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**CURBING EARLY-CAREER TEACHER ATTRITION:  
A PAN-CANADIAN DOCUMENT ANALYSIS OF  
TEACHER INDUCTION AND MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS**

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Over the past two decades, the phenomenon of teachers abandoning the profession has been noted internationally, and has increasingly caught the attention of policy makers and educational leaders. Despite this awareness, no pan-Canadian statistics or comprehensive reviews are available. This paper reports on the exploratory, pan-Canadian document analysis study that examined a) the organization and mandates of teacher induction programs in each jurisdiction; b) the role of mentorship as an aspect of teacher induction programs; and c) the mandated roles, duties, and responsibilities of school administrators in teacher induction and mentorship processes in each jurisdiction.

### **Introduction**

As teachers' quality and abilities are the most significant school-based factors contributing to student achievement and educational improvement (Cochran-Smith, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005), much attention is given to the development of novice teachers. Adding to the importance of the focus on new teachers is the phenomenon that many new and beginning teachers, feeling depressed and discouraged, choose to abandon the profession (Boreen, Johnson, Niday, & Potts, 2009), with the most talented

beginning teachers among those most apt to leave (Colb, 2001). Despite financial assistance to enable teaching careers, the majority of teachers choose to leave the profession within two to five years and in some extreme cases even drop out even before the end of their first year (Black, 2001). Teacher attrition crosses international borders: the United Kingdom (Smithers & Robinson, 2003), Australia (Stoel & Thant, 2002), the United States (Darling-Hammond, 2001; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004), and other countries (OECD, 2005). Internationally, it is argued that the first three to four years following initial training are crucial for teachers' decisions about remaining in the profession (Jones, 2003).

Despite the persistence of this phenomenon for almost two decades, recent pan-Canadian statistics are inconsistent and incomplete. Only 6 in 10 of the 1995 graduates from elementary and secondary teacher education degree programs in Canada were employed as full-time teachers 5 years after graduation; almost one quarter of them never went into teaching at all (CTF, 2003). In 2004, the estimated teacher turnover in Canada was approximately 30% in the first 5 years of service (CTF, 2004). Some sectors of the teaching profession have significantly higher attrition rates (e.g., French Immersion or French as a Second Language teachers [Karsenti, Collin, Villeneuve, Dumouchel, & Roy, 2008]). Furthermore, early-career attrition rates in some Canadian jurisdictions are very high (Clandinin et al., 2012; OCT, 2012). In addition to the inconsistent statistical information of the pan-Canadian picture, there is also limited research on understanding the problem of early-career teacher attrition (Schaefer, Long, & Clandinin, 2012).

As education is a provincial/territorial responsibility in Canada, responses to attrition concerns tend to be regionally based, resulting in lessons learned from one jurisdiction being largely unavailable to other jurisdictions experiencing similar teacher attrition. Researchers,

policymakers, and educational leaders need to understand how educational systems might assist in retaining teachers. Examination of pan-Canadian policies of support for new and beginning teachers can provide a comparative perspective of the variances in each region. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to report on the exploratory, pan-Canadian document analysis study (Kutsyuruba, Godden, & Tregunna, 2013) that examined a) the organization and mandates of teacher induction programs in each jurisdiction; b) the role of mentorship as an aspect of teacher induction programs in each jurisdiction; and c) the mandated roles, duties, and responsibilities of school administrators in teacher induction and mentorship processes in each jurisdiction.

## **Review of the Literature**

### *Teacher Attrition*

The transition and socialization processes, as well as efforts focused on acculturation to school contexts and the profession are commonly noted challenges to novices beginning their teaching careers (Halford, 1998; Howe, 2006; Kauffman, Johnson, Kardos, Liu, & Peske, 2002). Indeed, teaching has long been seen as an occupation that “eats its young” and in which the beginning of a new teacher’s journey is similar to a “make or break,” “sink or swim,” “trial/baptism by fire,” or “boot camp” experience. Some of the most significant challenges faced by beginning teachers include the egg-crate structure of schools, isolation, reality shock, inadequate resources and support, lack of time for planning and interaction with colleagues, difficult work assignments, unclear and inadequate expectations, intergenerational gaps, dealing with stress, lack of orientation and information about the school system, and institutional practices and policies that promote hazing (Andrews & Quinn, 2004; Anhorn, 2008; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2004; Johnson & Kardos, 2002, 2005;

Patterson, 2005). Teachers who do not feel effective or do not receive adequate support in the first years leave schools and abandon teaching in favour of other professions (Moir, Barlin, Gless, & Miles, 2009). Of course, complicating the attrition phenomenon are the situated conditions and workforce economies together with the individual factors and experiences of many beginning teachers who may be required to persist in temporary contract arrangements for a number of years before actually securing full time and regular teaching contracts.

While a certain level of attrition within the profession is both necessary and healthy (Ingersoll, 2001; Ryan & Kokol, 1988), the early-career loss of teachers is neither desirable nor sustainable (Plunkett & Dyson, 2011), as it is generally costly to schools and detrimental to student learning (Guarino, Santibañez, & Daley, 2006). Borman and Dowling (2008) noted that despite an increased research and policy rhetoric to explore the factors that may help retain a greater proportion of the existing teaching force, attrition and its associated costs to the system have not always been systematically addressed by formal policies and interventions.

### *Teacher Induction and Mentoring Programs*

Researchers have claimed that induction programs with effective mentoring in the early teaching years are capable of positively affecting beginning teacher retention and student achievement, and reducing the waste of resources and human potential associated with early-career attrition (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Huling-Austin, 1986, 1988; Huling-Austin & Murphy, 1987; Laitsch, 2005; Strong, 2005, 2006). Induction programs and high-quality mentoring programs have been found to enhance teacher effectiveness, provide higher satisfaction, increase commitment, improve classroom instruction and student achievement, and promote early-career retention of novice teachers (Glazerman et al., 2010; Guarino et al., 2006; Henry, Bastian, &

Fortner, 2011; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Odell & Ferraro, 1992; Richardson, Glessner, & Tolson, 2010).

Induction programs aim to provide instruction in classroom management and effective teaching techniques; reduce the difficulty of the transition into teaching; and maximize the retention rate of highly qualified teachers (Anhorn, 2008; Wynn, Carboni, & Patall, 2007). Research shows that there are inconsistencies and problems inherent in any induction program (Barrett, Solomon, Singer, Portelli, & Mujuwamariya, 2009; Doerger, 2003). Variation in induction implementation and teacher experiences is related to unique structural, social, and cultural factors, functional causes, and operationalization in schools (Cherubini, 2009; Jones, 2002).

Neophyte teacher mentoring can be an effective support when used in conjunction with other components of the induction process (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Wong, 2004); however, failure to appropriately match mentor with mentee, unsuccessful new teacher/mentor dyads, lack of willing and able mentors, lack of mentor training, or individual factors (e.g., burnout, lack of professional respect) may result in failed efforts (Benson, 2008; Johnson & Kardos, 2005). New teachers become reflective thinkers and co-learners if mentoring environments are based on collaboration (Clandinin, Davies, Hogan, & Kennard, 1993; Kochan & Trimble, 2000).

### *The Role of Administrators in Mentoring Beginning Teachers*

The principal's role is vital in creating a structure supportive of the induction process. When they serve as the builders of the school culture, exhibit supportive and shared leadership, create the opportunity for shared values and vision, and promote professional relationships among novice teachers and experienced teachers, morale is improved and beginning teachers'

self-concept is strengthened (Cherian & Daniel, 2008; Wood, 2005; Wynn et al., 2007). Administrators' commitment to mentoring programs for new teachers either supports and promotes the retention of novice teachers or undermines the success of induction and results in teacher attrition (Bleach, 1998; Jones, 2002; Turner, 1994; Wechsler, Caspary, & Humphrey, 2008). Furthermore, organizational leaders are instrumental in establishing a mentoring culture aimed at transforming learning and leveraging experience (Zachary, 2005), helping people meet adaptive challenges by facilitating new learning and organizational resiliency in the face of rapid change (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002), and promoting continuous school improvement (OCT, 2004). However, tensions often arise between the principal's responsibility to foster growth-oriented professional development for new teachers and serving in their roles as administrators and teacher evaluators (Cherubini, 2010).

### **Research Methodology**

To conduct this exploratory research study, document analysis was used as a qualitative research method of data collection and analysis (Atkinson & Coffey, 1997; Berg, 2007; Bowen, 2009; Hodder, 2000; Miller & Alvarado, 2005; Prior, 2003). Although often neglected in methodological research, unobtrusive research methods, of which document analysis is but one example, are increasingly recognized as a particularly interesting and innovative strategy for collecting and assessing data (Berg, 2007). Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing and evaluating documents that entails finding, selecting, appraising (making sense of), and synthesizing data contained within them (Bowen, 2009). Like other qualitative research methods, document analysis requires data to be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge. In addition, documents can be

publicly available, cost effective to collect, and suitable for multiple reviews (Bowen, 2009). Based on classic and recent methodological sources on content analysis of documents (Krippendorff, 1980; Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken, 2010; Mayring, 2000; Merriam, 1998; Neuendorf, 2002; Salminen, Kauppinen, & Lehtovaara, 1997), a rigorous set of steps (domain definition, category construction, sampling, data collection, data analysis, and interpretation) was developed for conducting analysis.

### *Data Collection*

Documents used for systematic review or evaluation often fall within two broader categories: informal and formal (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Informal documents, such as memos, drafts, or proposals, provide an internal perspective of the institution or organization, by describing its functions, norms, values, and understandings. Documents of external communication, such as newsletters, publications, and public statements, represent the official perspective on a topic, issue, or process. Policy documents are typically characterized as documents of external communication while the responses to formal policies by various stakeholders are more aptly characterized as informal documents. Although this study was mainly concerned with the analysis of policy documents as means of external communication, many informal documents were collected as well.

Documents were sourced and collected from provincial education authorities, teacher associations/federations, teacher unions, and individual district school boards' websites in 2012. These publicly available policy, planning, and curriculum documents were considered external communication, and included government communiqués, websites, program/policy memoranda, newsletters, handbooks, agenda, and minutes of meetings. Documents from each province were

reviewed in their entirety and no cross-searches were conducted between different jurisdictions. Key search terms identified were: new teachers, induction, mentoring, new teacher support, professional development for new teachers, and entry into the profession. Any documents relating to these topics found on the organization websites were noted and selected. Search records with document identification were kept for each province, and documents and relevant information were electronically saved, printed, allocated an identification code and organized into files per province.

### *Data Analysis*

Considering the methodological advantages and limitations of document analysis (Bowen, 2009; Caulley, 1983), data analysis was determined by both the research objectives (deductive) and multiple readings and interpretations of the data from the documents (inductive). The publicly available documents and the informal responses to formal policies by various stakeholders were analyzed in a complementary fashion in this study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Given the multitude and variety of documents, thorough reviews were the first step in the analysis. Some documents, although originally selected given their content, title, or possible link, were not appropriate to the inquiry. Content of documents in relation to the research objectives were highlighted and recorded into charts. Data were organized according to themes related to the model of provision and level; policy-mandated, government-funded programs; teacher association/federation and/or union programs; hybrid or collaborative programs; and individual school district programs. As a team of individuals analyzing the content of a large number of documents, we followed the guidelines for assessing and reporting intercoder reliability in content analysis studies (Lombard et al., 2010).



## **Findings**

In this section we report on the findings of the document analysis undertaken in our study. In the first section we report information found on the support for new and beginning teachers offered through policy-mandated, government-funded programs in Ontario and the Northwest Territories. In the second section we report on provisions offered by teacher associations and unions in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Saskatchewan. In the third section of our findings, we report on hybrid and collaborative programs offered in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nunavut, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, and Yukon. In the final section of our findings, we report on support provisions for new and beginning teachers evident in individual district school boards in the following jurisdictions: Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, and Saskatchewan.

### *Policy-Mandated, Government-Funded Programs*

Policy-mandated, government-funded programs describe where there is provision to support new or beginning teachers through a program that is financially supported and designed by the provincial government. Though Ontario and Northwest Territories both share the distinction of having provincially mandated policy, their program implementation differs.

*Ontario.* In Ontario, the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) began with the passing of the Student Performance Act 2006 by the Ministry of Education (MoE), which described the necessity for all publicly funded schools boards in Ontario to offer NTIP to new teachers (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010a). The MoE produced a technical requirements guide, the *New Teacher Induction Program: Induction Elements Manual*, which remains the only

official, required document of consultation regarding the content of the program as determined by the MoE (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010a). NTIP is described in the *Elements Manual* as including orientation, mentoring, professional development, and training, in addition to two teaching performance appraisals. The *Elements Manual* provides an overview of roles and responsibilities including the specific role of school administrators, regarding these outlined elements. In particular, a principal's role includes consulting in board-wide sessions for orientation, mentor, and principal training, and having a consultation and developmental role in the mentoring relationships (with the teacher and mentor). In addition to the principal's roles, they also have overall responsibility for implementing the individual NTIP strategy in their school, providing school-level orientation, selecting, matching, and training mentors, providing individual professional development and training, and submitting the names of new teachers who complete NTIP to the Ontario College of Teachers. Instruction and guidance is provided for school boards and administrators to facilitate interpretation of the document and subsequent implementation in their local jurisdiction.

*Northwest Territories.* The Northwest Territories (NWT) Induction Program was established in 2001 through collaboration between the Department of Education, Culture, and Employment and the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association (Government of Northwest Territories, 2008). The NWT Induction Program was seen as a response to the continued concern at the high teacher attrition (32% in 1999–2000), by supporting new and beginning teachers (Mallon, 2004). The NWT Induction Program consists of four phases: a) pre-orientation, b) orientation, c) systematic sustained supports, and d) professional development (Government of the Northwest Territories, 2008).

As part of the NWT Induction Program, teachers are provided with a mentoring component. The vast geographic area of NWT presented many complexities for the implementation of a mentoring program given the variety of challenges within the different teaching assignments (Mallon, 2004). Nevertheless, a formal mentorship program has become a major component of the NWT Induction Program. The content of the NWT Mentorship Program is detailed in a publicly available internet-based resource (<http://www.newteachersnwt.ca>).

The NWT Mentorship Program outlines specific responsibilities for school administrators including, matching experienced teachers with protégés, approving the mentorship plan developed by mentors and protégés (that must also be approved by the superintendent), informing potential mentors and protégés about the mentoring program, and identifying staff suitable to become mentors (Northwest Territories Teacher Induction, n.d.). In addition, administrators are accountable for providing release time for the mentoring pairs and for arranging necessary training. Emphasis is placed upon administrators to create a culture of mentoring in their schools through careful matching of mentor and protégé, offering support and encouragement for the mentoring process, intervention if the mentoring relationship is not working, and supporting team orientation to the community culture. Finally, school administrators must ensure the mentorship is not associated with evaluation.

#### *Programs Offered by Provincial Teacher Associations or Unions*

In some provinces and territories, induction or mentoring programs designed and provided by teacher's associations or unions support new and beginning teachers. Typically, program content varies between jurisdictions, with funding also characteristically coming from a

number of sources. Our document analysis revealed limited information as to the extent of these variances.

*New Brunswick.* The New Brunswick Department of Education established a province-wide teacher induction programs in 1995 in all Anglophone districts of the province for teachers new to the profession (Gill, 2004). A significant body of research reported the Beginning Teacher Induction Program in New Brunswick as successful, and the program generated interest from additional jurisdictions, both in Canada and in other nations (Mugglestone, 2004; Scott, 1998; Scott & Compton, 1996; Scott & Doherty, 2002; Scott & Mirchandani, 2001; Scott, Smith, & Grobe, 1995; Scott & Surette, 1999). The 2009–2010 budget for the province of New Brunswick saw the cancellation of the BTIP program due to “expenditure restraint savings” (New Brunswick Department of Finance, 2009, p. 27).

The NBTA introduced the Professional Orientation and Induction of New Teachers (POINT) Program in 2010–2011. Partially funded by the New Brunswick Department of Education, POINT began in April 2010 with a planning meeting held by NBTF, which was attended by representatives from the Department of Education, and each school district. After a subsequent period of consultation, and the POINT program was introduced consisting of a two-day orientation conference, a handbook, and provision for mentoring. The only reference to the role and responsibility of school administrators was outlined in the *Beginning Teachers Handbook* as an evaluation role of all teachers in the school (NBTA, 2011).

*Nova Scotia.* The Nova Scotia Department of Education (DoE) has recently reviewed teacher professional development processes, specifically looking at issues, needs, and barriers with regard to professional development (Nova Scotia Department of Education, 2009b). The inquiry resulted in a report that offered a number of recommendations and the DoE developed

three strategic directions in response (Nova Scotia Department of Education, 2009a). While there is no specific focus on new teacher induction within the new ministry directions, there is emphasis on mentoring, coaching, skill and competency development, and the development of effective practices. Despite the DoE's awareness of the needs of Nova Scotia teachers, there is currently no provincially mandated support program.

Currently, support for new teachers in the province of Nova Scotia commences with teacher hiring and automatic membership of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU, 2001). Support from the NSTU happens at teacher training institutions, the school level, and local union branch office; however, it does not promote the support at a school district level. The NSTU handbook for new teachers, details basic information regarding contact information, procedures, and information regarding other NSTU initiatives, along with a number of "tips" to use in a teacher's practice (NSTU, 2001). The second edition of this handbook has updated sections regarding professional development workshops designed specifically for new teachers and now offer a new member portal on the union website (NSTU, 2012).

*Saskatchewan.* The Saskatchewan Teachers Federation (STF) supports new and beginning teachers in the province, with financial assistance from the Saskatchewan government and individual school districts. Support includes STF produced handbooks, a new teacher conference, the identification of particular resources, established professional growth partnerships, and an induction ceremony (STF, September, 2009b).

The STF handbook for beginning teachers contains information about the importance of new teacher induction provisions, ideal induction processes, possible events that new teachers can expect to occur, aspects of the position (strategies, structures, etc.), suggestions for stress management, a statement about a new teachers' professional role, and mentoring (STF,

September, 2009b). The STF administrator's handbook follows in a similar format, and provides guidance for administrators with regard to supporting new teachers in the province (STF, September, 2009a). The handbook includes an overview of induction and mentoring practices, a calendar for possible processes, brief case studies, and information that promotes teachers' professional development and wellness. The Handbook for Administrators outlines the administrator's responsibility for recruitment, matching, and training of mentors, and subsequent continued monitoring of the mentoring relationship, and resources allocation.

### *Hybrid and Collaborative Programs*

Our document analysis showed that in some provinces and territories, support for new and beginning teachers is offered through hybrid programs provided by collaborations between provincial and territorial governments, teacher associations, universities, First Nations, and local communities. There is significant variance in the structure both within these collaborations, and in individual program design and content. In the following section we highlight differences where established by our investigation.

*Alberta.* Support for beginning and new teachers begins at the Department of Education (DoE). The strategic framework for improving education within the province is described in the five-year planning framework comprised by many stakeholders within the province's government (Alberta Department of Education, 2010). The strategic planning aspires to a better education system that will better prepare the provinces youth for the future, acknowledging the vital role of teachers in this process. To support new and beginning teachers, the Alberta DoE allocated resources to continue the piloted Alberta induction program. A call for research was made from the Alberta DoE for details from school jurisdictions regarding attrition, best

practices, roles, and mentoring, and for ongoing discussions in this area between all stakeholders (Alberta Department of Education, 2010).

The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) began supporting new and beginning teachers in the late 1990s, with the inclusion of teacher growth statements in ATA policy and a new teacher conference. Policy statements outline the creation of a mentoring relationship between a new or beginning teacher and a veteran ATA member which has since been extended to a formal Mentorship Program (Alberta Teachers' Association, 1999). For the first two years of implementation, the program identified structures and roles in relation to desired protégé support. The DoE responded with interest, and the program now has its own section of the ATA website. The website outlines a history of the program, details regarding the mentoring process, including the process of detailing goals and areas of support in a Growth Plan to work on in the mentoring relationship with a veteran teacher ([www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca)). The ATA has produced a *Mentoring Beginning Teachers Handbook* that includes a rationale, stages of new teacher development, projections of ideal induction program structure, mentoring, and roles and responsibilities (Alberta Teachers' Association, 2003). Furthermore, it includes specific information for protégés on their needs, the administrator's role, many resources, and a long list of references on mentoring. In addition, the ATA continues to hold a conference for new and beginning teachers (Alberta Teachers' Association, 2000, 2002).

*British Columbia.* The beginning teacher induction in British Columbia (BC) is divided up amongst many partners. Though BC does not have a provisionally mandated teacher induction program, our study revealed activity at the Ministry of Education, British Columbia Teaching Federation (BCTF), local teachers associations, and school district levels.

Evidence of Ministry of Education level support and commitment to new and beginning teachers was seen in three documents on the Ministry's website, BC's Education Plan (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2012a), the province's 2012/13 to 2014/15 Service Plan (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2012a, p. 21), and a news release issued by the BC Ministry of Education on April 3, 2012. The news release declared the pilot of a new mentorship program for new teachers to be run in three school districts to be selected by the University of British Columbia (UBC) (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2012b).

The BCTF offers a number of resources to support new and beginning teachers. The resources available are varied and are listed as: a new teachers and student teachers conference, local/PSA new teacher grants, an E-mail list (*bctf-beginteach*) that "facilitates discussion among and between new and experienced teachers," Provincial Specialist Associations (PSA's), publications (including the BCTF Handbook for New Teachers and TTOC's: The Practice of Teaching), and web resources (British Columbia Teachers' Federation, 2012, p. 1). Furthermore, the Federation holds an annual 2-day New Teacher/student-teacher/TTOC (Teacher Teaching on Call) conference in March, in addition to workshops in conjunction with either partner-groups (Science World, BC Math Teachers' Association, Canadian Parents for French, etc.) or with individual teachers.

*Manitoba.* The Manitoba Teachers' Society (MTS) details a policy that specifically outlines assistance for new and beginning teachers with orientation, professional development, the creation of supportive working conditions, and the provision of release time for professional development (Manitoba Teachers' Society, 2010, p. 51). The statement also highlights the usefulness of mentoring to support the process. A handbook for beginning teachers details information regarding many aspects that a teacher may find challenging (report cards, advice for



communicating with parents, what to expect for the first few days, etc.). In addition, the MTS provides new teachers with orientation and workshops. No details regarding the specific mentoring processes or administrative role was found.

*Newfoundland and Labrador.* New teacher induction support in Newfoundland and Labrador can be traced back to the late 1990s when the school districts, teachers' association, and local university jointly created an induction program (Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, 2005). However, while the need for support was recognized, the program ended due to poor implementation. A handbook produced by the ministry, teachers' association, and local university was subsequently developed to provide support for new and beginning teachers.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association (NLTA) has a handbook on their new and beginning teacher section of their website. In addition NLTA teacher-specific benefits, ethics, and professional development opportunities are also detailed on the website. The handbook outlines a conference offered in partnership with Memorial University and typically held annually in January or February (Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, 2005). The contents of the handbook feature areas of challenge for new teachers (classroom management strategies, assigning homework, routines, professional wellbeing, procedures, etc.).

The NLTA provides new teachers with mentors and offers a handbook for mentors (Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, 2007). The handbook provided the mentors with information on the teacher induction program outlining how the handbook for new teachers is a component of the induction program alongside the mentorship. However, mentorship was not consistently available; the onus was on new teachers to take responsibility for requesting a mentor if they wished to participate. The handbook for mentoring new teachers provided a

thorough underpinning of the benefits of mentoring. In addition, some challenges associated with mentoring, such as not giving the mentee enough autonomy to independently experiment with new strategies or tasks were outlined. The handbook offered mentors information on how to get started mentoring, strategies for communication, and outlined the phases typically experienced by a new teacher and how to provide appropriate support during these times. Some consideration of the administrators' role is provided in the handbook, outlining their responsibility in creating and informing the new teacher of the benefits of engaging in mentoring. Furthermore, the handbook describes the availability of an additional handbook for administrators distributed per request from the principal.

*Nunavut.* The Nunavut Teachers' Association (NTA) oversees all teacher and administrative matters of education (Nunavut Teachers' Association, 2012a). The NTA in partnership with the Department of Education established the Nunavut Professional Improvement Committee (NPIC), which facilitates teachers to improve their skills and support their needs in fulfilling the necessary professional development requirements for maintaining teacher certification in the territory (Nunavut Teachers' Association, 2012a). One NTA member holds the position of overseeing teacher induction within the province (Nunavut Professional Improvement Committee, 2009). The NPIC offers a professional development resource book, information on activities that are eligible for support from NPIC, school-based improvement, particular types of programs for improvement, and the requirements for the forms of improvement (Nunavut Teachers' Association, 2012b). The NPIC and the NTA have sole responsibility for professional development of teachers in Nunavut.

*Prince Edward Island.* The annual report for the school years 2010–2011 (Prince Edward Island Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2012) included a

section on “Professional Development/School Development.” The Beginning Teacher Induction Program was jointly offered by the school boards, the University of PEI, and the Prince Edward Island Teachers Federation (PEITF). Although mentorship was mentioned, our investigation found limited additional information about the specific mentoring provision.

*Quebec.* The Quebec Ministry of Education frequently discussed new teachers, induction, and mentoring in the past decade (Government of Quebec, February 12, 1999; Government of Quebec, March, 2009; Government of Quebec, 2003; Government of Quebec, 2007; Lepine, 2009b). Several reports and conferences have been published, with the most recent document in 2009. Implementation of an induction program in the early 2000s that was comprised of workshops and mentoring was briefly mentioned, but information regarding policy mandates currently in place was not found. In addition to these discussions, the Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers (QPAT) produced a handbook in 2010 to support any teacher new to the role in the province. Included in this document were rights and responsibilities, tips for getting started, and resources.

*Yukon.* The Department for Education (DoE) has produced a number of resources to support new and beginning teachers in the province including a handbook for Yukon Teachers dated August 2011 (Yukon Education, 2011), which mentions orientation and mentoring of teachers through collaboration with the Yukon Teachers Association (YTA). The orientation is described as an annual three-day event dedicated to helping new teachers to learn about “YFN [Yukon First Nations] culture, history, and language” (Yukon Education, 2011). A handbook for prospective teachers to the Yukon is also available (Yukon Education, 2011). Information is given about the educational system in the Yukon, including the structure and management of the

schools, the main teaching responsibilities, the Yukon curriculum, and information about the communities in Yukon and its First Nations peoples.

The YTA is responsible for implementing the Yukon’s mentorship program in collaboration with the DoE (Yukon Teachers' Association, 2012). The YTA also has produced a document that provides greater detail about the Yukon Mentorship Program for New Teachers (Yukon Teachers' Association, n.d.). In this document the program is described as a “joint venture” between the Yukon Department of Education and the YTA (p. 2). It is seen as a “formal partnership involving the mentor-teacher, the protégé, the school administration and the Steering Committee” and it has three main functions: to be “professional”, “instructional”, and “personal and emotional” (p. 3).

The role of the administrator is seen to be one of facilitation and includes the following: principals should base mentorship programs on the needs of the staff; principals should see that the potential mentors and protégés are informed about the process and the program; principals should approve mentorship teams early in the school year or at the end of the current year for next year; principals should facilitate the use of time and resources for the mentorship program (p. 9).

#### *Support for New and Beginning Teachers at Individual District School Board Level*

Our study found that in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, and Saskatchewan, support for new and beginning teachers was seen at the individual district school board level in addition to provincially-mandated, and hybrid or collaborative provisions. No evidence was found for provision at school district level for new and beginning teachers in Northwest

Territory, Nunavut, and Yukon. In Ontario, some district school boards have produced their own documentation that describes the provincially mandated NTIP program. The following section of our findings reports by province and territory an outline of support for new and beginning teachers at the individual district school board level.

*Alberta.* Nine of the nearly 60 school districts in the province had some form of support for new and beginning teachers. Five of these school districts have outlined an induction program, whereas there are three who only address a new teachers' induction through an annual growth plan. Seven of these school districts offer mentoring as a component of new teacher induction provisions and the other two identify that mentoring is an option, should teachers choose to have one.

*British Columbia.* Twenty-nine of the 60 school districts that are in the province have a mentoring program, and some of these mentoring programs have been in existence longer than others. The local teachers' associations, school boards, or a combination of both, administer some of these projects. Some school boards also provide release time for orientation, and in some districts this provision is part of the collective agreement.

*Manitoba.* Of the nearly 40 school districts in Manitoba, it was found that only five offered information regarding new teacher induction provisions. In two documents reviewed, the programs had official titles, two were labeled as professional learning or growth plans, and the other was a policy statement. Detailed in this information was that the "programs" were comprised only of performance evaluations and did not involve any mentoring. Mentoring was an optional component outlined in both of the professional learning plans. In all of these found provisions, the administrator's role was outlined as being an evaluator.

*New Brunswick.* Of the nine public English-speaking school districts in New Brunswick, two were found to have documents that mentioned support of new and beginning teachers. District 15, Dalhousie referred directly to the POINT program in their annual report for 2010. The second school district, Anglophone East School District, formerly District No. 2, Moncton, described their teacher induction program as including sessions on topics including district orientation, classroom management, cooperative discipline, teacher evaluation, finance and payroll, staff, communication, teaching students with exceptionalities, differentiation, and other curriculum related topics (AESD, 2012). Teachers are assigned a mentor selected by the school administrator to support them in their first year.

*Newfoundland and Labrador.* Of the five school districts in Newfoundland and Labrador, induction provisions were found in only two. As related to their appropriate policy statements, one of the school districts offered a program outline regarding the “Teacher Mentorship Program” that highlights that mentoring is offered with evaluation by the administrator in the second year of the program (Labrador School Board, 2006). In the other school district, information was found in the policy statement that there is a district induction committee and professional development conference called the “Beginning Teacher Institute” (Eastern School District, 2009). This school district highlights that mentoring is included as a component of the support, but clearly outlines that it is not a consideration of the teachers’ evaluations.

*Nova Scotia.* At the school district level, some school districts in Nova Scotia have addressed the challenges faced by new teachers. The support varies from policy directions that state the requirement of support or a mentor, to actually implementing a New Teacher Support

Program where new teachers are provided with an orientation, coaching, and support through teacher evaluations (AVRSB, 2009).

*Prince Edward Island.* There are three school boards in the province: Eastern School District, Western School Board, and the Commission scolaire de langue française. The French school board information was not included in the document search. In the English Language School Board, formerly the Eastern School District, the current emphasis is on team collaboration using an online forum for planning, where teachers and school staff can create goals and an action plan to achieve the goals ([www.schooldevteams.pbworks.com](http://www.schooldevteams.pbworks.com)). Though this is suggestive of a collaborative approach that might facilitate support for new or beginning teachers, no specific reference to new or beginning teachers' induction programs or mentoring was found.

*Quebec.* There are nine school boards in Quebec and six of them were found to offer support for new teachers. Five of these include mentoring as a component and contain professional development, orientation, and resources. The additional school board offers professional development on a regular basis to new teachers.

*Saskatchewan.* In addition to the support offered by the STF, there were some school districts in Saskatchewan that have provisions for new teachers. School districts outlined support for professional practice within policy documents (LCCSD, 2011; NSD, 2011; PVSD, 2010; RPSB, 2012b; SRSD, 2005), and some school districts offered handbooks (SWSD, 2012), handouts regarding professional practice (work/life balance) (PSTA, October, 2012), as well as mentoring programs (Cochrane, 2011; LPSD, 2011; LCCSD, 2011).

## Summary of Findings

A summary of the research findings according to the levels of support for teacher induction and mentoring in Canadian provinces is outlined in Table 1. The table illustrates support found at provincially mandated level, provincial teacher association level, hybrid support between multiple levels, and decentralized support at the school district level. The table presents the findings by name of the province or territory, and a key outlines the acronyms adopted to portray individual types of support.

Table 1  
*Summary of Findings*

Provincial mandated/ministry level support	Provincial teacher association/federation/union level support	Hybrid programs	Decentralized programs (school district level support)
NWT (IM, A)	New Brunswick (IM)	Alberta (IM, A)	Alberta (9/58)
Ontario (IM, A)	Nova Scotia (IM)	British Columbia (TI)	BC (29/60)
	Saskatchewan (IM, A)	Manitoba (TI)	Manitoba (5/38)
		NFLD (IM, A)	New Brunswick (2/9)
		Nunavut (TI)	NFLD (2/4)
		PEI (IM)	Nova Scotia (6/7)
		Quebec (TI)	PEI (*1/2)
		Yukon (IM, A)	Quebec (6/9)
			Saskatchewan (9/29)

Key: (IM) induction and mentoring support available  
 (TI) teacher induction support only  
 (M) mentoring program or support only  
 (A) administrators' role identified according to support

Table 2 further illustrates the findings of the decentralized pan-Canadian support for teacher induction and mentoring revealed through our search of publicly available documents. Great variance in the support for new teachers for induction and mentoring was found in Canadian provinces, with multiple avenues of support existing. The first column on the left indicates the province where decentralized supports were found in the provincial English speaking school divisions. The following columns denote the type of support found offered by



individual district school boards. The types of support are described as mentoring and induction support, induction only support, mentoring only support, and if the role of the administrator was identified in the document. The numbers of individual school boards that are in accordance to each category are listed with totals at the bottom of each column. This table does not include information of provincial level support for new and beginning teachers.

Table 2  
*Decentralized Supports*

Province/territory with total no. of English speaking SD	Induction and mentoring support (no. of SD)	Induction only	Mentoring only	Administrators role
Alberta (9/58)	7	2	0	7 (3 as evaluator)
BC (29/60)	6	3	7	0
Manitoba (5/38)	2	3	0	4 (all as evaluator)
New Brunswick (2/9)	1	1	0	0
NFLD (2/4)	2	0	0	1 (as evaluator)
Nova Scotia (6/7)	3	2	1	0
PEI (*1/2)	*1	0	0	0
Quebec (6/9)	4	1	1	2 (undetermined role)
Saskatchewan (9/29)	2	2	5	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>

\* Indicates that the support found in PEI did not contain enough details to denote that induction or mentoring is a component although the collaborative nature of the online planning forum would suggest that these details may be a consideration.

## Discussion and Conclusions

The pan-Canadian landscape for new and beginning teacher induction practices and mentoring as evidenced through accessible documents is varied and multi-layered. This study has revealed policy-mandated government-funded programs; programs offered by provincial teacher associations, federations, or unions; hybrid programs based upon cooperation between the provincial and territorial governments, teacher associations, universities, First Nations, or local communities; and, decentralized models maintained by local school boards/divisions. Such

variety of provision is attributed to the lack of a federal bureau of education and provincial/territorial responsibility for education in Canada.

*Organization of New and Beginning Teacher Induction Programs in Canada*

The organization and mandates of teacher induction programs in each jurisdiction in Canada vary, as shown in Table 1. This study revealed how support for new and beginning teachers (in the form of either induction based programs and policies, or mentorship) exists in all Canadian provinces. Only two of the provinces addressed teacher induction and mentoring at a provincial level, while many of the provinces had support in these areas in a hybrid or collaborative manner. Furthermore, many of the provinces that addressed support for new and beginning teachers at a teacher federation or hybrid level also had some form of decentralized support at the school district level.

As shown in Table 2, there was also variance within each province as to support offered at the school district level. A total of 69 school districts were identified as having documents relating to the areas of teacher induction or mentoring. Of these, 28 school districts identified some form of support with combined elements of induction and mentoring, while fourteen school districts were found for both categories of offering mentoring or induction support only. Of the 69, only 15 of the school districts identified the role of the principal within their documents, with at least 8 as being in an evaluative role. Although there were a total of 69 school districts with documents regarding policies and practices of induction or mentoring within their division and further with 28 as offering both induction and mentoring support, variance was seen in regards to the kind of support offered. For example, in Alberta, of the seven school districts with documents relating to support in the way of induction and mentoring, five of these school districts had

programs, whereas the other two only offered additional supports (i.e., handouts for new teachers or teacher growth plans associated with teacher appraisals). Furthermore, as seen in many school districts, the documents supporting the classification of support may have been a policy statement or documents with greater details such as a handbook, program outline, or entire section of a website dedicated to these areas.

Furthermore, demonstrating the variance at hybrid level, documents for Alberta provided extensive details of support for new teacher induction and mentoring. Provinces where programs were identified at hybrid level with identified elements of induction, mentoring, and the role of the administrator acknowledged (i.e., Quebec), also demonstrate varied support at the school district level, with some districts only indicating mentoring or induction support. While these findings suggest that support might have existed, the lack of publicly available documents online makes it difficult to establish the exact nature and extent of provision offered.

Furthermore, the variance in the documents suggested a structure or emphasis of the school district in the area of teacher induction or mentoring, which might not be indicative of the full nature of support in the area. Further research into the exact form and structure of the supports is needed in order to indicate a more complete understanding of teacher induction and mentoring practices on a pan-Canadian scale.

### *The Role of Mentorship in New and Beginning Teacher Induction*

Programs that included mentoring as part of an overall teacher induction provision were seen in all provinces and territories. Evidence was found of mentoring programs, induction programs that excluded mentoring, and induction programs where mentoring was embedded. Within mentoring programs further variance was found. For example, in British Columbia, one

school district offered a mentoring program focused on personal well-being, professional growth, and development. The handbook for this program focused on the retention of beginning teachers through provision of workshops, social events, and training. In contrast, the purpose of the formal mentoring program offered by the provincial teachers' association in Alberta, was described as being to "improve teaching and learning" (Alberta Teachers' Association, 2003, p. 4). These variances were found in each province and territory as some provinces, at government, teacher federations, and school district levels. There may be many reasons for the differences discovered in our examination, one explanation is the regional, social, and cultural differences within each province and territory, for example the emphasis on cultural adaptation was particularly evident in the Northwest Territories induction program.

Not only was inconsistency seen in the program details of provision for each province, our examination revealed differences in the theoretical arguments for the inclusion of mentoring within individual programs. For example, some programs cited empirical research, explaining how new and beginning teacher support with embedded mentoring can foster new teachers' confidence, enhance teaching practice, improve job satisfaction, and provide the support that new teachers require to remain in the profession (Hirsch, 2001; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Johnson et al., 2005). Despite recognition of the value of mentoring relationships for new and beginning teachers, mentoring was not always included within programs of support for new and beginning teachers. In Manitoba, for example, where new and beginning teachers are supported at teacher federation level, it was suggested in the program handbook that mentoring is useful, although it was not included within the teachers' federation provision. Instead, teachers were directed to seek out mentoring at the school or school division level (Manitoba Teachers' Society, 2011).

We acknowledge the documents examined in this study may not be representative of the full range of mentoring possibilities available for new and beginning teachers in Canada. Therefore, the role of mentorship and mentoring, as a component of teacher induction, may be even more diverse and widespread than this study has revealed, and should be further explored.

### *The Role of School Administrators in Teacher Induction Mentoring Processes*

Though acknowledged as vital in creating a structure supportive of the induction process (Cherian & Daniel, 2008; Wood, 2005; Wynn et al., 2007), the role of the administrator was inconsistently and infrequently mentioned in the documents examined. The administrators in various jurisdictions were found responsible for mentor selection and mentor-protégé matching, for providing adequate professional development opportunities and release time for beginning teachers, for overseeing the mentorship process, for monitoring the progress of beginning teachers, and, finally and most importantly, for being role models of mentoring in their everyday activities in schools. In some provinces and territories, the role and responsibility of the administrator in supporting beginning teachers and the implementation of mentoring programs were outlined (or at least suggested), while in others the administrator's role was more implicitly mentioned within a larger context of new and beginning teacher support. The role of a leader is seen to be crucial in supporting the implementation of a mentoring culture within an organization (Zachary, 2005), and the lack of publicly available information would seem particularly relevant at school district level.

In the examination of documents, several handbooks or were found specifically for administrators in working with new and beginning teachers: in Saskatchewan, Ontario, and Newfoundland and Labrador (not publicly available). The handbook produced by the

Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation contained information on how the administrator can support the new and beginning teachers (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, 2009). This comprehensive document included a theory-based rationale citing relevant academic literature. The document provided the administrator with detailed, monthly considerations of how to best support new and beginning teachers through a comprehensive policy implementation process. In Ontario, a *Resource Handbook for Principals* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010b) outlined the roles and responsibilities of the principal in the implementation of the NTIP at the school level. The principal's role entails responsibility for consultation and development of individual NTIP strategy, school level orientation, individual PD/training, selection of mentors, mentoring relationships, and teacher performance appraisal. The principal is also responsible for final approval for most of the same categories except for mentoring relationships. However, the handbook contains a caveat stating that the use of the handbook material by principals is optional. Newfoundland and Labrador produced an information and guidance booklet for administrators, however, the document was not available publicly, and was therefore outside of the search parameters of this study.

Our investigation found the role of the administrator was described in inconsistent detail, where identified at all. It was seen at the provincially mandated level, in teacher associations/federations, or at the school district level, where there was sporadic evidence of the awareness of the administrator's role. For example, the Northwest Territories provided a website dedicated to new teachers working in the province, and included a section under the roles and responsibilities containing a list of duties for the school administrator in the program. In contrast, Ontario listed very similar details in relation to the New Teacher Induction Program, with the emphasis on suggestions for the role of the administrator, rather than prescribed instructions.

Some of the provisions found in relation to new teachers included details about the administrator's role, but only in relation to evaluation. This mainly occurred at the decentralized level, where school districts would include individual administrative roles. In many cases, details provided regarding the role of the administrator were purely posed from an evaluative perspective toward new and beginning teachers' performance and competence (e.g., Beautiful Plains School Division, 2008; Mountain View School Division, 2011). In contrast, other documents identified the administrator's role as supportive (e.g., NSTU, 2012; STF, 2009; NLTA, 2007), with Northwest Territories specifically identifying the administrator's role within new and beginning teacher induction as being non-evaluative. Given the empirical support for the importance of a leader's role in successful mentoring, there is the risk that a lack of information might be interpreted as a lack of mentoring provision, an important issue for new and beginning teachers undertaking job searches for their first teaching position. While it is assumed that administrators would have some level of involvement within new and beginning teacher induction provision, the irregularity of this study's findings suggest further examination is warranted.

### *Research Implications*

We suggest our study has two broad implications. First, the inconsistencies seen in how administrators' roles are defined within new and beginning teacher induction and mentorship is of concern. Administrators' commitments to mentoring programs for new teachers can either support or undermine the success of induction and mentorship for new and beginning teachers (Bleach, 1998; M. Jones, 2002; Turner, 1994; Wechsler, Caspary, & Humphrey, 2008). In particular, we propose further investigation is needed to clarify the evaluative role of

administrators that was frequently identified in our study. Research has highlighted how tensions can arise between the principal's responsibility to support and nurture professional growth and development for new teachers when combined with an evaluative capacity (Cherubini, 2010). A deeper analysis of the evaluative role of administrators within new and beginning teacher support could help to ensure future policy regarding teacher induction and mentoring is concentrated on new and beginning teacher development and growth rather than performance and competence.

Second, this study has revealed a sporadic and inconsistent approach to the support of new and beginning teachers in the pan-Canadian context. However, due to the limitations of this study, it is likely that there exists a richer and deeper level of provision of support for new and beginning teachers than has been revealed by our research. The documents revealed through this study may be out of date, incomplete, or inaccurate, and may not be fully representative of the support available across Canada. We propose further investigation is needed to look more extensively at the full range of induction and mentorship within the pan-Canadian context. Research has shown empirical support that providing induction and high-quality teacher mentoring programs for new and beginning teachers correlates to increased teacher effectiveness, higher satisfaction, commitment, and early-career retention of novice teachers, as well as improved classroom instruction and student achievement (Glazerman et al., 2010; Henry, Bastian, & Fortner, 2011; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Identifying the full extent of how new and beginning teachers are supported across Canada could provide a rich and diverse resource for all provinces and territories faced with losing new teachers early in their career.



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