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## Teacher Attrition in Elementary Schools

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Teacher Attrition  
in Elementary Schools

by

Amanda J. Almy

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Master's Project

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at Grand Valley State University

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Degree of Master of Education

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Amanda Almy

## Abstract

All schools want to have the best teachers in place and have them stay until they retire from a school district. They want teachers that are able to teach each and every child to help them reach their full potential without having to rehire and retrain new teachers who leave the district fairly quickly. It would be ideal if schools were able to retain the best teachers so these teachers can continue to grow and become more effective. These teachers would be able to teach to higher standards and better assist their students as time goes on. For schools to be successful, there are a variety of measures that need to be in place. Bastian and Marks (2022) suggest that one of these measures is obtaining and retaining high-quality teachers in the students' classrooms. Thus, we need to keep experienced teachers in the classroom to ensure that all students succeed (Stewart et. al., 2021). In order to retain experienced teachers, we need to first develop them.

According to all three studies, Bastian, K. C. & Marks, J. T. (2017), Mitchell, D., Keese, J., Banerjee, M., Huston, D., & Kwok, A. (2021), and Skeen, N., Lewis, A. A., Vanburgen, C., & Hodges, T. E. (2020), having a great induction program in place reduces teacher attrition rates in schools. According to Bastian and Marks (2017), the more frequently novice teachers are able to meet and participate with their mentor coaches, the higher job satisfaction they have and also the more successful this teacher will be. As the teaching field collectively and positively changes the way people learn and teach, the students will ultimately be the ones who benefit the most.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **Problem Statement**

In the United States, beginning teacher attrition rates are extraordinarily high; 50% of teachers leave the classroom within five years (Stewart et al., 2021). Attrition rates of first-year teachers have increased by about one-third in the past two decades (Bastian & Marks, 2022). Research suggests that teacher turnover has negative effects on school performance, particularly for schools that are low-achieving and serve larger high-needs populations (Hanushek et al., 2016). Having a great amount of teacher attrition is hurting schools and the ability for novice teachers to become highly effective teachers. Novice teachers cannot become highly effective if they are not staying in the field long enough to master the art of teaching, which takes some time and practice. In addition, school districts are also spending a large amount of money and time to train new teachers.

### **Importance and Rationale of the Project**

Teacher attrition is a big problem in education, even more-so now than in the past. The extent of the problem is not only in most schools across the United States, but in other countries as well. The UK and Sweden are experiencing high attrition rates between 30 to 50% within the first five years (Cooper & Alvarado, 2006). Many other countries statistics are similarly alarming around the globe.

Research has shown time and time again that highly qualified teachers have a significant impact on student achievement. Mojavezi and Tamiz (2012) found that



there was a significant correlation between teacher self-efficacy, retention rates, and increased student achievement. Evidence suggests that the number of years of teaching experience held by an educator may be positively related to student achievement (Burroughs et al., 2019; Hightower et al., 2011). Further research by Steward et al. (2021) indicates that student learning is also directly affected by the experience level of the teacher: the lesser the experience, the lesser the level of student academic growth. For teachers to gain experience to help with student achievement, there needs to be a way to lessen the attrition rates.

Financial costs also accompany teacher attrition. In an American study, Borman and Dowling (2008) claim that the total cost of replacing public school teachers who dropped out of the profession was nearly \$2.2 billion in 2001. This money could be better used in public school systems to further help with student achievement, salary increases for teachers and materials for students. In addition to administrative and financial costs, research has demonstrated that unstable learning environments, as a result of teachers leaving schools negatively affects student achievement, particularly in schools with many low-performing and black students (Bastian & Marks, 2022). Furthermore, student achievement is negatively impacted when quality teachers leave the profession (Solomonson, 2019).

When this problem is not addressed, the cycle continues of hiring and training, which can cost school districts quite a bit of money and time. It is detrimental to student achievement with the frequent turnover of staff. In order for teachers to become highly effective, novice teachers need to have time to perfect the skill of

teaching. If they are leaving within the first few years and then schools must retrain new teachers, it is harder for school to create highly effective teachers. Being a great teacher is through patience, persistence, and practice. The longer a teacher is teaching, the more they learn and are able to help their students' achievement. The school culture and climate are also affected as well. With teachers coming and going, staff members are not able to form those concrete bonds which are imperative to creating a positive culture throughout the school. This problem is worthy of study because students are entitled to a high-quality education and for that to happen, access to high quality teachers is needed.

### **Background of the Project**

Since The Great Recession, teaching attrition rates have been increasing. The problem has seemed to become more severe since 2010. With the extra burdens placed on teachers, low salaries, increasing behavioral issues, and lack of support from administrators, teachers are experiencing high levels of teacher burnout (Weldon, 2018). Weldon also states that many have switched to other professions or retired which negatively impacts student achievement for all students in the school. In comparison with the rates of turnover from other occupations teaching has higher rates than higher-status occupations like professors and about the same as comparable semi-professions such as nurses (Ingersoll, 2003). For years, the public education system has dealt with teaching shortages. Since the COVID pandemic and the many different challenges of teaching virtual, hybrid, and face-to-face, these shortages have grown tremendously and could continue to persist. If this problem does not get

solved sooner rather than later, there will not be enough highly qualified teachers to teach students to have great academic achievement. The world is already seeing the ramifications of being short staffed and not being able to fill these vacancies.

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to create an evidence-based induction and mentoring program to lower attrition rates that will promote job satisfaction for all new and returning teachers at an elementary school in Southwest Michigan, Forest Academy. This project will include making the administration aware of how to support novice teachers within their first three years of being in the school teaching. This will also allow the school to lower attrition rates so the school can create highly effective teachers, which should help the students to achieve greater academic success. This project will not include salary increases to help retain teachers.

### **Objectives of the Project**

Novice teachers will go through an induction program prior to the school year starting to learn the procedures of the school, curriculum, and incorporate them into the social community of the staff. With the help of the administration, professional developments, mentor teachers, stress management strategies, and coaching, novice teachers will feel better prepared in their teaching. This project will help them to reach the level of being a highly effective teacher. Teachers will be better prepared to manage their classrooms, achieve higher test scores, and ultimately make a better

learning environment for all students which in turn should help to lower attrition rates.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Autonomy:* To experience the freedom of choice at work (Marais et al. 2021)

*Teacher Attrition:* The rate at which new teachers leave the teaching profession (Granados, 2022)

*Flourishing:* A pattern of positive feelings and functioning (Marais et al. 2021)

*Job Satisfaction:* Employees' realization of wants, refers to evaluating all aspects of a current job in terms of expectations (Marias et al. 2021)

*Highly Effective Teacher:* Educators who are fully able to support students in getting and remaining on track to graduate from high school and getting ready for college or careers (U.S. Department of Education, 2000)

*Teacher Induction:* A planned, sustained, and systematic approach to ushering a new teacher into a career (Bickmore & Bickmore, 2010)

*Mentor:* Person who builds a professional relationship that encourages continuous support, scaffolds a professional identity (Skeen et al., 2020)

*Mindfulness:* Practice that consists of calming the mind and remaining in this state (Stercke et al. 2015)

*Novice Teacher:* Teacher that is in their first three years in the classroom (Skeen et al., 2020)

*Professional Development for Educators:* The set of tools, resources, and training sessions for educators to improve their teaching quality and effectiveness (Marais et al. 2021)

*Student Achievement:* Student's success at school (Mojavezi & Tamiz, 2012)

*Teacher Self Efficacy:* The extent in which a teacher believes that he or she can influence the student's outcome, in educational contexts (Mojavezi & Tamiz, 2012)

*Teacher Stress:* experiences of unpleasant, negative emotions, for example frustration, anxiety, anger, tension, and depression associated with work (Marais et al. 2021)

*Well-being:* happiness, in the field of psychology (Stercke et al. 2015)

### **Scope of the Project**

This project will address attrition within a low-income charter elementary school in Kalamazoo County. It will focus on inducing novice teachers into a new school system for the first three years. The success of this project will rely heavily on the support that novice teachers get from administration and their mentor teacher as well as using the project with fidelity. Administration plays a key role in creating a warm climate and open communication between the novice teacher and the staff. The role that the administrator has in setting up professional developments for the novice

teacher and assigning a mentor coach to meet their needs is imperative. There must be follow through on the administration side to make sure that all the components of the program are being followed.

What this project does not address is the funding for the professional developments that will have to be offered at least once before using the new curriculum and maybe even another session when the novice teacher is a little more familiar with the curriculum. The novice teacher should be given ample time learn and review the new curriculum they will be using. The administration also needs to allow time for the novice teacher to meet with their mentor teacher to work on daily schedules, classroom management, and coaching. Observing the mentor teacher is also a part of the project, so there will have to be time allotted for the novice teacher to both observe their mentor's class and then have time to discuss what they saw.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

Teacher attrition rates are the highest they have ever been with nearly 50% of teachers leaving the profession within the first five years of being in the classroom, with 30% of those teachers leaving in the first three (Stewart et al., 2021). These percentages are alarming, especially for schools that have greater populations of minority students, students in poverty, and/or students struggling academically, who, according to Stewart et al. (2021), have even higher rates of attrition than those who do not. Clearly, this problem not only affects students, but it also affects teachers, support staff, administration, schools, and the communities around them. Multiple research studies have been done to determine why attrition rates are so high and the best possible ways to retain teachers. Subsequently, it is imperative to focus on measures that are attainable and that have the greatest impact on keeping teachers in the profession.

There are many different factors that need to be considered when looking at why such high attrition rates are transpiring. When examining schools where retention rates were the highest, they all have many of the same characteristics. These schools tend to have a warm and welcoming climate, have tremendous administration support, implement a solid teacher induction program where novice teachers are assigned to mentors (specifically in their content/grade level), offer accessible professional development based on specific needs, and make their mental

well-being of teachers a top priority (Gunn & McRae, 2021). The literature review will discuss the theoretical framework on which these characteristics are derived and help to develop an understanding of why so many novice teachers are leaving the field, the effects it has on schools, and some possible solutions to the issues at hand.

### **Theory/Rationale**

To ensure that all students have access to highly effective teachers to optimize their learning experiences, there needs to be an end to the cycle of teachers coming and going frequently. According to the literature, teacher competency is a significant contributor to student achievement and success (Gunn & McRae, 2021). In contrast, Hanushek et al. (2016) reports that current trends indicate that the negative-quality teachers are leaving, which leaves a positive impact on the school. Hanasheck et al. (2016) also goes on to say that teachers who exit public schools are on average less effective as evidenced by student achievement scores than those who remain, and a lack of success leads many teachers to exit. Nonetheless, there is evidence that turnover harms students, even in classes with teachers who remain in the school.

While there are many factors that contribute to teachers leaving the profession within the first five years of teaching, these are the most common: lack of administrative support, weakly organized or insufficient mentoring, poor induction programs, and teacher stress/burnout or accountability issues (Miulescu, 2020). The role of leaders is to hire high quality teachers and helping to retain teachers is an important factor as well. When there is strong leadership in place and a positive



climate within the school, the chances of retaining high quality teachers are more promising. "... [Teachers] more than anybody else, have direct and lasting influence on students and their achievement. As such, the responsibility that administrators have for working with and developing teachers is among the greatest responsibility they are charged with in the scope of their professional duties" (Fiore, p. 82, 2022).

For students to have access to highly qualified teachers, teachers need time to develop in their profession. New teachers move through a series of stages of development relating to teacher effectiveness. According to Fuller (1969), the first year of teaching is the survival year and the teacher just focuses on making it through the day. Teachers eventually move towards a more critical analysis of their teaching where they are taking the time to contemplate the implementation of actual teaching duties, and then, finally, they come to the reflection phase where they can focus on the impact made on students and outcomes related to the teacher's instruction (Reitman & Karge, 2019). A highly qualified teacher is also one who builds relationships with their students and utilizes all their experience to really help students to learn and be prepared for life after they graduate.

"When looking at the personal interpretive framework, it is also imperative to study feelings, motivations, and perceptions of [teachers'] work, as well as their general perspectives related to teaching and learning" (Marz & Kelchtermans, p. 2, 2020). To prevent early attrition, support must be in place to provide adequate mentoring to overcome the difficulties of starting a new career. Mentorship is also one of the key components in teacher retention. When this framework is provided it

gives a foundation to the steps that are needed to lessen the attrition rates in any school.

The rationale for this paper is to focus on the most important factors that play a role in teacher attrition and the measures the administration can take to help lessen it. Through research, it is evident that the attrition rates are the highest within the first five years of teaching, which can cost schools a tremendous amount of money. New teachers are faced with many challenges as they enter the field of teaching. With support from their administration and a mentor teacher, the stresses of being new to the field can be lessened. With an induction process in place, new teachers will be better able to adapt to their new setting, which will help to alleviate stress and teacher burnout. The literature review provides a framework to better understand teacher attrition and develop ways to retain teachers in the district.

## **Research/Evaluation**

### **Administrative Support**

A school's climate is a group of people's collective mood or morale. The climate describes the shared perceptions of the people in a group or organization, while culture includes how people feel about the organization and the beliefs, values, and assumptions that provide the identity and set the standards of behavior (Joseph, 2022). One of the top reported reasons for attrition rates in schools is the lack of administrative support. Research has indicated "healthy schools have the best chance

of creating successful implementation programs” (Brock & Grady 1998). A healthy school climate and culture is necessary to retain teachers.

Principals are the key element in shaping the culture and climate within the school. The principal sets the culture to make students and staff feel like they belong. The principal should set this culture from the beginning to establish the foundation for future support and communication. The principal helps have a positive and happy climate within the school to carry over to everyone they encounter and helps to spread it around the school.

“Working with future leaders [novice teachers], we [principals] should consider relationship building as a central component in instructional leadership” (O’Shea, p.293, 2021). Relationships impact teacher satisfaction not only among students but also with colleagues. Principals need to keep morale up and provide teachers with an environment where they feel supported and appreciated. They need to feel like they are being listened to, are being offered advice and professional knowledge, are being acknowledged and appreciated, and are being challenged professionally (Downey, 2018).

Teachers at all levels should feel like they can come to their administration about any problems that may arise. Principals oversee creating effective orientations, assigning and supporting mentors, providing professional development, and developing the professional culture so everyone is feeling like they are valued. Novice teachers will stay or leave jobs on the basis of their personal feelings and their

reactions to their experiences. If novice teachers feel like their perceived needs are being met during their induction process, they are more likely to stay (Bickmore & Bickmore, 2010). The principal is key in establishing the personal needs of respect, belonging, self-esteem, and autonomy.

Another thing that principals should do is allow autonomy for the teachers to think creatively and freely in their own classrooms. The principal needs to make sure teachers feel like they are respected as a teacher and can make the right decisions for their students. It is essential that the principal also schedules purposeful interactions with novice teachers. Career satisfaction helps them want to stay and the happier they are within the social aspect of the school, the more likely they will stay. Job satisfaction is a critical element to teacher effectiveness. It has been associated with lower absenteeism rates, reduced stress, turnover, and the use of innovative instructional practices in classrooms (Banerjee et al., 2016). The more they feel socially accepted, the higher job satisfaction they will have.

Principals also need to give teachers extra time to meet with their mentor and the other teachers within their grade level, as well as give them extra planning time to help reduce stress and burnout. This allows novice teachers to feel more supported and to have meaningful conversations with their mentor teachers. Allowing teachers extra time to observe highly effective teachers, including their mentor and participate in coaching exercises will help any novice teacher advance in their career.

## **Teacher Induction**

Strong, evidence-based induction and mentoring programs have shown significant potential in improving teacher retention and overall performance (Bastian & Marks, 2017). Combined, they can help to bridge the gap between the initial and continued professional development with teachers. This not only helps to increase both teachers' effectiveness and retention, but also positively impacts the achievement of the students they serve (Kina, 2016). A lack of success in the basic foundation leads many teachers to quit within the first few years. Providing them with the support they need to be successful will help tremendously in retaining them.

The teacher induction program can consist of many things. They are typically between a year and three years long and should consist of introducing the new teacher to the school, integrating them into their school culture, teaching them the foundations of the school, routines and procedures, professional development on their current curriculum and other necessities to be a great teacher, assigning a mentor teacher, and being coached periodically. Principals should also be visiting classrooms on a regular basis and offering constructive feedback to help the teachers grow.

When a novice teacher is hired into a new school district, there are many basic tasks and procedures they need to learn to successfully acclimate into the new school. Having a yearlong induction program and assigning a mentor teacher, typically for three years, significantly reduces attrition rates (Reitmand & Karge, 2019).

“Six themes emerged to demonstrate support strategies in the induction program: (a) individual relationships, (b) pedagogical knowledge, (c) teacher perception of perceived competence, (d) mentoring, (e) professional learning, and (f) reflection” (Reitman & Karge, p.14, 2019). Teachers meet with other teachers on day one to create new bonds. Being accepted by their peers may be an important factor in developing self-efficacy and professional identity and in increasing retention (Marz & Kelchtermans, 2019). Studies have shown that many of the most valued aspects of induction programs are those that allow the forming of collaborative relationships (Martin et al., 2016).

District staff must educate new staff on all the protocols and procedures that that school has set forth in the induction process. Usually, the first day or week is designed to help novice teachers get comfortable with the structure of the school. Administration covers many of the basic things such as staff and student handbooks, curriculum expectations, assessments, and different school resources.

Part of the induction process can include working with other colleagues in learning communities, observing experienced teachers’ classrooms, being observed by mentors, analyzing their own practice, and networking with other novice teachers (Reitman & Karge, 2019). The induction process can also include having monthly meetings or learning sessions where teachers are allowed to share and reflect with other novice teachers as well as experienced teachers. These sessions can be customized to the needs of the novice teachers. They can then focus on deeper learning, thinking skills, and problem-solving, all while working collaboratively.

Examples of support provided by experienced teachers during these training sessions include setting up behavior plans, designing lessons, curriculum, and setting up the classroom climate and environment.

### **Mentoring**

Mentoring should be part of a well-thought-out induction plan. Research has shown that when a principal provides a mentor to a novice teacher, attrition rates are tremendously reduced (Skeen et al., 2020). Administration should look for best-fit mentors. Research shows that mentor teachers who are paired up with novice teachers in the same grade level and subject matter are most effective. Many administrators are now recommending that the mentor teacher even have some formal training on how to be a mentor and best serve the novice teacher's needs.

Since lack of support is one of the top reasons for teacher attrition, having a mentor in place will help novice teachers to grow based on their specific needs. This also allows them to have collaborative planning time and allows them to observe each other for evaluation and coaching.

### **Professional Development**

Professional development can take many forms in a school system. Whether it be as an in-person, school-wide professional development, or an online, individual professional development, allowing teachers have access to professional development opportunities no matter what stage they are at in their teaching career is critical to their professional growth and success. While little current research discusses what

professional developments a new teacher should explore in the first few years of teaching, because everyone starts off at different levels of knowledge, it is imperative to focus on classroom management, curriculum implementation, trauma-informed practices, assessments, lesson planning, cultural diversity, differentiation, and special needs.

MacMath et al. (2021) cited that Feiman-Nemer's (2001) seminal paper introduced a model of teacher learning that recognized "the need for a continuum of serious and sustained professional learning for teachers" (p.37) that covered their time in teacher education, induction, and continuing professional development. These stages in the continuum depend on individual learning needs and can be anything from creating classroom community and developing a professional identity to deepening subject-specific skills and improving leadership among everyone.

Professional development should take place consistently throughout the year as the education system is always changing, and new ways of teaching are developed. This not only helps with teachers' knowledge about how and what should be taught to students, but also helps with their confidence in teaching which impacts teacher retention. Using distributed leadership, teachers can share what they learn in an individual professional development to all staff which in turn helps with their sense of belonging and makes them feel like an important member of the school community.



## **Mental Health**

Now more than ever, a tremendous number of requirements are being placed upon teachers and are causing what is known as teacher burnout. This has been especially prevalent since COVID-19 hit and teachers were required to start teaching online without having much notice or prior experience. Teachers had to shift from the ways they were teaching to different teaching environments and altered teaching routines. They had additional responsibilities and new, unfamiliar technologies to add to an already overloaded workday (Estep et al., 2021). Many were unaware of how to make it “work” for themselves and their students and most were not trained adequately in technology and felt very unprepared. There has also been work overload with many schools because so many schools have been short staffed, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Even before COVID, teachers had requirements placed upon them regarding lesson planning, paperwork, state testing, and professional development. Many do not have the leniency to teach the way they want, and some go without the proper induction into their new schools and do not have available resources and support from administration.

Teachers are called upon to put on many different hats and have been dealing with more behavioral concerns, including students who cannot self-regulate, and social-emotional concerns, amongst many other issues. They are not being given adequate planning time to accomplish their goals and feel very much under pressure

(Haydon et al., 2018). Haydon et al. (2018) documented the four main sources of teacher stress: school organization (lack of administration support and organizational structure of the school, negative schools working conditions), job demands (excessive paperwork, high teaching loads, insufficient time), work resources (limited sense of teacher autonomy and decision-making power), and social and emotional competence (lack of collegial interactions). These are causing many teachers to consider leaving the field due to high-stress levels.

Borman and Downing (2008) reported that stress is a high predictor of teacher turnover. Stress significantly impacts teachers' self-efficacy, job satisfaction, burnout, teacher attrition, student engagement, and physical health (Haydon et al., 2018).

High stress levels are one of the main reasons why 25% to 50% of teachers leave the profession within the first five years of teaching (Haydon et al., 2018). Based on the results from the study done by Borman and Downing (2008), they concluded that stress affects teachers' positive functioning and feeling. When they perceived positive stress, teachers were able to flourish at work. Distress affected teachers' intentions to leave. To reduce perceived negative stress, teachers need to find successful coping strategies.

DeStercke et al., (2015) states that happiness is the key to keeping new teachers in the workplace for the simple reason that its pursuit informs everyone's existence, universally. While there has been no agreement between researchers on which coping strategies are the best for stress management, administration support can help reduce the stress levels of teachers by focusing on their educational

advising/orientation, mindfulness, and emotional intelligence. When there is trust, respect, good communication and collaboration between staff, teachers feel less stress placed upon them (Haydon et al., 2018). Also, creating a warm atmosphere at school can help teachers with positive peer interactions. Administration can also provide professional developments on stress management and provide support on health and wellness.

Marais et al. (2021) concluded in their research that stress affects teachers' positive functioning and feeling. Therefore, it is essential to plan and implement interventions to address teachers' mental health and deal with stress. When teaching teachers mindfulness, they teach teachers to focus on calming the mind and staying in that calm state. Practicing mindfulness has positive effects on psychological health and mental agitation, as well as on educational problems such as group management and feelings of self-efficacy (DeStercke et al., (2015). Having teachers learn mindfulness improves their ability to manage what can be deemed as stressful situations by teachers. Teacher leaders can introduce mindfulness training programs as part of their teacher induction programs.

### **Summary**

Attrition affects everyone including students, teachers, support staff, administration, and the community. There are many measures that can be taken to lower attrition rates, but the ones that have the most impact are the support from

administration, the induction process, professional development, having a mentor teacher, and focusing on one's mental health.

Administration needs to focus on creating a warm and welcoming climate for novice teachers to feel comfortable to open the bridge to be able to ask questions and feel accepted at a school. There needs to be a proper induction program in place to help novice teachers to become great teachers. Professional development is critical in helping novice teachers to grow and become more aware of different theories to help in their classrooms. The mentor teacher plays a significant role by helping novice teachers through encouragement and coaching. When teachers find ways to deal with everyday stresses, they will be able to reflect and focus.

### **Conclusion**

Attrition rates have grown through the years and continue to rise. With higher attrition rates, students' academic performance and school morale declines. Schools need to work together and produce a plan to help lessen those attrition rates.

Administration needs to focus on the most effective ways to keep both novice teachers and highly qualified teachers in the field and help acclimate novice teachers into the world of teaching. Implementing a proper induction plan, assigning mentor teachers, offering professional development, focusing on mental health, and creating an inviting culture and climate are all essential components in retaining new teachers in the school.

## **Chapter 3: Project Description**

### **Introduction**

Teacher attrition is a big problem in schools which impacts students' achievements and can also be very costly to school districts. Giving teachers the right tools for teaching can help teachers to become better at their profession. Having a high-quality induction process in place to better prepare novice teachers can help to lower the attrition rates in school districts. With support from administration, novice teachers will be better able to handle the problems that arise on a day-to-day basis.

Principals also need to know how to assist in retaining teachers and what factors are causing them to leave within the first five years. Teachers have the greatest impact on student achievement and the principal is the 2<sup>nd</sup> most impactful person on a students' achievement (Fiore, 2022). To help increase student achievement, teachers need time to become highly effective teachers by staying in a school to perfect the art of teaching. They can do so with the help of professional developments to learn more about teaching in the classroom. Teaching can be a highly stressful job, so giving teachers the tools to reduce stress can be beneficial for teachers also.

In this last chapter, a blueprint will be laid out for every new teacher who enters the school district. This program will rely heavily on having buy-in from the principal, the mentor teachers, and the novice teachers. This section will include the components of this project and how it will be implemented. It will explain how to

evaluate the effectiveness of this induction program. This last chapter will also provide in detail the conclusions of this project.

### **Project Components**

This project will be implemented at Forest Academy, which is a small elementary charter school in Kalamazoo County. With the rise in attrition rates at this school in the last few years, there needs to be a better system in place to retain novice teachers. The goal is by implementing this new project, the attrition rates will decline, and the school will be able to help create highly effective teachers to help increase student achievement. This project will focus on the following objectives: implementing an induction program into a school, assigning each novice teacher a mentor teacher, reducing teacher stress, offering high quality professional development, and helping the principal become more aware of why attrition rates are much higher and how to lower them development. With this knowledge, the principal will better be able to assist novice teachers with preparation for their first few years of teaching.

### **Administrative Support**

Being a great leader and creating a good climate and culture within the school is an essential job of the principal. Every novice teacher needs the support of administration to feel successful. When new hires come into the school, the first thing that should be done is to create a relationship with the new hire so they feel comfortable coming to the principal with any concerns they may have.

Communication between the staff and the principal will help to solve many problems that may arise. The pamphlet that has been created explains what the role of the principal has in the induction process (Appendix H). The principal will also conduct weekly check-ins with every novice teacher in the building to maintain a good working relationship.

### **Teacher Induction**

Since strong, evidence-based induction and mentoring programs have shown significant potential in improving teacher retention and overall performance (Bastian & Marks, 2017), every novice teacher at Forest Academy will benefit from having a proper induction to the new school. The teacher induction process will begin a week before the students arrive back at school. It will consist of a checklist that every new hire follows to learn the basics of the school (Appendix D). The teacher induction process will last a total of three years to help make sure every novice teacher gets acclimated into the new school district appropriately with as little stress as possible. Part of the induction process will require every novice teacher to have a mentor teacher for the three years after being hired in the school district.

### **Mentoring**

Research has shown that when a principal provides a mentor to a novice teacher, attrition rates are tremendously reduced (Skeen et al., 2020). Therefore, as part of the induction program, every novice teacher will be assigned a mentor teacher at the beginning of their induction process. A beginning of the year sit-down meeting

is very beneficial. The mentor teacher will help guide their mentee through the induction checklist and help with completing the first week's checklist. The mentor teacher will meet with their mentee weekly to discuss certain topics for that particular month (Appendix I). Another thing that will be put into place will be a concrete plan like those in Skeen, N., Lewis, A. A., Vanburgen, C., & Hodges, T. E. (2020). Here, they will set monthly goals and steps needed to achieve their goals (Appendix F). The first year uses a responsive coaching method and concentrates on helping teachers navigate and create a solid professional foundation, specifically focusing on working with other adults, reaching, and teaching all students, and strengthening efficacy in classroom management. The second year is designed to develop reflective practitioners and help teachers identify, explore, analyze, and grow their individual teacher identity using a goal-based coaching approach. The third year employs developmental coaching, a more facilitative form of goals-based coaching, to help teachers identify and develop their personal leadership skills.

### **Professional Development**

There are a number of professional developments that will take place throughout the first three years of becoming a teacher to help novice teachers in every aspect of their teaching since studies have shown that this will help with attrition rates. Some will take place within the first week before school starts which are listed on Appendix D. After every professional development, teachers will be asked to fill out a short questionnaire as to how beneficial the professional development was and



also what other professional learning opportunities they feel would be most important to their teaching career (Appendix D).

### **Mental Health**

A professional development and varied resources (Appendix G) will be given on managing stress as a teacher since it can be very stressful at times and teacher burnout is a factor in why teachers are leaving the field early. A stress level survey will be done three times a year by teachers, beginning of the year, mid-year, and end of the school year for both the novice teacher to reflect on, but also for the principal to gain insight on how they may be able to lessen the workload to reduce stress (Appendix B). Administrators will give extra time to novice teachers to meet with their mentor teacher for meetings and observe in their mentor's classroom. The administration will always be looking for ways to reduce stress levels and workloads when possible. The principal will also be checking up with the novice teachers weekly to help lessen any stress factors.

### **Project Evaluation**

There will be multiple evaluation measures for this project, both quantitative and qualitative. The first evaluation measure will be given after the first week of having the new staff member into the school (Appendix A). It will ask questions about how the first week of the induction process went and if they felt more prepared for the basic protocols within the school. The next evaluation measure will be done monthly to find out what is working and what is not working (Appendix B). At the

end of the first, second and third year, a survey will be done with open ended questions to assess their job satisfaction. If the results are positive, it will be known that the induction process is having a positive impact. If the results are negative, it will be known and addressed for continued improvement. This will also be given as in exit-survey, along with an exit interview for when any teacher leaves the school to find out whether it was due to the induction process or other reasons. (Appendix C).

The effectiveness of the program will be determined at the end of the first three years when there is data to determine the new attrition rates among novice teachers. Through the use of the new evaluation measures, administration will be able to see what is working and what might need to be adjusted for continuous improvement for the program.

### **Project Conclusions**

Teacher attrition rates are a problem within schools around the world. Student attrition not only affects students' achievement but can also be very costly to school districts (Borman and Dowling, 2008). The top five reasons teachers are leaving schools within the first five years are lack of administration support, not having a proper induction plan in place, lack of professional development, not having an adequate mentor teacher or coach and teacher burnout (Gunn & McRae, 2021). With administration aware of these downfalls, they can be more mindful in setting up a proper plan to help lower attrition rates. This would have a positive effect on the school culture and climate, as well as help to raise student achievement. With the use

of the new induction program into the school that is followed with fidelity, there should be a decline in attrition rates, which is our ultimate goal in creating highly qualified teachers for students to be able to learn from.

### **Plans for Implementation**

This mentoring program will begin in Fall of 2023 at Forest Academy, a small elementary charter school in Kalamazoo County. The principal will assign mentors to any new hires for the school year. There will be a week full of community building, professional development, and classroom set up before the students arrive. On the first day of the induction process, the new hires will take a tour of the new school and be given their classroom. This is when the program will be explained in detail by the principal to everyone in the school through a PowerPoint presentation. Other staff members and mentors will receive this information also. New hires will meet with all staff and introduce each other. The first day of the induction process will begin. Each novice teacher will be given a checklist of requirements to accomplish the first week at the new school (Appendix D). The first day will be used to go over the staff handbook, meet with their mentor teacher, go over schedules, and start their professional developments on the curriculum used throughout the school year.

The novice teacher will meet this week with their mentor teacher to set measurable goals for the first month of teaching. At the end of the first week, the mentee will fill out a survey to assess how prepared they feel for the beginning of the school year. The mentor and mentee will meet once a week for a coaching session

throughout the whole induction process to improve teaching skills. At the end of the first month, each mentee will be asked to fill out a survey to discuss the induction process and set new monthly goals.

Throughout the school year, the mentee will also participate in a series of professional developments. After each professional development, each mentee will be asked to fill out a survey about the professional development that they just attended. The mentee will also meet with the principal once a week to talk about what is going well for them, what isn't, how the principal can reduce their case load, and stress relief strategies. There will also be an end of the year induction process evaluation for every novice teacher to fill out. The data taken from these evaluations will be used for continued improvement throughout the years. If the project is a success, the principal will meet with other principals around the area to share the induction program that is in place after the first three years of having the program in place.

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**Appendices**

Appendix A

New Hire Evaluation Survey

# NEW HIRE EMPLOYEE SURVEY 2023

NAME:

Please indicate your level of agreements with the statements listed below

AGREE NEITHER DISAGREE

- I was given a tour of the school and met the staff.

- I felt welcomed by the principal and staff.

- I was able to meet with my mentor teacher.

- I was given a staff handbook and was able to read through it with my mentor teacher.

- I was given a school schedule so I can plan my daily schedule accordingly.

- I recieved professional development on the curriculum our school uses.

- I was given some stress related tools to use throughout the school year.

**ADD ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS YOU FEEL WOULD  
HAVE BEEN MORE BENEFICIAL TO YOUR FIRST WEEK  
AT OUR SCHOOL**

**Appendix B**

**New Hire Monthly Induction Evaluation**

# Teacher's Monthly Induction Evaluations

Teacher's Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. On a scale of 0 - 10, how well do you feel supported as a teacher by the principal/mentor teacher?

*Not at all*    0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10    *Extremely*

2. What does she, or can she, do to show you this?

---



---

3. What do you feel like you could use more assistance with?

---



---

4. What do you feel has been most beneficial in terms of professional development?

---



---

5. What do you feel has been most beneficial to you in terms of mentor/principal coaching?

---



---

6. On a scale of 0 - 10, how do you rate your stress level?

*Not at all*    0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10    *Extremely*

7. On a scale of 0 - 10, how much do you enjoy teaching in this class?

*Not at all*    0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10    *Extremely*

8. What is one area you would like more professional development/coaching on?

---



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**Appendix C**

**End of the Year Job Satisfaction Evaluation**



# End of the Year Teacher Satisfaction Survey

	HIGHLY SATISFIED	SATISFIED	NEUTRAL	DISSATISFIED	HIGHLY DISSATISFIED
 Support from Principal/Mentor Teacher	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
 School Culture and Climate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
 Stress Management and Workload	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
 Professional Development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

HOW LIKELY ARE YOU TO TEACH NEXT YEAR AT OUR SCHOOL?

  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10    
Not Likely Very Likely

WHAT IS YOUR GENERAL FEELING ABOUT OUR SCHOOL?

Do you have any suggestions that could help us improve our school? If you plan to leave, does your leaving have to do with the school or other reasons?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Appendix D**

**First Week Induction Checklist**

# 1st Week Induction Checklist

Meet the Staff/Mentor



Take a School Tour



Review Teacher Handbook



Watch LMS/Objectives PowerPoir



Watch Synergy PowerPoint



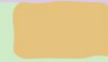
PD on PATHS



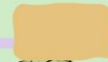
PD on Reading Street



PD on Heggerty



Learn School Schedule and Create  
Your Own Class Schedule (with  
Mentor)



**Appendix E**

**Professional Development Survey**

PLEASE TAKE A FEW  
MINUTES TO FILL OUT  
THIS SURVEY.

TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_

How would you rate the quality of the  
professional development?



Rate how much you learned from the pd.



How likely are you to use what you learned in  
the class?



What is one thing you can start doing tomorrow  
in this class pertaining to this professional  
development?

---

\*THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND FEEDBACK.

**Appendix F**

**Monthly Goals Checklist**

## \_\_\_\_\_ 'S MONTHLY GOALS CHECKLIST

<b>Goal :</b>	<b>Steps :</b>	<b>Target :</b>
	.....	.....
	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	.....
	<input type="radio"/>	.....

<b>Goal :</b>	<b>Steps :</b>	<b>Target :</b>
	.....	.....
	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	.....
	<input type="radio"/>	.....

<b>Goal :</b>	<b>Steps :</b>	<b>Target :</b>
	.....	.....
	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	.....
	<input type="radio"/>	.....

<b>Goal :</b>	<b>Steps :</b>	<b>Target :</b>
	.....	.....
	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	.....
	<input type="radio"/>	.....

<b>Goal :</b>	<b>Steps :</b>	<b>Target :</b>
	.....	.....
	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	.....
	<input type="radio"/>	.....

**Appendix G**

**Stress Management Checklist**





**Appendix H**

**Principal's Responsibilities Pamphlet**

# BACK TO SCHOOL

## Principal's Responsibilities

- to support the new teacher in any way possible
- to create a warm and inviting atmosphere
- to be available for consultation and assistance
- establish rapport



**Appendix I**

**Monthly Mentor Topic Ideas**

### Before The School Year Begins Checklist

	Tak about mentor/ mentee roles (Guidelines for Good Mentors)
	Hand out Pre-Mentoring Survey (Bring to second meeting to discuss)
	Hand out Individual Development Plan
	Hand out Mentor and Mentee responsibilities
	Tour school/ introduce to staff
	Discuss Forms/ Schedules (lunch/ recess/expectations, specials times, morning duties/expectations, character counts, monthly calendar, time OFF requests/expectations, PD requests, phone tree, and peer to peer observations)
	Pacing Guide/ Road Map (provide copy for example) Where to Find Percentage in LMS
	Discuss Open House expectations (Forms, room set up, locker assignments)
	Establish Classroom rules/ Expectations (See Classroom routines and procedures page)
	Lesson Plan Expectations (What is expected to be in them and when are they due) What do you feel needs to be covered in the first week and when during the week?
	Positive Behavior (class rewards, etc.)
	Problem Behavior (behavior charts, etc.)
	LMS reports For First week
	Emergency procedures (codes, whistles, scenarios, and practicing with class)
	Schedule next month's meeting/ preferred contact method (exchange emails/ numbers)

## August

	Tak about mentor/mentee roles (Guidelines for Good Mentors)
	Hand out Pre-Mentoring Survey (Bring to second meeting to discuss)
	Hand out Individual Development Plan
	Hand out Mentor and Mentee responsibilities
	Tour school/ introduce to staff
	Discuss Forms/ Schedules (lunch/ recess/expectations, specials times, morning duties/expectations, character counts, monthly calendar, time OFF requests/expectations, PD requests, phone tree, and peer to peer observations)
	Pacing Guide/ Road Map (provide copy for example) Where to Find Percentage in LMS
	Discuss Open House expectations (Forms, room set up, locker assignments)
	Establish Classroom rules/ Expectations (See Classroom routines and procedures page)
	Lesson Plan Expectations (What is expected to be in them and when are they due) What do you feel needs to be covered in the first week and when during the week?
	Positive Behavior (class rewards, etc.)
	Problem Behavior (behavior charts, etc.)
	LMS reports For First week
	Emergency procedures (codes, whistles, scenarios, and practicing with class)
	Schedule next month's meeting/ preferred contact method (exchange emails/ numbers)

### October

	Review pacing chart/lesson plans (percentages needed and when)
	Discuss Pre-Mentoring Survey
	Check in on Individual Development Plan progress
	Special Services (supply examples if needed/what areas are they needed for)
	Conferences (notes, expectations, what to go over, how to schedule)
	Report card comments
	Newsletters
	NWEA scores (how to rank students and who needs special services)
	Talk about NWEA binder (show how to print / Find reports needed )
	Discuss PD options (GVSU, KRESA, Calhoun ISD, etc.)
	Discuss Special Ed accommodations/ documentation
	IRIPS (K-3) Who needs them and how to Fill them out
	Positive Behavior (class rewards, etc.)
	Problem Behavior (CPI, behavior charts, etc.)
	Discuss holiday/ celebrations
	Schedule next month's meeting/ preferred contact method (exchange emails/ numbers)

### November

	Review pacing chart/ lesson plans (percentage needed and when)
	Newsletters
	Check in on Individual Development Plan progress
	Special Services (when to create new, when to end)
	Conferences (How they went)
	School closing procedures
	Check over staff calendar for due dates
	Winter gear reminders for parents/ recess procedures in winter
	Check over NWEA binder (show how to print / Find reports needed )
	How to differentiate instruction based on NWEA and LMS needs
	Reading groups/ Math groups
	Discuss PD options (GVSU, KRESA, Calhoun ISD, etc.)
	Discuss Special Ed accommodations/ documentation
	IRIPS (K-3) Completed and turned in
	Positive Behavior (class rewards, etc.)
	Problem Behavior (behavior charts, etc.)
	Discuss holiday/ celebrations
	Schedule next month's meeting/ preferred contact method (exchange emails/ numbers)



### December

	Newsletters
	Check in on Individual Development Plan Progress
	Special Services (due date)
	Snow days (lesson revisions/ LMS pacing )
	Check over staff calendar for due dates
	Winter gear reminders for parents/ recess procedures in winter
	How to differentiate instruction based on NWEA and LMS needs
	Readin Groups/ Math Groups
	Discuss PD options (GVSU, KRESA, Calhoun ISD) etc.)
	Discuss Special Ed accommodations/ documentation
	Holiday Break Packets
	Positive Behavior (class rewards, etc.)
	Problem Behavior (behavior charts, etc.)
	Discuss holiday/ celebrations
	Schedule next month's meeting/ preferred contact method (exchange emails/ numbers)

### January

	Newsletters
	Check in on Individual Development Plan Progress
	Special Services (update)
	Snow days (lesson/revisions/ LMS pacing)
	Check over staff calendar for due dates
	Winter gear reminders for parents/ recess procedures in winter
	How to differentiate instruction based on NWEA and LMS needs
	Reading Groups/ Math Groups
	Report Card Comments/ Report Cards
	Discuss PD options (GVSU, KRESA, Calhoun ISD, etc.)
	Discuss Special Ed accommodations/ documentation
	IRIPS K-3) update after NWEA scores
	Positive Behavior (class rewards, etc.)
	Problem Behavior (behavior charts, etc.)
	Schedule next month's meeting/ preferred contact method (exchange emails/ numbers)

## February

	Newsletters
	Check in on Individual Development Plan Progress
	Special Services (update)
	Snow days (lesson/revisions/ LMS pacing )
	Check over staff calendar for due dates
	Winter gear reminders for parents/ recess procedures in winter
	How to differentiate instruction based on NWEA and LMS needs (after most recent NWEA test)
	Reading Groups/ Math Groups (Are you changing these?)
	Discuss PD options (GVSU, KRESA, Calhoun ISD, etc.)
	Discuss Special Ed accommodations/ documentation
	IRIPS (K-3) update after NWEA scores
	Positive Behavior (class rewards, etc.)
	Problem Behavior (behavior charts, etc.)
	Holidays/ celebrations
	Schedule next month's meeting/ preferred contact method (exchange emails/ numbers)



The signature of the individual below indicates that the individual has read and approved the project of Amanda Jo Almy in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

*Catherine L. Meyer-Looze*

Catherine L. Meyer-Looze, Project Advisor

Date: March 23, 2023

Accepted and approved on behalf of the Educational Leadership Program and Educational Leadership and Counseling Unit.

*Rick Vandermolen*

Richard Vandermolen, Graduate Program Director

March 23, 2023

*Catherine L. Meyer-Looze*

Catherine L. Meyer-Looze, Unit Head

March 23, 2023