition* to their regular responsibilities.

Teachers and Support Providers described three of the four schools as operating in triage mode on a daily basis. This reactive environment cast a negative light on beginning teachers' experiences as they often felt that they were the last to know about important school policies and procedures. Further, they felt that changes in school leadership meant that there was no institutional memory to sustain successful practices. Many teachers felt that working in these environments meant that every day was unpredictable and teaching and learning conditions were subject to change. This communication to staff by school leadership through their words and actions created a negative tone for many beginning teachers that ultimately impacted their satisfaction with their position and influenced their decisions about continuing at their school.

- *Commitment and Flexibility*

Teachers with the greatest likelihood for long-term success needed to have the “right attitude” for working in hard-to-staff schools, including enthusiasm for the families and children served by high-needs schools, flexibility, ability to collaborate, and willingness to adapt in ever-changing working conditions. Teachers entered with variations in the extent to which they understood the population of students they would serve and with diverse rationales for being there. School leaders were careful to screen for candidates who appeared to be organized, flexible, and knowledgeable about their content area as well as experienced with kids. Entering teaching with the mission of “saving the world” could lead to disappointment, according to the school leaders in this study. A number of study participants—from savvy teachers to Support Providers—commented on the importance of being committed to the kids and recruiting teachers who have the ability to learn and adapt to do this challenging work.

### **The Context for Retention in Participating Schools**

The findings of the study indicated that there were great similarities between the teachers who chose to stay in their schools and the teachers who chose to leave. On the whole, both sets of teachers indicated a love for teaching their subject area and a desire to do work that would “give back” to society through working with students. Some of the reasons behind these desires and actual retention outcomes had to do with factors outside of the teacher’s control. A few teachers who stayed were not guaranteed jobs until the end of the school year, and a few teachers who left *wanted* to stay but found that their positions had been eliminated. However, all teachers agreed that their decisions to remain in their schools for the long term rested largely upon their ability to have success within their classrooms and some protection from constraints to teaching. Some of those particular constraints to achieving success are unique to the schools (as mentioned in the above section). Other constraints rested upon district policies. One particular constraint to

building a supportive school environment that retains teachers has implications for district leaders and is discussed next.

- *Hiring, placement, and licensure uncertainties placed additional burdens on beginning teachers.*

Once beginning teachers passed the county screening exams necessary to work in the district school system, they interviewed with school administrators to determine whether or not their candidacy was an appropriate fit to the school's needs. However, many times, staffing needs for schools were indeterminate until either immediately prior to the start of the school year, or even after the start of the school year. As a result, some teachers participating in the study were hired and placed at the last minute. Because of these practices, some beginning teachers missed the new teacher orientation and were asked to take over teaching their classrooms before the mandatory 10-day orientation period for late hires had passed. Particularly problematic about these practices is the large number of lateral entry teachers who are being hired after the start of the school year and placed in classrooms with little to no teaching preparation or experience.

It was clear that a diverse pool of beginning teacher candidates in this study entered their schools through a variety of pathways. Some teachers had a traditional university undergraduate or master's level certification, but many entered through alternative licensure routes, including affiliation with the Regional Alternative Licensing Center (RALC) or through University or College-approved alternative licensure programs. Those entering through alternative licensure programs were required to take at least six credit hours of instruction until they fulfilled their plan of study. Beginning teachers entering through the lateral entry pathways often encountered conflicts in finding time for courses or received inappropriate advisement regarding county and state licensure requirements. Thus, some teachers were still struggling to complete required coursework in the summers following their first and second years.

### Lessons Learned

State and district policy-makers have made great progress toward the goal of enhancing support for beginning teachers through by enacting several induction policies related to hiring, placement, and support; direct intervention, such as mentoring; and other mandates that help protect teachers from additional duties. School level implementation of these and other induction practices varied based upon each school's capacity to create a culture of support. Lessons learned regarding teacher preparation, dispositions, support, and retention from participants in this study will help guide future work in districts and schools and can inform the work of policy-makers and other stakeholders involved in induction.

- *Lesson #1: Induction is a component in the overall support of a beginning teacher. The ability to create a supportive school environment requires creativity and flexibility in accommodating individual contexts.*

Support Providers attested the challenging work involved in providing beginning teachers important induction-support while working within the particular constraints in their school contexts. At times, Support Providers and teachers pointed out that the best intentions for institutional support for beginning teachers were sometimes subverted by scheduling constraints and lack of resources. For instance, it is important to make the best effort for appropriate placements initially. Clearly, a class assignment that would be difficult for even an experienced teacher is unlikely to lead to a successful experience for a beginning teacher. While most Support Providers aim to protect their beginning teachers from course schedules that involve multiple preparations and high-stakes testing, it was sometimes impossible to prevent. In the future, having diverse models for beginning teacher support will provide understanding about how school-based support can play out in differing contexts and with different resources available. These models

will serve as an important resource to draw on as the preparation and support of new teachers continues to be refined.

- *Lesson #2: The support and engagement of school leadership plays an important role in the development and implementation of supports for beginning teachers.*

Leadership was a critical factor in how induction policies and practices evolved in each school. Principals of the schools affected the scope of influence of beginning teacher support based on their understanding of the goals of induction, their capacity to take full advantage of their resources, and their engagement with the program. Principals also set the overall tone and working conditions of the school. In Schools A and B, for instance, the fledgling administration spent less time on beginning teacher support than the more veteran administration at School C. In School D, leadership's focus on accountability and performance measures created a sense of urgency for beginning teachers to improve student achievement scores. Beginning teachers look to their leaders for both instructional support as well as institutional support. The way in which they perceive induction-support is mediated by these priorities set forth by their leaders.

- *Lesson #3: Colleagues have a critical role to play in support of beginning teachers.*

Collegial support *can* be highly effective because it gives the teacher a network of people to turn to according to their day-to-day needs. Colleagues, including veteran teachers, other beginning teachers, and Department Heads can provide specific advice regarding content, best practices, student needs, and school policies. Beginning teachers can filter the advice and information they receive to suit their needs and their personal style. Time is typically a scarce resource in schools, so it is necessary for teachers to be able to work with and learn from each other. However, leaving it up to beginning teachers to locate supportive colleagues is not the intent of induction support, and leads to teacher feeling like they have to sink or swim on their own.



- *Lesson #4: A clear understanding by beginning teachers about the realities of teaching in different school contexts, including high-needs schools, and a sense of professional commitment contributed to their retention.*

Teachers who are recruited to schools have differing expectations about the realities of the schools they are entering and the kind of support they can expect. These expectations are mediated by their career and life experiences prior to teaching, their dispositions, and their level of preparation. Careful screening of candidates during the interview process also provides Support Providers an opportunity to introduce candidates to potential challenges of working in their school and develop a dialogue about how to approach these challenges while learning the ropes at the school. An important factor for Support Providers to consider in the hiring process is the teacher's level of commitment to honor the teaching placements they have accepted. In multiple instances, teachers who struggled mid-year with the challenges they faced, and questioned whether they would continue teaching in their schools, experienced important successes when, with support from the schools, they persevered and worked through the difficulties they faced. Instilling this sense of professional commitment and developing their skills for self-advocacy when confronting professional challenges is a critical component for encouraging retention.

- *Lesson #5: Beginning teachers need induction support to extend beyond the first year.*

A critical element in beginning teacher support is time. Often beginning teachers grow substantially in their first year and see dramatic improvements in their ability to manage their classrooms in the second year. District administrators admit to a lack of resources needed to offer beginning teachers an ideal support package, but they do affirm that beginning teachers need *time* to grow and improve in their roles. Many, advocate for the investment in their hires and for

providing appropriate time and intervention to grow struggling first-year teachers rather than advising their dismissal.

- *Lesson #6: Successful beginning teacher support and high teacher retention depends on the interplay of multiple factors, including school context, support, and teacher dispositions.*

Critical factors that seemed to impact the success and retention of beginning teachers in this study included preparation prior to entrance into the classroom, the induction and professional development support they received as they began teaching, and the stable and supportive school environments in which these beginning teachers are placed. Preliminary findings—particularly the rate of retention for beginning teachers—indicated the importance of developing a multi-faceted intervention for the preparation and retention of teachers in differing school contexts, as well as the need for stability in school leadership positions.

- *Lesson #7: Beginning teachers who experienced classroom success became more self-efficacious and committed about their work.*

Support Providers and teachers cited the ability to find and celebrate successes with students as an important factor in teacher retention. The first years can be extremely frustrating and emotionally and physically taxing as beginning teachers learn to manage multiple responsibilities in and outside of the classroom while also achieving a level of instructional success matched by their more seasoned colleagues. Positive experiences with students, even small gains made in managing their workload, provided critical encouragement necessary to affirm their decisions to remain in teaching. Further recognition from experienced others, such as colleagues and school leadership gives teachers a sense of value to their school community, thus deepening their commitment. Support providers need to provide that support along with other assistance and advice they may offer.

- *Lesson #8: Late hiring practices push selection and placement of some beginning teachers into the school year, thus creating additional challenges for support.*

Late hiring practices pose a key challenge in supporting and retaining beginning teachers because it often places the least-qualified teacher in the classroom with little time to prepare. Exigencies for staffing can be particularly acute in the schools considered to have high needs, where principals are forced to hire lateral entry due to lack of options in some subject areas. The need to hire lateral entry teachers raises questions regarding teacher quality. It may be that in *some* situations it would be more beneficial to principals to hire a full-time substitute teacher than to staff a position with an under-qualified teacher.

Hiring and budget policies can impede recruitment and placement of beginning teachers. Policies that encourage administrators to staff their schools by July 1, prior to the start of the academic school year do not take into account the licensure process for lateral entry teachers that requires them to complete six credit hours of coursework each year until they have fulfilled all certification requirements. Many lateral entry teachers work up to their June 30 deadline to complete their requirements, thus forcing administrators to hire teachers late if those requirements are not met in time. Further, beginning teachers are not given the option of transferring to other positions within the school system in this study (with the exception of transfer *into* a Mission Possible School). If teachers wish to leave, they may not announce their resignation until they have secured positions at another school out of district, and often this type of turnover occurs during the summer. Finally state law requires that all lateral entry teachers take part in training or observations as part of induction success program prior to entering the classroom, if they are hired after the start of the school year. This policy, while helpful to the lateral entry teacher, prevents schools from being 100% staffed at the start of the academic school year.

## Recommendations

One aim of this study was to learn how various stakeholders perceived support for beginning teachers at their schools, and the main finding was that contexts mediate induction policies and practices at different schools. A second aim was to learn why some beginning teachers choose to leave, and why do some beginning teachers choose to stay in schools that have had historically lower rates and historically higher rates of retention? Another purpose of this study was to provide state and district policy-makers and school leaders with an understanding of how induction plays out at the local level, and then to offer recommendations for improving the quality of induction to better support and retain beginning teachers. This section summarizes recommendations for the successful implementation of induction policies and practices at the state, district, and school levels. It is certain that induction practices will continue to be fine-tuned as all stakeholders involved become increasingly experienced and knowledgeable about what it takes for beginning teachers to succeed.

### Recommendation #1: Refine Approaches to Recruitment.

#### *At District and State Levels:*

- Change hiring and transfer practices to ensure earlier placements of beginning teachers.
- Protect beginning teachers from placement in high-stakes courses.
- Provide a “go-to” person at the district level to provide specific advice regarding program of study guidelines and deadlines for lateral entry teachers who need coursework to retain their jobs.

#### *At District and School-levels:*

- Reinforce to beginning teachers the importance of multi-year commitment to their schools.

- Consider incentives for commitment to three to five years of service in urban, high-needs schools.

Recommendation #2: Target Specific Support Needs of Beginning Teachers During Their Early Years.

*At District and School Levels:*

- Provide lateral entry teachers with a committed colleague (preferably a trained mentor) to provide instructional intervention, particularly during the first semester of their first year
- Provide beginning teachers “systems training.”
  - Show teachers how to access standards and other instructional resources.
  - Give instructions about how to operate grade-book and other online programs.
  - Provide beginning teachers with a list of important deadlines, policies, and procedures.
  - Describe the evaluation process to beginning teachers and provide examples of observation instruments and “things to look for.”
- Promote an understanding of the communities and students served.
- Encourage regular collaboration with other teachers and teams.
- Help beginning teachers develop skills for identifying needs, locating resources, and negotiating with school colleagues and administrators.

Recommendation #3: Implement Beginning Teacher Support with Flexibility.

Induction support should account for the various levels of preparation that beginning teachers bring to their position as well as the special circumstances of their respective school contexts. Instead of a “one-size-fits-all” programmatic approach, school leaders and policymakers

should consider the scope and sequence of support and the need to differentiate support based on teachers' preparation pathway and school environment.

*At District and School Levels:*

- Encourage support that meets beginning teacher needs while also staying attuned to the particular challenges and unique characteristics of the school environment.
- Stay firm about non-negotiable components for induction support, but give schools flexibility about implementation.
- Design a continuum of courses, experiences, and activities that accommodate variations among individual pathways into teaching and the realities of the first years.

Recommendation #4: Ensure Accountability for Support Providers.

*At District and School Levels:*

- Designate a point-person to provide reliable feedback to the district regarding the implementation of induction supports at the school level.
  - Ensure that all mentors are fully compliant in fulfilling their responsibilities.
- Encourage Support Providers to provide positive and direct encouragement to beginning teachers.
- Discourage Support Providers from punitive practices such as issuance of non-renewal letters *unless* it is coupled with a plan for intervention designed for the under-performing teacher.
  - Provide Support Providers training in how to not de-motivate employees.

Recommendation #5: Create a Common Language for Beginning Teacher Induction and Support.

*All Levels:*

- Orchestrate opportunities for, teachers and Support Providers to share challenges, successes, and strategies with each other.

- Articulate what induction support looks like at the state, district, and school levels.
  - Create and disseminate common definitions for key induction supports.
  - Provide Support Providers with a continuum of good induction practices, including a continuum for mentoring and for school leadership support.

### **Limitations of the Study**

A major limitation of the study is the relatively small sample size, which prohibits making generalizations regarding the needs of all beginning teachers in their first years. However, the study did highlight that each school context, and in particular in the two high-needs contexts, sheds some light on why teachers in these schools ultimately choose to stay or leave. The understanding of beginning teachers' position within their unique school contexts supports the argument that one must look more deeply at the reasons behind teacher retention, rather than just looking at the outcomes. In this case study, multiple factors, such as school leadership, external pressures, teacher dispositions, and teacher success all contributed to the teachers' overall feelings of success and effectiveness as well as commitment to their schools. While other school leaders and policymakers may not find exact linkages between the experiences described in this study and their own, certainly all stakeholders can identify with the common themes that undercut many beginning teachers' experiences and find implications and recommendations for their own districts and schools.

A second limitation is the short-term nature of this study. Data collection took place throughout the spring of 2008 in one school district in one state. Data was collected from only 25 beginning teachers and 14 support providers from four different high schools. It was clear during data collection that participants' perceptions regarding some issues of support changed during the course of the study, and it can be inferred that these perceptions varied over the course of their entire first year(s) of teaching. This study did not account for apparent changes in perceptions

over an extended period of time. However, informal check-ins over the course of the study with teacher participants gave the researcher a clearer understanding of each teacher-participant's philosophy regarding teaching and overall support needs. Also, by including BT2s in the study, the researcher was able to get participants' retrospective views regarding the changes in their perceptions about support and retention over time.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The findings of this study challenge the notion that induction-related supports are sufficient in creating an environment in which beginning teachers will thrive and stay (Humphreys et al., 2008). The induction experiences of teachers are mediated by their school contexts, and these experiences can vary greatly from one school to the next (Glazerman et al., 2006; Youngs, 2007). Therefore, rather than viewing induction as a program, future research should examine the effects of induction support as part of the overall context of the school. The participants in this study seemed to represent the mixture of candidates entering teaching through multiple certification pathways and with varying types of life experiences. If professional commitment, teacher dispositions, and preparation factor into the participants' beliefs about teacher retention, further investigation should determine if there are connections between demographic makeup of the candidate and teacher retention as well as the licensure pathway, particularly the licensing agency, and teacher retention.

Further, the findings from this study suggest that even the best preparation, recruitment, and induction strategies cannot guarantee success for a teaching candidate who will commit to their school over time if there is poor leadership or poor management at the school site. Future investigations could examine the effect of school leadership turnover and school leadership styles on the implementation of induction and teacher retention. Finally, because induction cannot not be viewed as a cure-all approach to supporting and retaining beginning teachers, particularly in



high-needs school environments, future research should examine the effect of specific interventions that aim to create more supportive school environments and improve the effectiveness of school leadership on beginning teacher support and retention. Induction supports can be costly to implement and maintain; thus, an exploration of the costs and benefits of various components of induction for addressing key beginning teacher needs would assist policymakers and school leaders in making cost-effective decisions about how to utilize induction supports for diverse classrooms contexts.

Building upon the premise, supported in this study, that school leadership is critical in mediating induction policies and practices and building school environments that nurture and retain teachers (Brock & Grady, 1997), the follow-up to this study would investigate the relationship between principal quality and beginning teacher support and retention. Several possible angles in approaching this investigation exist: one would be to compare the effects on teacher induction and retention between schools that have veteran, in experience and in relationship to the school, principals and schools that have novice principals. Another angle would be to study school leadership in schools that have high teacher retention over time. Finally, case study investigations of school leadership at schools that have differing rates of beginning teacher retention and scores on teacher working conditions data would shed light on leadership perceptions of “what works” in building the context for support.

### **Conclusion**

The implementation of supportive induction policies and practices continues to be a work in progress. Numerous challenges were encountered by both the beginning teachers and the Support Providers at the four schools participating in this study. However, even recent changes occurring in the cultures of participating schools indicate that there is promising potential in creating stronger support systems for beginning teachers through an expansion of district and

school partnerships and an increased understanding of how the roles of key Support Providers, namely school administrators, impact teacher support and retention. Examination of the school environments in which stakeholders interpret and enact induction gives policy-makers, stakeholders in beginning teacher support, and researchers a deeper understanding of why some induction activities are successful or unsuccessful at different schools and why beginning teachers need different kinds of support. The findings, to date, indicate the importance of supporting and retaining beginning teachers through induction practices and through establishing stable and supportive school environments.

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## Appendix A

### Interview Protocols

#### Supervising Administrator Interview Protocol

Question	Comments
<p>Based on your own work with beginning teachers, what do you think are the most critical skills, knowledge, and dispositions needed for beginning teachers to teach in your school?</p> <p><b>PROBES:</b> (a) What types of knowledge and skills would you expect BTs to enter their first year with?</p>	
<p>Could you briefly articulate what induction looks like at your school? <b>PROBES:</b> (a) What are your goal(s) are in working with BTs in your school this year? (b) What is your role in this goal? What is the role of the induction coordinator? Mentor? Department Head?</p>	
<p>What are the most critical types of support that BTs need during their first year in the school?</p> <p><b>PROBES:</b> (a) What do they need to best transition from their prior setting (university/student/other career) setting into the public school/professional setting?</p>	
<p>If you had carte blanche to make any changes at all to the induction program, what would you change?</p> <p><b>PROBES:</b> (a) Are there any changes related to district policies? (b) Are there any changes related to your school's induction program? (for example: class size, planning time, class placement, etc)</p>	
<p>What is the recruitment process as you see it?</p> <p><b>PROBES:</b> Are there any challenges to recruitment? If so, describe.</p>	
<p>Could you tell me a little bit about how your beginning teachers are doing this year?</p> <p><b>PROBES:</b> (a) What are their challenges? (b)What are their successes?</p>	

<p><b>Could you predict how many teachers will continue at your school next year?</b></p> <p><b>PROBES: (a) If not at your school, do you think they will stop teaching or go somewhere else? (b) What factors do you think are influencing your teachers' decisions?</b></p>	
<p><b>What are your thoughts on why some beginning teachers are leaving and some are staying? What factors most influence teachers deciding to remain in their schools? What factors most influence them to leave?</b></p>	
<p><b>What facilitates implementation of district policies for induction at your school?</b></p>	
<p><b>What impedes implementation of district policies for induction at your school?</b></p>	

#### **Induction Coordinator/Mentor/Department Head Protocol**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<p><b>Based on your own work with beginning teachers, what do you think are the most critical skills, knowledge, and dispositions needed for beginning teachers to teach in your school?</b></p> <p><b>PROBES: (a) What types of knowledge and skills would you expect BTs to enter their first year with?</b></p>	
<p><b>Could you briefly articulate what induction looks like at your school? PROBES: (a) What are your goal(s) are in working with BTs in your school this year? (b) What is your role in this goal? What is the role of the induction coordinator? Mentor? Department Head?</b></p>	
<p><b>What are the most critical types of support that BTs need during their first year in the school? PROBES: (a) What do they need to best transition from their prior setting (university/student/other career) setting into the public school/professional setting? (b) Who is responsible for providing this support? (d) What do you think is the role of school leadership in induction, particularly the principal?</b></p>	

<p><b>Could you tell me a little bit about how your beginning teachers are doing this year?</b>  <b>PROBES: (a) What are their challenges?</b>  <b>(b)What are their successes?</b></p>	
<p><b>If you had carte blanche to make any changes at all to the induction program, what would you change?</b>  <b>PROBES: (a) Are there any changes related to the Right Start Program? (b) Are there any changes related to your school's induction program? (for example: class size, planning time, class placement, etc)</b></p>	
<p><b>What is the recruitment process as you see it?</b>  <b>PROBES: Are there any challenges to recruitment? If so, describe.</b></p>	
<p><b>Do you feel that your goals for your work with beginning teachers were accomplished this year? Please describe.</b>  <b>What might your change about the program for next year?</b></p>	
<p><b>Could you predict how many teachers will continue at your school next year?</b>  <b>PROBES: (a) If not at your school, do you think they will stop teaching or go somewhere else? (b) What factors do you think are influencing your teachers' decisions?</b></p>	
<p><b>What are your thoughts on why some beginning teachers are leaving and some are staying? What factors most influence teachers deciding to remain in their schools? What factors most influence them to leave?</b></p>	
<p><b>What facilitates implementation of district policies for induction at your school?</b></p>	
<p><b>What impedes implementation of district policies for induction at your school?</b></p>	

### Beginning Teacher Protocol

Question	Comments
<p><b>Tell me about how your year is going?</b>  <b>PROBES: What have been some of the successes you've had? What have been some of the challenges you've had? What has surprised you?</b></p>	
<p><b>Talk a bit about your teaching environment and school context. What is it like?</b>  <b>PROBES: How does the context impact your teaching?</b></p>	
<p><b>Who do you turn to for help?</b>  <b>PROBES: Do you tend to seek help when you have a question? Does someone offer it to you?</b></p>	
<p><b>What are the most critical types of support that you need during your first year(s)?</b>  <b>PROBES: Is this support what you actually need? Is it working well?</b></p>	
<p><b>Talk a bit about your preparation prior to coming into this role.</b>  <b>PROBES: What has helped you? What would have helped prepare you more that you didn't have? What do teachers need to best transition from their prior setting (university/student/other career) setting into the public school/professional setting?</b></p>	
<p><b>What do you think is the role of leadership in induction support? (Principal, IC, mentors)</b></p>	
<p><b>What was the recruitment process like for you?</b>  <b>PROBES: When were you hired? Who hired you? Did you feel that the principal took time to get to know you? Did you meet any other faculty during the hiring process.</b></p>	
<p><b>Tell me about your experience with Right Start Orientation. What did you get out of it?</b>  <b>PROBES: Tell me about how you were oriented to your school.</b></p>	
<p><b>What kinds of impacts has Right Start had on your transition and your teaching?</b>  <b>PROBES: monthly meetings</b></p>	

<p><b>The district offers a few additional supports, such as a check card at the beginning of the year, and a district person who can come in and help you when needed. Have you taken advantage of these opportunities, and if so, how have they helped you?</b></p> <p><b>PROBES: Is it working? What facilitates or impedes these opportunities?</b></p>	
<p><b>Tell me about your relationship with your mentor and your buddy.</b></p>	
<p><b>If you could rank the kinds of support you most need, what would be your top 3?</b></p>	
<p><b>Follow up interview questions:</b></p>	
<p><b>Could you tell me a little bit about how you're doing this year? Any changes or updates?</b></p> <p><b>PROBES: (a) What are their challenges?</b></p> <p><b>(b) What are their successes?</b></p>	
<p><b>Do you feel that your goals as a beginning teacher were accomplished this year? Please describe.</b></p>	
<p><b>If you were in charge of designing an induction support system for new teachers coming to your school next year, what would you do?</b></p>	
<p><b>What are your thoughts on why some beginning teachers are leaving and some are staying? What factors most influence teachers deciding to remain in their schools? What would most influence YOU to stay next year?</b></p>	
<p><b>Do you think you've been supported this year as a teacher? Please describe:</b></p> <p><b>PROBES: (a) Who provides support? (b) Do you think you might return next year? If so, what makes the difference for you?</b></p>	
<p><b>What facilitates induction support at your school?</b></p>	
<p><b>What impedes induction support at your school?</b></p>	
<p><b>Do you plan to continue teaching here next year? Why or why not?</b></p>	

### Teacher Leaver Protocol

Question	Comments
<p><b>Tell me about how your first year of teaching.</b>  <b>PROBES: What have been some of the successes you've had? What have been some of the challenges you've had? What has surprised you?</b></p>	
<p><b>Talk a bit about your teaching environment and school context. What is it like?</b>  <b>PROBES: How does the context impact your teaching?</b></p>	
<p><b>Who did you turn to for help?</b>  <b>PROBES: Do you tend to seek help when you have a question? Does someone offer it to you?</b></p>	
<p><b>What are the most critical types of support that you needed during your first year(s)?</b>  <b>PROBES: Is this support what you actually need? Is it working well?</b></p>	
<p><b>Talk a bit about your preparation prior to coming into this role.</b>  <b>PROBES: What helped you? What else could have helped to prepare you for a class? What do teachers need to best transition from their prior setting (university/student/other career) setting into the public school/professional setting?</b></p>	
<p><b>What do you think is the role of leadership in induction support? (Principal, IC, mentors)</b></p>	
<p><b>What was the recruitment process like for you?</b>  <b>PROBES: When were you hired? Who hired you? Did you feel that the principal took time to get to know you? Did you meet any other faculty during the hiring process.</b></p>	
<p><b>Tell me about your experience with Right Start Orientation. What did you get out of it?</b>  <b>PROBES: Tell me about how you were oriented to your school.</b></p>	
<p><b>What kinds of impacts has Right Start had on your transition and your teaching?</b>  <b>PROBES: monthly meetings</b></p>	

<p><b>The district offers a few additional supports, such as a check card at the beginning of the year, and a district person who can come in and help you when needed. Have you taken advantage of these opportunities, and if so, how have they helped you?</b></p> <p><b>PROBES: Is it working? What facilitates or impedes these opportunities?</b></p>	
<p><b>Tell me about your relationship with your mentor and your buddy.</b></p>	
<p><b>If you could rank the kinds of support you most need, what would be your top 3?</b></p>	
<p><b>Do you feel that your goals as a beginning teacher were accomplished? Please describe.</b></p>	
<p><b>If you were in charge of designing an induction support system for new teachers coming to your school next year, what would you do?</b></p>	
<p><b>What are your thoughts on why some beginning teachers are leaving and some are staying? What factors most influence teachers deciding to remain in their schools? What would most influence YOU to stay next year?</b></p>	
<p><b>What facilitates induction support at your school?</b></p>	
<p><b>What impedes induction support at your school?</b></p>	
<p><b>What led to your decision to discontinue teaching at your school?</b></p>	
<p><b>What are you doing now?</b></p>	
<p><b>Would you consider reentering teaching in the future?</b></p> <p><b>PROBES: Would you consider entering another school like this one? If so, what would it take for you to be successful and happy in teaching? What kind of school would you teach in? What would you look for in choosing a good teaching environment? What would you do differently?</b></p>	
<p><b>Do you have any recommendations to those who design and carry out beginning teacher support?</b></p>	



## Appendix B

### Codes for Support Providers and Beginning Teachers

<b>Codes for Support Providers</b>		
<b>Support Category</b>	<b>Frequency of Times Support Providers Cited These Categories</b>	<b>Category Description</b>
<b>School-based Support</b>		
1. Administration	87 (8 Support Providers)	Support as it relates to administration and the implementation of induction policies and practices. These policies could relate to hiring and placement in addition to support.
<b>Mentor Work</b>		
2. Types of Support	27 (11 Support Providers)	What types of instructional, procedural, and moral support given to the teacher.
3. Mentor/Mentee Match	21 (4 Support Providers)	Appropriateness of fit in terms of knowledge of curriculum and expectations and philosophy about instructional pedagogy. Matching also in terms of common times to plan and work together.
<b>District Support</b>		
4. Administrator Support	14 (9 Support Providers)	District mentor support, Instructional Improvement Officer support and other support. <b>Also relates to structural supports that district administrators put into place to protect and support new teachers.</b>
<b>Challenges (in implementation)</b>		
5. Workload	49 (7 Support Providers)	Balancing work/home schedules, managing and

		prioritizing multiple tasks and time management. Particular challenges that come with that school context or district conditions. <b>Challenges in receiving support.</b>
6. External Pressure	17 (4 Support Providers)	Learning the ropes as a novice teacher while facing school and district performance expectations. Challenges of getting licensed while working as a novice teacher.
<b>Successes</b>		
7. Teacher Growth	33 (4 Support Providers)	In time, growth in instructional effectiveness, feelings of self-efficacy, and time management and organizational skills. Success with teachers growing through relationships with administrators or colleagues.
<b>School-based Support</b>		
1) Colleagues	5 (4 Support Providers)	Teacher led support; PLCs
2) Professional Development	4 (4 Support Providers)	Site based PD activities geared for the entire faculty, new teachers, and/or content areas. Courses taken while teaching that were supportive.
<b>Uniqueness of School</b>		
School A	5 (2 Support Providers)	
School B	1 (1 Support Providers)	
School C	6 (3 Support Providers)	
School D	6 (2 Support Providers)	
<b>Recruitment and Retention</b>		
1. Reasons for Leaving	12 (10 Support Providers)	<u>Other options</u> in another school environment or another profession; <u>Pre-expectations</u> did not match actual experiences; <u>district/school changes</u> mandate teacher move, such as cuts due to

		enrollment and program changes; <u>Job satisfaction</u> – the rewards are not greater than the cost; lack of support; <u>teacher performance</u> – teachers asked to leave; Lack of <u>support</u> ; <u>Workload</u> ; <u>relationships</u> with staff and leadership; Exit Interview
2. Expectations and Dispositions	11 (7 Support Providers)	Personality traits and dispositions that participants cite as important for teaching. Preparation as a time to cultivate some of these traits. Reconciling expectations prior to entering teaching role with actual experiences.
3. Reasons for Teaching/Staying	6 (5 Support Providers)	Why teachers choose to enter the profession. Ex. Family background, social conscience, etc.; <u>Expectations</u> for teaching
4. What Principals Look For	4 (4 Support Providers)	Work experience; teaching experience; <b>dispositions</b> ; background; references; instructional competency; content knowledge
<b>Codes for Beginning Teachers</b>		
<b>School-based Support</b>		
1. Administration	74 (25 Teachers)	Support as it relates to administration and the implementation of induction policies and practices. These policies could relate to hiring and placement in addition to support.
<b>Mentor Work</b>		
2. Mentor/Mentee Match	18 (18 Teachers )	Appropriateness of fit in terms of knowledge of curriculum and expectations and philosophy about instructional

		pedagogy. Matching also in terms of common times to plan and work together.
3. Types of Support	16 (9 Teachers)	What types of instructional, procedural, and moral support given to the teacher.
<b>District Support</b>		
4. District Administrator	21 (8 Teachers)	District mentor support, Instructional Improvement Officer support and other support. Orientation and other PD activities geared to help beginning teachers. Also relates to structural supports that district administrators put into place to protect and support new teachers.
<b>School-based Support</b>		
Colleagues	16 (frequency 32)	Teacher led support; PLCs
<b>Uniqueness of School</b>		
School A	5 (4 Teachers)	
School B	6 (3 Teachers)	
School C	7 (4 Teachers)	
School D	7 (4 Teachers)	
<b>Perceived Needs</b>		
Need for Better Collaboration	20 (15 Teachers)	What participants believe beginning teachers need that they are not currently receiving. The reasons they need this support and may not receive it in full.
<b>Recruitment and Retention</b>		
1. Reasons for Leaving	51 (25 Teachers)	<u>Other options</u> in another school environment or another profession; <u>Pre-expectations</u> did not match actual experiences; <u>district/school changes</u> mandate teacher move, such as cuts due to enrollment and program changes; <u>Job satisfaction</u> – the

		rewards are not greater than the cost; lack of support; <u>teacher performance</u> – teachers asked to leave; Lack of <u>support</u> ; <u>Workload</u> ; <u>relationships</u> with staff and leadership; Exit Interview
2. Reasons for Teaching/Staying	39 (12 Teachers)	Why teachers choose to enter the profession. Ex. Family background, social conscience, etc.; <u>Expectations</u> for teaching