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Teacher Attrition: Supporting Teachers Through Mentorship

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Acknowledgments

Abstract

A wealth of research demonstrates that teachers of all career levels are leaving the profession due to dissatisfaction with a variety of working conditions and lack of growth opportunities. Teachers desire a better work-life balance, opportunities to progress in their careers, and collaboration with co-workers and school leaders. Additionally, the research shows that teachers stay in education when they are valued and given the opportunity to use their expertise and voice. Mentorship programs support early-career teachers, while giving mid-to-late career teachers the opportunity to use their expertise. This project is the development of a two-tiered mentorship program that combines instructional coaching and support from a job-alike mentor for those entering their teaching career. Mentees will provide and receive formative feedback that will be used to select personalized professional development. Through the development of the project, new teachers at Hudsonville Christian School made it known that there is also a need for support with student faith formation. Mentors in this program will assist teachers with implementation of student faith formation and will support teachers in the development of the instructional skills and goals the mentees set with their instructional coaches. This mentorship program distributes leadership to the instructional coaches, teacher leaders, and the mentors.

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction

Problem Statement

Data shows that teachers are leaving the teaching profession at a higher rate than those entering the profession, creating a shortage of qualified teachers.

As teacher attrition continues to rise, student achievement is declining, and the role of leaders is shifting (McHenry-Sorber & Campbell, 2019). Experienced teachers are leaving the profession and fewer students are enrolling in teacher preparation programs (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016). Untrained and unqualified teachers are entering the teaching profession and school leaders are using school resources to support them, shifting funding and focus from students (McHenry-Sorber & Campbell, 2019). Student achievement is at risk as fewer and fewer qualified teachers remain in the profession and resources that should be student focused are being used to support teachers (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019).

Importance and Rationale

Students are the future; the success of our nation's students depends on their education and qualified, experienced teachers. "Recruiting and retaining excellent teachers is critically important for the success of future generations" (Podolsky, Kini, Darling-Hammond, & Bishop, 2019, p. 32). All students deserve the opportunity to succeed, and teachers are the pathway to success. "Effectively retaining teachers is crucial to making sure there are enough well-prepared and committed teachers to staff all of our nation's schools and that the teachers in our classrooms have the time and experience to effectively serve all students" (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019, p. 19). The success of our nation depends on retaining excellent teachers.

Teachers improve through experience and support. Unsupported and unprepared teachers contribute to the problem of attrition and create an environment of instability and, often times, distrust. The teacher turnover churn, "undermines student achievement as a function of teacher inexperience, under preparation, and overall instability" (Sutcher, et al., 2016, p.5). Supporting teachers through distributive leadership practices and mentorship opportunities will contribute to teacher retention.

When teachers are successful, their success translates to achievement for their students. Studies show that teacher success depends on work environments that promote job satisfaction. "These studies are part of a growing research base finding links between the quality of school working environments and outcomes for students and teachers. And the qualities of these more positive and professional working environments have been shown to serve as critical building blocks for schools developing collective teacher efficacy, which some new research suggests is one of the most important factors influencing student achievement" (Berry, Bastian, Darling-Hammond, & Kini, p.1)

Resources

At the current high rate of teacher attrition, schools are losing valuable funding to teacher turnover. In a study focused on retaining teachers, Shuls and Flores found that "every time a teacher in Missouri leaves the profession, the corresponding school district loses 2.34 times the amount it takes to provide an adequate education to one student" (2020, p.3). Replacing and retraining teachers is expensive. "A decade ago, these costs---estimated to reach up to $18,000 per teacher in an urban district---produced an estimated national price tag of over $7 billion a year. With inflation, these costs would be more than $8 billion today (2016)" (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2019, p.5). Funding that should be

spent on directly supporting students is being used to indirectly support students through new teacher training and support. "Because of the district's concerns about teacher quality for its teachers-in-residence and permanent substitute teachers, it has been forced to funnel its federal dollars aimed at math improvement into support for these uncertified positions just to get them basic math instruction" (McHenry-Sorber & Campbell, 2019, p. 19). As a result, school leaders' focus has shifted to supporting unprepared and inexperienced teachers.

Background of the Project

Supply and Demand

The United States has a history of varying teacher attrition, changing the issue of supply and demand. The relative balance of supply and demand that occurred in the early 2000s turned into a surplus in 2010 through 2012, when school budgets declined, and teachers were being laid off. By 2014, however, as the economy recovered, demand began to rise and then took a steep upward turn in 2015, why supply continued to remain low and decline further. During this period, the teacher labor market moved into a shortage condition (Sutcher, et al., 2019, p. 3).

The economy has contributed to the current teacher shortage, and "currently, there are not enough qualified teachers applying for teaching jobs to meet the demand in all locations and fields" (Sutcher, et al., 2019, p.3). It is predicted that the gap between supply and demand will continue to grow wider.

Target-Driven Culture

The focus of education took a major turn to target-driven culture after the release of the government report, *A Nation at Risk,* in 1983. "The report called for an increase in both

academic standards and assessment in order to remain competitive in an expanding global economy" (Rubin, 2011, p.407). "Since that time, there has been a universal movement towards government-regulated standardization and high-stakes assessment, resulting in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001" (Rubin, 2011, p.407). The was the beginning of the use of frequent standardized testing to prove student growth. "Because of the predominant focus on high stakes reading and writing assessments required by NCLB, teachers have been victims of increased expectations and regimentation" (Rubin, 2011, p.408). These increased expectations and regimentation lead to teacher burnout, limited efficacy, and reduced creativity. Currently, those who enter the profession for altruistic reasons are leaving as a result of this target-driven culture and government initiatives (Perryman & Calvert, 2020).

Respect

Coincidentally, the high stakes testing, and teacher monitoring measures sends a message to Americans. "By testing students in almost every grade level to show Annual Yearly Progress, more and more schools are considered to be 'failing' in the eyes of the state and federal governments, and consequently, by the population at large" (Rubin, 2011, p. 408). Respect for the teaching profession has declined, and government measures to get teachers into classrooms have reduced the validity of teacher accreditation and education (McHenry-Sorber & Campbell, 2019).

Compensation

Salaries influence attrition and teacher salaries are not competitive with salaries in other occupations. Teacher salaries "have been declining since the 1990s and now amount to about 70% of the salaries of other college-educated workers" (Sutcher, et al., 2019, p.6). Additionally, "In 30 states, mid-career teachers who head families of four or more qualify for

three or more public benefit programs, such as subsidized children's health insurance or free or reduced-price school meals" (Sutcher, et al., 2019, p.6). Research suggests that policies should "leverage more competitive, equitable compensation packages that allow teachers to make a reasonable living across all kinds of communities" (Sutcher, et al., 2019, p. 7). Teacher pay needs to reflect the amount of work a teacher does.

Teaching Conditions

Traditionally, early- and late-career teachers are known to leave the career more consistently (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). However, the number of teachers leaving before retirement is growing. "Pre-retirement attrition accounts for the largest share of turnover---and most of the teachers who leave before retirement list dissatisfaction with teaching conditions as their major reasons" (Sutcher, et al., p.4). Teaching conditions have long been a factor in teacher attrition. "Surveys of teachers have long shown that teaching conditions play a major role in teachers' decisions to change schools or leave the profession" (Sutcher, et al., 2019, p.6).

Poor mentorship programs have led to the shortage of teachers we are currently experiencing. In a study by Berry, Bastien, Darling-Hammond, and Kini, "Teachers' collective efficacy was often undermined by inadequate mentoring, which was due in part to the fact that schools typically had large numbers of novices" (2021, p.9). Lack of mentorship or inadequate mentorship contribute to teacher attrition. "Well designed mentoring programs improve retention rates for new teachers, as well as their attitudes, feelings of efficacy, and instructional skills" (Sutcher, et al., 2019, p.6).

Statement of Purpose

Teachers want to feel valued in the work they do and have the opportunity to be a part of decision making that involves them and their students. Teachers know their students' needs best because they are interacting with them most. When decision making excludes teacher input, there becomes a divide between teachers and leaders. Utilizing teachers as leaders bridges this gap, allowing for teacher voice to be a part of the decision-making process and directly affect student achievement. Teachers are professionals and they feel valued when they can apply their knowledge to benefit their students and do their job effectively.

Objectives of the Project

To maintain stability for students, increase achievement, and develop a culture of trust and collegiality, the project will aim to reduce teacher attrition at the school level. A mentorship program, within the practices of distributive leadership, will support early-career teachers and develop the leadership skills and roles of mid-to-late career teachers. The objective is to increase teacher self-efficacy and collective efficacy through relationship building, collaboration, and personalized professional development.

Definition of Terms

Autonomy: Professional independence in education. The freedom to make decisions about what to teach and how to teach it.

Collective efficacy: The belief that through their actions, educators can make a difference in the education and achievement of students.

Distributive leadership: The expansion of leadership roles in schools, beyond those in formal leadership or administrative posts. Facilitating and supporting others in leading innovation and change (Harris, 2011).

Leavers: Those who are moderately or extremely unlikely to remain teachers for their entire career (Dell'Angelo & Richardson, 2019).

Movers: Those who attempt to cross state lines and teach in another state (Sutcher, et al., 2019).

Self-efficacy: The belief in oneself to have the ability to make changes that affect the outcomes of students.

Stayers: those who are extremely likely to remain teaching for the duration of their career (Dell'Angelo & Richardson, 2019).

Scope of the Project

This project will address teacher retention at the parochial school through effective mentorship for beginning teachers in grades PreK-8 . The project will focus on increasing leadership opportunities and training for established teachers, developing relationships between teachers, and personal selection of professional development to support mentee and mentor growth. The project is designed to fit within the framework of distributed leadership, providing more opportunities for teachers to grow and advance in their careers. Additionally, the project focuses on developing skills and strategies needed for supporting student faith formation. Teachers new to the profession will have the benefit of formal mentorship and coaching for 1 year, followed by an additional 2 years of formal coaching and goal setting.

This project will not address issues related to teacher attrition at the state or national level including funding, legislation, and transferable licensing. It will focus only on building supports within a given school. School leadership will be able to implement the program with support from teachers and teacher leaders, no additional administrative staff will be needed.

The success of this project is dependent on the established distributive leadership practices, funding, available resources (including mentors), professional development options, teacher buy-in, and follow-through with implementation.

Chapter 2

Introduction

Research shows that there are an increasing number of teachers leaving the profession. New teachers continue to leave during their early career years and teachers continue to retire. Mid-career teachers are also leaving the profession at higher rates than they have left in the past. Teacher preparation programs report lower numbers of students entering the profession as well (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomoas, 2016). Student achievement depends on qualified, experienced teachers. With teacher attrition on the increase, and alternative teacher certification programs, student achievement is at risk. The following research addresses what can be done to prevent teacher attrition, and ultimately retain teachers for the betterment of students.

Adequate research is available surrounding the topics of teacher attrition and retention. Topics reviewed relevant to teacher attrition included who leaves, how attrition affects students, effects of turnover, factors outside of school leaders' control, working conditions for teachers, leadership quality, decision-making, autonomy, work-life balance, and burnout. Ultimately, a variety of supports are explored throughout the literature, but the most effective supports involve relationships built through induction and mentorship programs. Distributive leadership practices also contribute to teacher retention by supporting teacher growth as leaders and allowing teachers to contribute to decision-making that affects daily instructional practices and students.

Rationale

Those who go into the teaching profession plan to do so for a lifetime, but the realities of teaching are making the career not a sustainable option for many. Many teachers

enter the field for altruistic reasons and desire to make a difference in the lives of young people. They choose the profession for its variety and creativity, for love of subject matter, and because they were inspired by a great teacher that impacted their own life. Teachers are people who want to change the world through their daily contribution to the lives of others.

Teachers' motives for teaching are faced with a harsh reality. Societal demands have turned the work of teachers "increasingly directed towards assessment, exams, progress measures and preparation for review and inspection, and away from the more individualistic and creative aspects of the job" (Perryman & Calvert, 2020, p.5). Many teachers are finding that they cannot maintain a healthy work-life balance, citing work conditions and poor leadership as their main reasons for leaving.

Students are affected by the currently high attrition rates. Teacher turnover directly affects the achievement of students, but also affects all of the students and remaining teachers in a school. Funding to retrain and support new teachers is often reallocated from resources that would otherwise be directly used to support student growth (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckhoff, 2013). School cultures and relationships become less trustworthy when teachers are constantly leaving, remaining teachers carry the burden of supporting new teachers with curriculum, and students lose cultural stability.

Studies show that stress, lack of support, exclusion from decision-making, and lack of autonomy are all work conditions contributing to the increase in teacher attrition. Without the collaboration, support from leaders, and the opportunity to give input into decisions affecting their students, teachers feel hopeless in their efforts to impact the lives of their students. Teachers need the support of their fellow colleagues, school leaders, and

community members and also need the opportunity to exercise their professional knowledge and share their learned experience as teachers.

Teachers need support as they enter, and continue, in the teaching profession. "Mentoring, when effective, has the ability to transform and advance. Mentors have the ability to mold novice teachers into lifelong learners, continually reflecting and improving their practice. It is through this support and continual learning that educational systems will be able to retain effective educators and improve students' achievement" (Sowell, 2017, p.134). Mentoring is a two-fold opportunity. Mentees glean knowledge, experience, and relationships while mentors gain leadership skills through the opportunity to share their professional knowledge and skills. Mentorship relationships contribute to a greater community of collegiality, which is also fostered through distributive leadership.

The distributive leadership model, when effectively implemented by school leadership, allows for the distribution of leadership tasks among a variety of administrators and teacher leaders. Principals invest in teachers, nurturing their leadership skills, and collaborating with them to make decisions about the school. Most often, those involved in distributive leadership become more invested in their organization and contribute to organizational growth (Harris, 2011). Distributive leadership practices are linked to increased staff morale, which increases positive student behavior and achievement. Distributive leadership provides teachers with the opportunity to exercise their knowledge and experience as professionals in education. "When teachers are granted greater control over their work conditions through distributed leadership opportunities, they experience greater self-efficacy to collaborate with peers, which is also associated with greater job satisfaction levels" (Torres, 2019, p. 120). Teachers are affirmed through their contributions to

leadership and decision-making that leads to problem solving for their students and collaboration with other teachers.

Research

Attrition

Ongoing research to resolve the problem of teacher attrition has taken place for many years. Most recently there has been an increased concern over the number of teachers needed to teach the increasing student population in the United States. With the current attrition rate of 8%, Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, and Carver-Thomas examined the supply and demand of teachers and determined that current data and projections reveal teacher shortages across many states, communities, and subject areas could worsen if changes aren't made (2016) This research indicates that schools nationwide are hiring tens of thousands of teachers each year as a result of beginning and mid-career teachers leaving the profession (Sutcher, et al., 2016). New teachers, teachers with little or no preparation, math and science teachers, teachers in Title 1 schools, teachers of color and teachers in the south and midwest all have higher rates of leaving the teaching profession. Most teachers leaving the teaching profession relate their decision for leaving to their dissatisfaction with workplace conditions (Dell'Angelo & Richardson, 2019). Most commonly, teachers are expected to leave teaching as they age towards retirement and beginning teachers often leave within the first five years. More mid-career teachers are deciding to leave, however, creating higher attrition rates than have been recorded in the past (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019).

It is also important to note that along with teacher attrition, other factors have contributed to teacher shortages.

Based on the evidence available, the emerging teacher shortage appears to be driven

by four main factors: 1. Decline in teacher preparation enrollments; 2. An effort to

return to pre-recession course offerings and class sizes resulting in lower pupil-

teacher ratios; 3. Increasing student enrollment; and 4. High attrition (Sutcher, et al.,

2019).

Though change has been seen in the various factors, the largest factor in teacher demand is

attrition. "Reducing attrition would actually make a greater difference in balancing supply

and demand than any other intervention" (Sutcher, et al., 2016).

As we examine teacher attrition, we will take an in depth look at the "leavers," while

discussing aspects of "movers," and "stayers" within the field of education. Oftentimes,

statistics of "movers," those moving to a position in a different state, get interpreted as

"leavers" due to the fact that their credentials are not easily transferable. "Teachers earn

state-specific credentials while they are preparing, and candidates sometimes encounter a

variety of barriers in trying to transfer credentials to other states, creating steep transactions

costs for moving" (Sutcher, et al., 2016). This does help some states retain their teachers,

while making it difficult for other states who do not have many teacher candidates to recruit

across state lines. "At least 25% of teachers move across state lines, and they may encounter

difficulties transferring their certification and retirement benefits" (Podolskly, Kini, Darling-

Hammond, & Bishop, 2019, p. 7). These teachers may choose to take other positions in

education to avoid the difficult process of transferring their certification and credentials.

"Stayers," those choosing to remain in the teaching profession, are feeling the

negative effects of teacher attrition. The "stayers" take on the difficult and exhausting work

of retraining new staff, carrying the instructional burden, and having fewer resources.

Turnover often distributes resources intended for students and teachers toward new teacher training, onboarding, mentoring, and evaluating. When the lack of resources for teachers results in a lack of support, this can have a debilitating effect on teachers and in turn negatively affect their students (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wycoff, 2013).

In a survey by Dell'Angelo and Richardson, they found that those who do stay "spoke about the love and passion they have for teaching," found that there was "always something new to learn" (2019, p.177). Participants had always dreamed of being teachers and could "not see myself doing anything else." Stayers in the survey were motivate by the desire to "serve students and their families" despite having challenging classrooms (2019, p.177). In their conclusion, Dell'Angelo and Richardson accredit the teachers' desire to stay to their "strong sense of identity and commitment to their students and families" (2019, p.178).

The group that causes greatest concern, are the "leavers." Those leaving the teaching profession for reasons other than retirement, often leave because they are dissatisfied with the working conditions. "While salaries matter for retention as well as recruitment, working conditions are typically found to matter at least as much. Surveys of teachers have long shown that teaching conditions play a major role in teachers' decisions to change schools or leave the profession" (Sutcher, et al., 2016). Work conditions can be a result of community demographics and resources, decisions made at the national, state, and district level, but also all of the interactions and components of a teacher's daily work.

Effects

Teacher attrition has significant negative effects on student achievement. Until most recently, studies indicated that there was a correlation between teachers leaving and low

achievement, but it was unknown if teachers were leaving because of low achievement or if students weren't achieving because teachers were leaving (Ronfeldt, et al., 2013). In an extensive data study using years of statistics from the New York City Department of Education and the New York State Education Department, Rondfeldt, Loeb, and Wychoff found "some of the first empirical evidence that teacher turnover has a significant and negative impact on student achievement in both Math and ELA(2013, p.30). Moreover, teacher turnover is particularly harmful to the achievement of students in schools with large populations of low-performing and Black students"(Rondfeldt, et al., 2013, p.30).

Attrition contributes to the lack of qualified teachers and many schools are feeling the effects. Though there is much attention on the national teacher shortage, "little attention has been paid to the ways shortages manifest in local contexts, beyond generalized comments based on student demographics, geographic placement, and socioeconomic realities" (McHenry-Sorber & Campbell, 2019, p.24). At the local level, schools are creatively staffing teachers so that learning opportunities continue. However, not all staff members are highly qualified or even qualified to teach. "Last year we had one person in both the middle school and the high school, one individual that was certified in math. Everyone else that was a math instructor was not totally certified in mathematics. You could imagine what that has done to the instruction at the higher-level mathematics, for our students" (McHenry-Sorber & Campbell, 2019, p.18). Providing extra support for uncertified or alternatively trained teachers relocates resources that would otherwise contribute to student achievement.

Turnover not only affects the achievement of students of teachers who leave, "Turnover negatively affects the students of stayers---those who remain in the same school from one year to the next" (McHenry-Sorber & Campbell, 2019, p.31). This broader-than-expected impact suggests a variety of implications. "One possibility is that turnover

negatively affects collegiality or relational trust among faculty; or perhaps turnover results in loss of institutional knowledge among faculty that is critical for supporting student learning" (McHenry-Sorber & Campbell, 2019, p.32). Students need strong and steady teachers, invested over time to increase achievement.

In the competition for educational investment, the evidence points strongly to the importance of a strong stable teaching force. Preventing and eliminating teacher shortages so that all children receive competent, continuous instruction in every community every year is, in a 21st century economy, essential for the success of individuals as well as for our society as a whole (Sutcher, et al., 2019, p.9). Students need teachers in order to achieve, and our nation needs teachers to continue the advancement of our society through its youth.

Outside Factors

With an increase of state-level initiatives to reduce teacher shortages, administrators at the district level continue to feel as though staffing situations our outside of their control. Administrators, depending on their geographic location, experience inadequate teacher benefits and pay, high district poverty rates, community opioid use, and a general lack of respect for the teaching profession, all of which effect the teaching and learning in their schools (McHenry-Sorber & Campbell, 2019). At the local level, schools are not able to make their own decisions about hiring and are confined to work within the state's hiring and transferring policies.   Some administrators also find that it is difficult to attract teachers to rural communities that are geographically isolated and have poor community infrastructure (McHenry-Sorber & Campbell, 2019). Many of these factors leave administrators seeking alternative approaches to teacher recruitment and retention.

Administrators, desperately needing qualified teachers, feel conflicted about participating in initiatives that reduce teacher preparation or make the occupation less appealing to adequately trained teachers. Initiatives such as "Grow Your Own" and teacher-in-residence programs come with a variety of negative effects. Hiring teachers from these programs in turn supports the program, while putting a strain on the district and negatively affecting students and teacher career experiences (McHenry-Sorber & Campbell, 2019).

With an increase in inexperienced teachers, the need for administrative support increases and is often not available, in turn increasing the teacher attrition. One participant in the study by McHenry-Sorber & Campbell expressed concern that "this model actually exacerbates the teacher shortage because he believes that it undermines the teaching profession and increases attrition out of the profession given the difficulties of the positions in his district" (McHenry-Sorber & Campbell, 2019, p.19). Yet, teachers in these programs are hired in desperation and fill classrooms that would otherwise be empty. Funds originally allocated for subject area growth for students get reallocated to support underqualified teachers in those subject areas. The work of administrators shifts to accommodate non-certified teachers, mentoring them and observing them more often, reducing the time for other administrative duties that support student growth.

Working Conditions

Much research has pointed to dissatisfaction with working conditions as the main cause of teacher attrition. Inversely, "As one would expect from the literature, better-paid teachers who have more positive working conditions are more likely to stay in the profession and in their schools" (Berry, et al., 2021, p.5). Multiple aspects of the teaching profession fall under the category of work conditions. In their study of the importance of teaching and

learning conditions, Berry, Bastian, Darling-Hammond and Kini examined associations between working conditions and school growth. In their study, working conditions included teacher and school leadership, professional learning and collaboration, teachers' efficacy, instructional resources, time for teaching, student conduct, physical environment, and student assessment data. These areas all contribute to student and school growth (2021). Teacher working conditions are student learning conditions, so when conditions are not right for teaching, students' learning is affected.

The quality of school leadership is a high predictor of teacher departure rates. When considering all of the work-condition variables, school leadership is one of the greatest influences on teachers' stress levels (Farmer, 2020). Teachers in a variety of studies have expressed a range of support from varying administrators, but some "found their school leaders to be uninterested or too busy"(Wang, Straubhaar, & Ong, 2020, p.10). The same sentiments are sited regarding professional development; teachers were "frustrated at the variability in the quality of their professional development and the lack of administrative support they received as new teachers" (Wang, et al, 2020, p.9). When professional development does not match the needs of the teachers or students, it creates a disconnect between teachers and administrators and teachers do not feel supported.

Principals guide professional learning and school improvement. They "often serve as gatekeepers to teacher involvement in decision-making, collaboration, and instructional support---all conditions that lead teachers' collective efficacy" (Berry, et al., 2021, p. 7). Focus groups in the research study by Berry, Bastien, Darling-Hammond and Kini found that leadership should not be controlling but should allow teachers to be treated as professionals. "Good principals build trust and trust teachers to lead"(Berry, et al., 2021, p. 7). Good

leadership supports teachers in leadership growth. Those who are unsupported are more likely to leave.

Support for school leadership is equally as important. The constant battle of teacher attrition for those with few resources can be exhausting and can contribute to leadership attrition. "The practical implications of focusing attention and resources on both principal and teacher turnover is vital, particularly for achieving equity in low-performing schools that serve low-income students of color" (DeMathews, Knight, & Shin, 2022, p.101). Not surprisingly, teacher attrition increases with leadership turnover. More professional development and support are needed for leaders so that improvements to the working conditions and learning conditions in schools contribute to the equal opportunity for all students to learn (DeMathew, et al., 2022).

Support from leaders needs to reflect the school discipline policy as well. Student discipline issues and support throughout the discipline process affect teacher retention. Teachers are more likely to stay in schools that maintain a safe environment and have consistent enforcement of behavior norms by teachers and principals (Berry, et al., 2021). "Without significant training in teaching high-needs students, teachers struggle to contribute to consistent and equitable school discipline policies and practices. We found that such practices are a key factor in teacher retention" (Berry, et al., 2021, p. 9). The ability to manage behavior and the support from administrators through the discipline process "are major predictors of both teacher retention and student achievement gains" (Berry, et al., 2021, p. 9).

Decision Making

Teachers desire to be a part of the decision-making process, especially when decisions are impacting their students or school policy. Teachers' perceptions regarding lack of autonomy, increased micromanagement, and decreased decision-making have a negative influence on teacher retention (Sulit, 2020). In a recent case study by Baker, Hill, Portwood, Smith-Harrah, and Sutherland, a very successful principal from Pennsylvania, earning awards for excellent leadership, recruitment, and retention, was hired to reduce teacher turnover in a school in Southern California (2022). In an attempt to reduce teacher stress and turnover, the principal eliminated committee work. In effect, teacher turnover doubled over the course of three years. In the case study, "teachers voiced that they do not feel that their input or voice is heard regarding instructional decisions. In addition, there was a lack of communication from administration and opportunity for leadership roles" (Baker, et al., 2022, p. 386). Teacher voice matters. "The amount of voice that teachers have in decision-making on issues directly affecting their ability to do their job well also contributes to teacher satisfaction" (Podolsky, et al., 2019, p.20).

Accountability Agenda

With an increased focus on standardized testing and pay that depends on student test scores, teachers' experience limited autonomy. According to Perryman and Calvert, "Our data suggest it is not just the issue of the workload, and the stressful environment (that caused teacher attrition) but the nature of the work, the accountability agenda that deprived teachers of the creativity and variety for which some had joined the profession" (2020, p. 14). In another study, the "most surprising finding was that even teachers who left in primary grade levels indicated "high stakes testing" as a job-related stressor that caused them to leave (Baker, et al., 2022, p.382). Diliberti, Schwartz, and Grant, in a study about teacher attrition related to stress, concluded that leavers who left for private school jobs cited "better work

climates and more control over what they teach" as an attribute they liked about their new job (2021, p.12). Others in new positions also cited flexibility as a positive attribute.

Autonomy

Limited autonomy and target driven culture coincide. The more time a teacher spends on preparing students to reach specific testing or curriculum targets, the less time is available for teacher choice and individual creativity in teaching. Teacher retention was negatively related to using student assessment data to impact instruction. It may be that schools with a strong focus on using test data were those in which there was significant pressure to raise scores---often the case in low-scoring schools that serve concentrations of students in poverty. This pressure may encourage or be coincidentally associated with higher teacher attrition. In the national Schools and Staffing Surveys, the most frequently cited reason for leaving the profession in 2012, during the No Child Left Behind era, was dissatisfaction with student testing and accountability (Berry, et al., 2021, p. 5)

Teacher retention is clearly affected by state and federal accountability systems. Teachers are assessed on student achievement, while not guaranteed the appropriate support to prepare students. "Of the teachers who left the profession after the 2011-12 school year for reasons other than retirement, approximately 25% reported that dissatisfaction with the influence of school assessment and accountability measures on the teaching or curriculum was extremely or very important in their decision to leave teaching" (Podolsky, 2020, p.22). For some teachers, accountability that links their annual evaluation to student achievement has damaging effects on teachers' mental health (Farmer, 2020). These teachers understand that not all students have support at home and basic resources that allow for students to be successful at school.

Work-Life Balance

There is a multitude of research that supports stress as a significant contributing factor to teacher attrition. Statistics show that pay does not balance the amount of stress teachers experience. "A higher percentage of pre-pandemic teacher leavers than pandemic teacher leavers rate stress as a reason for leaving. In fact, a higher percentage of pre-pandemic teacher leavers indicated that the stress of teaching was not worth it (48 percent) than ranked insufficient pay (27 percent) as a reason for leaving" (Diliberti, et al., 2021, p.10). In a study examining early career teacher leavers, for "those who were no longer teaching or strongly considered leaving the field---the stress associated with the teacher appeared to be an important factor for their decision making" (Dell'Angelo & Richardson, 2019, p.178). One respondent stated, "Every teacher I've ever met is highly stressed, overworked, and struggling to get through the year" (Dell'Angelo & Richardson, 2019, p.178). Most respondents anticipated future burnout, noticing that a healthy work-life balance was not possible. Others noted that they simply did not have the passion needed to balance the stress of their teaching position.

Many teachers leave the teaching profession to improve their work-life balance. Many go into teaching anticipating work outside of the classroom such as grading and meetings, but do not understand the full extent of the workload (Perryman & Calvert, 2020). Teachers will often relocate to jobs with fewer demands and less work in exchange for less pay and fewer benefits, as long as it provides a favorable work-life balance. (Diliberti, et al., 2021). Ultimately, leavers are looking for more flexibility, less work, and less time spent away from the job on work activities.

Teachers experience burnout when there is a mismatch between the demands and responsibilities of their job and the resources available to them (Hurley, 2022). Hurley concludes, from his evaluation of the growing number of teacher burnout cases, "Burnout cases can no longer be ignored, and the effects of burnout syndrome (damages psychological, emotional, and physical conditions) cannot be easily overcome unless adequate measures are taken to reduce chronic stress, such as continuing professional education and instituting collaboration structures" (2022, p.25). When teachers experience burnout, they are more often absent and less productive in their teaching. The illness, exhaustion, and physical effects related to stress contribute to teacher attrition.

Teachers go into the profession with the best of intentions, with great hopes of making a difference in the lives of their students. Even for teachers who have been adequately prepared, their expectations of the career did not match the actual workload. "It is not as if they were not aware that teaching was going to be demanding, however they feel that the demands of the job outstrip their capacity to adapt" (Perryman & Calvert, 2022, p.17). Many of the teachers in this particular study didn't feel as though they were supported well as they started in the profession. "Many of our sample thought that they could cope with the workload, but lack of support and the target accountability culture seemed to be worse than they had thought and led to many leaving, and further numbers considering it." It is clear that support is necessary for teachers, especially in their early years of teaching. Teachers need support from administrators, collaborative professional development, and the opportunities to contribute to decision making and leadership. "Beyond resources, teachers' plans to stay in teaching and their reasons for actually having left are strongly associated with how they feel about administrative support, collegial opportunities, and teacher input into decision-making. When these elements are present, retaining teachers is much easier" (Sutcher, et al., 2019,

p.6). Strong relationships with colleagues create a sense of belonging and contribute to a support system for teachers. "When positive relationships and collegial support are missing, the likelihood of teachers moving or leaving increases" (Farmer, 2020, p.43). Increased collegial support, along with support from leaders, contribute to trusting work relationships that allow teachers to grow and stay in the teaching profession.

Support

Supporting teachers is essential for teacher retention. Researchers analyzed data from Michigan related to retention rates, available supports, teachers' perceptions of the supports, and what supports were associated with teacher retention (Lindsay, Jiang, Wan, & Gnedko Berry, 2021). Their findings conclude that four supports contribute positively to overall teacher retention: a mentoring program for new teachers, regular supportive communication with school leaders, an orientation to the school, and opportunities for teachers to set goals in their evaluations. The following section provides a review of the literature surrounding teacher support. Many of the supports fall into the four categories previously mentioned, but a larger variety of supports are discussed in literature. No matter the support, it is important that when supports are implemented they are useful to teachers, provide efficacy, and lead to personal satisfaction.

Successful, well-designed induction programs are linked to teacher retention, increased professional growth and improved student learning (Podolsky, et al., 2019). After districts hire teachers, strong induction and support for novice teachers during the first years in the professional can increase their retention. The first few years of a teacher's career are formative ones as teachers make the leap from preparation to practice. Depending on the amount and quality of support they encounter in their first teaching job, new teachers can

grow into highly competent ones---or they may develop counterproductive approaches or leave the profession entirely (Podolsky, et al., 2019, p. 16).

Beginning teachers with the support of an induction program are more able to maintain a positive classroom atmosphere. This leads the teacher to a feeling of success and higher sense of self-efficacy, in turn creating greater job satisfaction (Shuls & Flores, 2020). Most well-designed induction programs include the key component of mentorship.

Mentoring

Mentorship provides a teacher with a companion to walk beside them as they begin the teaching profession. In their investigation into teacher support, Reitman and Karge concluded that "the most helpful thing that participants found was someone to walk alongside them and support them. Every answer mentioned a relationship with a mentor or colleague" (2019, p. 14). "The mentor serves in the role of a guide on the side to fellow educators, creating self-reflection and inspiring lifelong learning" (Reitman & Karge, 2019, p. 15). Having a mentor allows new teachers to experience on-the-job growth and develop resilience. "Novices are becoming more competent and capable because their growth and learning is contextually-relevant and is occurring under the guidance of more experienced teachers and/or administrators" (Morettini, Luet, & Vernon-Dotson, 2020, p. 56). The guidance provided through mentorships promotes a safe and trusting environment where teachers learn.

Successful mentorships are intentional about developing relationships, supporting teachers in their content area, collaborating with other teachers, and providing enough interaction between mentor and mentee. Mentoring can be formal or informal, but frequency is important for success (Wang, et al., 2020). In a study where teachers were given open topic mentoring time, teachers and mentors journaled what topics were discussed during

mentoring. Cavan, Durodoye, Zhang, and Bock found that "Teachers participating in fewer than 4 hours of mentoring meetings a month might need additional support. Additionally, topics frequently covered in the mentoring meetings might suggest areas for more formal professional development" (2021, p.16).

In regard to mentorship programs, "The keys to success include having a mentor teacher in the same subject area, common planning time with teachers in the same subject, and regularly scheduled collaborations with other teachers" (Shuls & Flores, 2020, p. 13). Relationships between mentors and mentees increase retention, foster positive attitudes and feelings of efficacy, and increase overall job satisfaction. "The mentor-mentee relationships help to create a positive effect on student success and to develop a renewed professional perspective for the mentor" (Shuls & Flores, 2020, p.13). Students benefit from these relationships because through them, new teachers gain classroom management and instructional skills, and have the opportunity to develop problem-solving skills through the guidance of a mentor.

Collaboration

Teachers feel valued when they are given space to share their expertise, collaborate, and solve problems related to their students. "When teachers are supported in collaborating and doing what works for children, they feel more efficacious in the work" (Podolsky, et al., 2019, p. 18). According to Hurley, "Teachers who collaborate with their colleagues are able to overcome professional hurdles, trust each other with their capabilities and expertise, and share similar problems and experiences; furthermore, this leads to higher levels of engagement, vigor, and dedication" (2021, p.24). When leaders establish collaborative support for teachers, they create a built-in support system. This is important for all teachers,

but especially for early career teachers. "Mutually supportive, and trusting personal, professional, and peer relationships are important in beginning teachers' capability to become resilient in the face of challenging and stressful circumstances and situations" (Morettini, et al., 2020, p.58). The collaborative support system also reduces chronic stress, "The growing number of teacher burnout cases can no longer be ignored, and the effects of burnout syndrome cannot be easily overcome unless adequate measures are taken to reduce this chronic stress, such as continuing professional education and instituting collaborations structures" (Hurley, 2021, p.25). Collaboration develops supportive, purposeful working relationships that prevent burnout.

Personalized Professional Development

Teachers need professional development that they find useful. Shuls and Flores, when examining highly effective schools with high levels of teacher retention, discovered that an effective school "allows teacher voices to be heard when deciding what types of professional development to offer and even allows teachers to attend sessions that best fit their needs" (2020, p.12). The schools in the study understand that teachers working with the students have a better understanding of instructional and behavioral needs within the schools and allow them to provide input as to what professional development is most needed. This personalized professional development approach is used by the three districts in the study "to keep teachers engaged, encouraged, growing as professionals, and most importantly, as valuable members of their district" (Shuls & Flores, 2020, p. 13). This kind of build-your-own professional development honors teachers as professionals and provides professional development that is useful to teachers.

In other studies, various types of professional development led to teacher retention. "Certain aspects of teachers' professional learning identified in survey items were associated with greater teacher retention: these included professional learning that is aligned with school improvement plans, that encourages reflection on practice, and that offers opportunities for follow-up efforts that relate to specific training" (Berry, et al., 2021, p.7). Reflection and personal application tie value to professional development. Additionally, new teachers benefit from professional development relative to their community setting. "Through contextual familiarity, beginning teachers can begin to appreciate students' funds of knowledge and tap into community cultural wealth. To that point, the findings suggest more targeted professional development for beginning teachers about the communities in which they teach" (Morettini, 2020, p.58). When teachers know and understand the culture of their students, they will experience greater satisfaction and increased commitment to teaching.

Support for Leaders

School leaders need the skills to attract and retain teachers. Leaders need support to make decisions, foster positive school culture, and create learning communities. Improving principal preparation and providing professional development for leaders may contribute to greater success in teacher retention (Podolsky, et al., 2019). When school leaders have the knowledge and skills to support teachers effectively, teachers will want to stay, especially when they feel valued and effective. "The strong effects of principals on student learning are accomplished substantially by principals' ability to foster collegial learning and collective action among teachers. Principals who understand how to create conditions for distributed leadership in their schools and who value and know how to involve teachers in shared decision making have a strong, positive impact on both teacher effectiveness and teacher retention" (Berry, et al., 2021, p.11). Leaders with knowledge of distribute leadership, and

experience in implementing it, can foster positive school culture and creative learning communities through its implementation.

Distributive Leadership

Distributive leadership is currently at the forefront of leadership models. Effective principals foster the conditions in which distributive leadership can flourish, developing leadership capacity within teachers and sharing leadership responsibilities among staff members (Harris, 2011). Research demonstrates the "importance of teacher leadership for developing collective efficacy, and we found that high concentrations of expert teachers in a school are associated with strong student achievement growth" (Berry, et al., 2021, p. 12). Utilizing teachers as leaders also provides career advancement opportunities for teachers. "Opportunities to assume leadership roles and share expertise appear associated with teachers' interests in remaining in the profession" (Podolsky, et al., 2019, p.12). Sulit, in a study examining the qualities of distributive leadership that support teacher retention, noted that "Teacher experiences with distributive leadership suggests the need for educators to have input in making decisions that directly impact their work environment" (2020, p. 15). Allowing teachers to have input in decision-making and use their skills increases their commitment to the organization and their desire to stay.

To develop teacher leaders, principals need to focus on developing capacity in others. This involves relinquishing some control, and trusting others to do what they are trained and experienced in doing (Harris, 20110). "Our focus group interviews reinforced the fact that principal leadership matters most in the cultivation of teachers' own leadership." "Good principals build trust and trust teachers to lead" (Berry, et al., 2021, p.7). Some teachers desire to lead through mentoring and coaching colleagues and those new to the profession.

Others are interested in utilizing "time and space to create new models of teaching and learning" (Berry, et al., 2021, p.7). Teachers also express interest in leading professional development, developing curriculum, and meeting the needs of students and the community.

When districts value teacher voice in decision-making, professional development can directly meet students' needs. "Teachers determine and facilitate professional development topics because teachers are the ones closest to students, have the best understanding of the classroom, know the areas in which they would like to grow, and are aware of what they would like to know more about" (Shuls & Flores, 2020, p.6). Allowing teachers to participate in the decision-making process, lead, and have a voice, empowers teachers to help their students achieve, and contributes to a teacher's sense of accomplishment.

School Level Retention

Teacher retention is important for the future of our nation. "Effectively retaining teachers is crucial to making sure there are enough well-prepared and committed teachers to staff all of our nation's schools and that the teachers in our classrooms have the time and experience to effectively serve all students" (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019, p.19). There are a variety of ways to address teacher retention for the benefit of students. Work needs to be done at the national level, state level, district level, and within schools. Administrators and school leaders have the most control over retention efforts within their schools.

Research suggests that supports at the school level include implementation of distributive leadership, developing strong mentoring and induction programs, mentoring by a trained mentor in the same field, learning opportunities for beginners in key areas of need, classroom visits, developing communities of collaboration, providing time for professional

development, and implanting time for teachers to plan together (Sutcher, et al., 2019; Harris,2011). Meanwhile, workplace conditions play a large role in a teacher's decision to leave or stay in the teaching profession. "Researchers have identified a number of workplace conditions associated with teacher's decision to stay or leave, including the quality of instructional leadership, school culture, collegial relationships, time for collaboration and planning, teachers' decision-making power, experiences with professional development, facilities, parental support, and resources (Sutcher, et al., p. 7). With this data, decisions can be made at the school level to mitigate teacher attrition and retain valuable teachers that can contribute to their students' achievement.

Summary

A large number of teachers across all experience levels are leaving the teaching profession, reducing student achievement at higher rates than in the past (Sutcher, et al, 2016). Those who are leaving claim that working conditions are keeping teachers from job satisfaction, those who are moving find it difficult to transfer credentials, and those who are staying are left to support students, curriculum, and a consistent flow of new teachers (Sutcher, et al, 2016). Leaders are finding it difficult to support teachers with few benefits to attract them and a lack of overall respect for teachers. Government initiatives designed to fill classroom with teachers contribute to the problem by hiring those who are less prepared, in turn making the profession less attractive for those who are properly trained and qualified. Education funds are redirected to support underqualified teachers and the role of school leaders focuses on supporting teachers as opposed to directly increasing student achievement (McHenry-Sorber & Campbell, 2019).   Few teachers are entering the profession, and with those leaving, there is increased attrition, a lack of qualified teachers.

Teacher work conditions are the contributing factors of teacher attrition or retention (Dell'Angelo & Richardson, 2019). Teachers look to school leaders to produce environments that encourage collaboration, efficacy, relevant professional development, and leadership opportunities. When teachers collaborate, develop relationships, contribute to decision making, and are given the opportunity to use their professional skills and experience, they are more fulfilled in the work and have greater job satisfaction (Farmer, 2020; Berry, et al., 2021). Increased fulfillment and satisfaction lead to higher retention. When these conditions do not exist, the opposite is true; teachers are more likely to leave the profession.

Teachers are experiencing burnout and are struggling to maintain a sustainable work-life balance. Many teachers grow weary from the persistent accountability agenda and find that a constant focus on measuring student growth reduces the creativity and autonomy a teacher can have. The joy that fueled the entrance into teaching is replaced with accountability measures that hold teachers accountable for learning conditions that are outside of their control (Hurley, 2022). Many teachers lack resources and are affected by students' needs, poverty, community opioid use, and other outside factors (Berry, et al., 2021).

Teachers need support on many different levels. Nationally, teachers need more flexibility transferring credentials. Locally, teachers need better pay and consistent requirements for entering and remaining in the profession (Berry, et al., 2021). At the school level, leaders need to support teachers in various ways. Research finds that supporting teachers through effective induction, mentoring programs, and collaborations increases teacher retention (Reitman & Karge, 2019; Morettini, et al., 2020). Teachers also benefit from personalized professional development that allows for choice in one's needs and growth areas, allowing for autonomy and voice (Shuls & Flores, 2020).

Distributive leadership allows for leaders to support teachers in providing opportunities for teacher leadership, input on decision making, collaboration, and the use of teacher knowledge and professional experience (Harris, 2011). When teachers' skills are valued and utilized through distributive leadership, student achievement increases and teachers become more committed to the organization and desire to stay (Berry, et al., 2021).

Conclusions

To increase teacher retention at the school level, leaders should implement distributive leadership practices, providing leadership opportunities, supporting the development of leadership skills and honoring teacher voices. Teacher leadership roles might include coaching, mentoring, leading a grade level or curriculum team, or other roles related to a teacher's skill or the needs of the school. With teacher leaders in place, more collaboration can take place between teachers. Working in grade level teams, curriculum area teams, professional learning teams or communities creates a collaborative work environment that allows teachers to carry the burden of work together, supporting one another.

Induction programs contribute to teacher retention. When teachers feel like they belong on a staff, and understand programs, expectations, and curriculum, they are more likely to stay. Induction programs allow teachers to feel supported from the very beginning, offering the opportunity for new staff to feel comfortable, supported and valued.

Teachers involved in mentoring programs as mentees or mentors are more likely to stay in the teaching profession. Mentorship builds relationships between experienced teachers and novice teachers. Novice teachers acquire a source of experiential knowledge, wisdom, listening, and problem solving. Mentors in return develop leadership skills and gain

satisfaction for being valued professionally. Mentorships contribute to the development of collegiality, collaboration, and trusting relationships.

Teachers benefit from professional development that can be applied directly to the work that they do. Personalized professional development contributes to job satisfaction for teachers because it allows teacher to learn and apply what they learn directly to their teaching or professional goals. Often times, professional development is not fitting for all who attend. This creates a disconnect between teachers and leaders, a sense that administrators lack the knowledge of what is effective or useful or a lack of respect for a teacher's time. Professional development related to the School Improvement Plan is found to be most successful as full staff professional development.

In conclusion, induction and mentorship programs surrounded by meaningful distributive leadership practices will promote teacher retention at the school level. Students will reap the benefits of teacher mentorships and teacher leaders. The increased collaboration and support structures will produce positive collaborative relationships, lighter workloads for teachers, and higher achievement for students. Stability created through retaining teachers will reduce the workload of teachers and administrators alike, providing more opportunity to invest in the needs of students.

Chapter 3

Introduction

With teacher attrition on the rise, it is important to develop solutions at the school level by supporting teachers through mentorship, providing leadership opportunities as mentors, and promoting collegiality and collective efficacy. Implementing a mentorship program within a distributive leadership model will contribute to collaboration, instructional improvement, systems of support, opportunity for teacher voice, the development of personalized professional development, and most importantly, student achievement. All of these aspects promote teacher retention for early-, mid-, and late-career teachers. Additionally, mentorship relationships are intended to "create a positive effect on student success and to develop a renewed professional perspective for the mentor" (Reitman & Karge, 2019, p. 15).

Upon examining schools with successful teacher retention, Sowell (2016) noted that mentors find that there are three important aspects to mentorship programs. Programs must build relationships, increase classroom management, and improve instructional practices. Teachers in the programs need support as they are navigating classroom management. "Support must be provided beginning on the first day of teaching and continue until the teacher is able to demonstrate that he or she has reached the impact level in all six areas" (Reitman & Karge, 2019, p. 17). The six areas are those that must be present to encourage a teacher to remain in the profession: individual relationships, pedagogical knowledge, teacher perceptions of professional competence, mentoring, professional learning, and reflection (Reitman & Karge, 2019).

Many mentors find that new teachers lack confidence. In a study by Sowell examining mentors' practices in supporting first-year teachers, mentors recognized that "new teachers struggle with building relationships while setting boundaries for students" (2017, p. 133). Mentor teachers attribute the lack of confidence to be the cause of classroom management issues. New teachers need mentors to walk beside them, accept them, and provide a safe space to make mistakes and grow. Reitman and Karge found that "The most helpful thing that participants found was someone to walk alongside them and support them" (2019, p. 14). Mentorships create acceptance. Findings demonstrate that the "feeling of acceptance from colleagues and administrators through mentoring helps to create an overall sense of acceptance from the larger school and community, hence building beginning teacher resilience" (Mosley, Playfair, Weppner, Balat, & Mccarthy, 2022, p.58). Acceptance and support provide an effective environment for new teachers to learn and grow.

Mid-career teachers need opportunities to grow as well. "Our findings suggest that mid-career teachers are a group of teachers that are easily overlooked: largely committed, skilled and intending to stay in the profession, but often feeling undervalued, juggling for priorities and lacking opportunities for development." (Booth, Coldewell, Muller, Perry, & Zuccullo, 2021, p. 21). Providing opportunities for teachers to take on leadership roles as mentors allows them to use their expertise to help others grow in the profession. "Both new and experienced teachers view mentorship as beneficial for their practice, a finding which extends the understanding that mentorship may benefit more than just beginning teachers." (Mosley, et al., 2022, p. 14). As mid-career teachers grow as mentors, they gain a desire for ongoing training to improve their practice. Sowell found that mentors "voiced their desire for ongoing training and support in ways to create mentoring relationships as well as strategies

for classroom management and instruction" (2017, p.133). Providing mid-career teachers leadership opportunities as mentors provides opportunities for professional growth.

The following project aims to increase teacher retention in early-career teachers by providing support, while increasing retention in mid-career teachers by providing leadership opportunities. The project components will be explained in the first section entitled project components. An evaluation of the project will follow, discussing criteria for success. The project conclusions will be stated and, finally, the plan for implementation will be presented.

Project Components

Administrators can support novice teachers by developing and implementing strategies that meet their needs and help them cope with the issues that most beginning teachers have. (Shuls & Flores, 2020). To know the needs of the newest teachers at Hudsonville Christian School, a needs assessment was created and administered to find and assess the needs of teachers in their first and second years of teaching (See Appendix A). With no current mentoring program in place, the needs of the new teachers were presented to the curriculum director and superintendent of the school. The director of curriculum and instruction (in her sixth month in a newly created position) has most recently developed a coaching program for teachers in their first year, which addresses some of the needed instructional support through the use of Priority Skills Goals. The program has been developed around a beginning teacher coaching guide that focuses on excellent results "built on simple, straightforward instruction and classroom management," while not overwhelming new teachers with too much information (Jackson, 2017, p. 21).

The coaching involves meeting with new teachers every six weeks to set and evaluate goals in the areas of classroom management, student engagement, behavior management,

delivery of a basic lesson, and creating instructional goals (See Appendix B). Upon reviewing the new teacher needs, it was found that teachers need additional support in the areas of technology, student behavior and academic expectations, parent communication, student and staff policies, extracurriculars, teacher expectations (lesson planning, dress code, workday) and student faith formation. Some of these needs can be met during the induction of new staff, while others are addressed in the mentorship program.

Research suggests a two-tiered mentoring program to best meet the needs of new teachers. New teachers benefit from being assigned an instructional mentor & job-like mentor. "Beginning teachers are assigned an instructional mentor that is a curriculum expert and provides instructional support as well as a job-alike mentor that is based in the new teacher's home school and provides more day-to-day support. This two-tiered system works to provide multiple levels of support to beginning teachers" (Shuls & Flores, 2020, p. 13). In the instance of Hudsonville Christian School, the instructional mentorship needs are met through coaching by the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, but an additional job-alike mentor is needed to support new teachers with daily needs, and daily application of the Priority Skills Goals.

Additionally, teachers at Hudsonville Christian School expressed the need for support with the faith formation of their students. Guidance from the Director of Faith Formation along with two faith formation resources (Keeley, 2010; Keeley & Keeley, 2011) were used to develop a program schedule that aligns faith formation integration with priority skills (coaching). This program allows mentors to focus on supporting mentees with ongoing skill development and student faith formation simultaneously (See Appendices C and E). Needs that were not met by either the coaching or mentorship program were added to the induction

portion of the process and can be addressed in the summer induction before the beginning of the school year.

Research demonstrates that mentoring programs that provide a minimum of four hours of support to new teachers are most successful in promoting teacher retention. "Teachers participating in fewer than 4 hours of mentoring meetings a month might need additional support. Additionally, topics frequently covered in mentoring meetings might suggest areas for more formal professional development" (Cavan, et al., 2021, p.16). Mentees, when meeting with mentors during one common planning time each week, will fulfill a minimum of three hours per month. When combined with one hour of coaching support monthly, mentees will receive an appropriate mentorship duration for support. Furthermore, the interactions between mentee, mentor, and instructional coach will guide the mentee in selecting personalized professional development. These details and others pertaining to the mentorship program are outlined in the Mentorship Program Guide (See Appendix D).

Formative feedback and professional development selection are also valuable aspects of the mentorship program. Districts with successful teacher retention offer "a professional development program that focuses on personal growth and individualized areas of need rather than a one-size-fits-all approach" (Shuls & Flores, 2020, p.12). Formative feedback is used throughout the mentorship program, assessing mentee growth and need for support (See Appendix C). Feedback will be used to determine appropriate professional development that meets the needs of the mentee teacher.

The mentor/mentee match is important to the success of the mentorship program. Mentees will be matched with a grade level team member who desires to be a mentor and has

the correct qualifications (See Appendix D). The mentor teacher may or may not be the team leader but will teach the same content to students of the same age and will be the job-like mentor for the teacher. The mentor, mentee, and other team members meet weekly during a combined planning time to participate in planning, student needs discussions, and professional development. The team structure is part of a distributive model of leadership and allows for "voice and opinions [to] play a key role in making district-level decisions" (Shuls & Flores, 2020). This structure within distributive leadership allows for leaders to glean expertise of teachers and know what is really going on in the classroom (Shuls & Flores, 2020). Additionally, through this structure, mid-career teachers gain opportunities to maintain leadership roles and share expertise in the roles of Team Leader or Mentor.

Mentor leadership development is important for the continued growth of mentors and mentees. "Mentors should receive formal training, as they do in all districts studied, to better understand the needs of new teachers, learn how to engage in productive and meaningful observations and conversations, and understand how to formulate and maintain non-evaluative relationships based on support and trust." Teachers find satisfaction through growth opportunities and those in education should "understand the desire for continued support and growth beyond teacher's initial years of instruction" (Mosley, et al.,2022, p.12). Professional development opportunities will be provided for mentors in the summer prior to the mentorship. They contain a review of mentor responsibilities and training in mentorship skills, priority skills development, and faith formation integration.

The induction, mentorship, and coaching program is designed to cohesively meet the needs of teachers. When new teachers are supported and flourish, students will receive the benefits of a positive learning environment and increased achievement.

It is interesting to note that the successful school districts participating in this study often do not intentionally develop policies designed to retain teachers. Rather, they develop policies designed to make the school district more effective at meeting the needs of faculty and students. By focusing on creating a positive work environment, the district essentially kills two birds with one stone. They make the place more inviting for faculty and a better educational environment for students (Shuls & Flores, 2020, p. 14-15).

Meeting the needs of early and mid-career teachers, supporting them with personal professional development, mentorship, coaching, faith formation integration, and leadership opportunities will contribute to job satisfaction, teacher retention, and student achievement.

Project Evaluation

The success of the project will be demonstrated overtime with the calculation of teachers who stayed in the teaching profession. With hope of a positive change after implementation, a variety of measures can be taken over time. Teacher retention or attrition statistics at the school level will ultimately demonstrate the effectiveness the projects' implementation.

Additionally, a first-year exit survey can be used to monitor feedback of teachers that have participated in the onboarding, coaching, and mentoring provided by the project (See Appendix F). The survey includes an evaluation of the effectiveness of induction program, instructional coaching, and mentoring. It also provides the opportunities for teachers to make comments or suggestions about the program in general. Teacher feedback will assure that any necessary changes be made to the program to best suit the needs of teachers.

Project Conclusions

Increased teacher attrition causes a decrease in student achievement (McHenry-Sorber & Campbell, 2022). With consistently high attrition rates, action must be made at the school level to retain beginning and mid-career teachers. "Teacher attrition remains high, at 8% annually. Two-thirds of leavers depart before retirement age, most because of dissatisfaction with aspects of their teaching conditions" (29, p.30). Attrition happens for a broad range of reasons, most of which fall under the category of teaching conditions. "Teachers plans for staying in teaching and their reason for actually having left are strongly associated with how they feel about administrative support, collegial opportunities, and teacher input on decision making. When these elements are present, retaining teachers is easier" (Sutcher, et al., p.28). Retaining early and mid-career teachers creates greater stability and trust for leaders, teachers, and students.

Research demonstrates that teacher retention occurs through improved mentoring, inductions, working conditions, and career development (Berry, et al., 2021). "Strong induction and support for novice teachers can increase their retention, accelerate their professional growth, and improve student learning"(Podolsky, et al., 2019, p.30). If a teacher receives "mentoring, collaboration, and extra resources and is part of a strong teacher network, first-year turnover is cut by half" (Sutcher, et al., 2016, p.8). Personalized professional development contributes to teacher growth and retention as well. "Professional learning, properly structured, positively influences teacher retention and the kind of collective efficacy necessary for long-term school improvement" (Berry, et al., 2021, p.7). Teacher and mentor supports should be differentiated to meet the needs of teacher and mentors as well. Supporting teachers involves listening to teachers and does not involve one-size-fits-all practices (Baker, et al., 2022). Additionally, when teachers are given the opportunity to share their expertise and use their skills, they find satisfaction in their work. "Opportunities to

assume leadership roles and share expertise appear associated with teachers' interests in remaining in the profession" (Podolsky, et al., 2019, p. 28).

Schools should invest in mentoring, induction, coaching, and other professional learning opportunities in order to develop environments that support learning for teachers and students (Berry, et al., 2021). Fostering mentorship relationships provides opportunities for teacher growth, personal professional development, and increased collegiality. In a study by Reitman and Karge, "The mentor-mentee relationship helped to create a positive effect on student success and to develop a renewed professional perspective for the mentor" (2019, p.15). Furthermore, mentees and mentors provide professional and personal fulfillment to each other through reflective practices. "The mentor serves in the role of a guide to the side of fellow educators, creating a process of continual self-reflection and inspiring lifelong learning" (Reitman & Karge, 2019, p.15). Through the process, both are valued and grow professionally.

Distributive leadership provides a framework for teachers to take on leadership roles and develop collaborative relationships. "When teachers are granted greater control over their work conditions through distributed leadership opportunities, they experience greater self-efficacy to collaborate with peers, which is also associated with greater job satisfaction levels" (Torres, 2019, p. 120). When teachers are trusted to be professionals, are provided with support and personalized professional learning opportunities, and are valued for their expertise, they have fulfillment in their work and desire to continue in their career.

Plans for Implementation

Public schools in the state of Michigan are required by law to implement mentoring programs to support beginning teachers. Many private schools with fewer teachers and no

public funding have a more difficult time providing mentorship opportunities and resources for beginning teachers. Early and mid-career teachers lack the opportunity to be involved in mentorship programs. Teacher expertise often goes unused, and teachers are often left to feel unsupported. Implementing this program will provide leadership positions, demonstrating the value of teachers as leaders while providing support for new teachers.

As a result of conducting the needs assessment for first- and second-year teachers at Hudsonville Christian School, the need for support through mentorship became very visible. In sharing the data with the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, as well as the Superintendent, collaboration began for the implementation of a mentorship program alongside a coaching program that is in its early formation stages. Through the needs assessment, it was noted that teachers desire support with integrating the building blocks of faith into their teaching practices, not something that is typically taught in any teacher preparation program. The mentorship program includes faith formation support and could be adopted by any Christian school. At this particular school, it fulfills the purpose of listening to teachers and providing needed support. This mentorship program will be adopted by Hudsonville Christian Schools and will be implemented in the summer of 2023, beginning with new teacher induction and mentorship training.

Implementing a two-tiered mentorship program will supply needed support for early-career teachers, providing for the needs that came to light in the needs assessment. Additionally, mid-career teachers will gain a sense of value through the opportunity to share their expertise as mentors. Within the distributive leadership model, all teachers will have the opportunity to share their voices and provide input that guides leadership to make knowledgeable decisions that directly impact teachers and students. All of these varieties of support increase job satisfaction for teachers and reduce teacher attrition.

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Appendix A

Needs Assessment Questions and Data

Did you go through an induction process at HCS? What did it include?
We had a 2-day "introduction" to the policies and "set up" of the school, as well as introductions to certain staff members.
I think we were supposed to, but the presented got covid I think and so it was cancelled. You met me on my "induction" day when I was with my mom decorating my classroom. I think we also had a day for new hires where we did stuff with tax documents and the insurance policies and stuff. Oh! And for the library, Shelley trained me on the computer stuff for a week, but I don't think school made her, she just offered. If she hadn't done that I think it would've been really tough to acclimate to the library part of my job.
no
I am unsure of what this means, so no?
Yes. If I recall correctly, new teacher orientation happened at the end of June and was supposed to be two days long. One day got cancelled, rescheduled for August, and then never happened. From the one day we had orientation, I remember getting an insurance packet and going over some financial details, getting some HCS stuff (bag and coffee mug), receiving my key fab to the middle school, and getting a lot of papers.
Yes - it consisted of a days orientation covering benefits, beliefs, etc.
During the summer with Mary Broene, Justin Knot, Tricia Keepert, people from the business offices Beth, Lindsey H, and Steve Snyders, and all of the other new teachers for 2021-22. This meeting was held in the west connector at the elementary school. It included walking through a folder that included information about many of the things we would need to know prior to starting in the fall. I can't remember all that was in it, but here are a few things that were included. - Payment and Benefits & reimbursement type information - Foundational Faith (All belongs to God) documents for a reformed perspective - Emergency protocols explanation and evacuation type maps - Student handbook - staff handbook. (in print not really discussed) - Staff responsibilities outside the classroom like break duty, bus duty. - Brief COVID 19 expectations for masks and that sort of thing. - Information about our @4hcs accounts from Steve with passwords and shared digital folders for all staff. We got our keys for school and our classrooms.
We had two meeting with all the new staff coming to HCS the summer before we started. The first one was an overview of the school, handbook, etc. The second meeting was going

to be going over the biblical approach and "building blocks" that the school uses. It ended up getting canceled and was turned into a few PD days for the whole staff last year.

We had a new hire meeting prior to the school year starting. This included basic information of HCS, reviewing insurance/benefits, a tour of the elementary school. There was supposed to be a second day which was to include information on the faith statement but that was canceled due to illness.

Yes - 1 day of new teacher orientation

What would you like to have known more about before you started teaching?
I would like to have known more about the expectations regarding homework, discipline policies, extra-curriculars such as exploratories, etc. More of the "hands on" workings of the school would have been helpful.
It would've been nice to meet more of the middle school staff or have an introduction to the middle school building, because what stuff we did do to start the year was all at the elementary.
what essential standards were important to the school, what unplugged was,
I wish my college had a behavior management class.
1) TECHNOLOGY! How to use RenWeb (putting in grades), Securly (monitoring students chromebooks). 2) EXPECTATIONS! Expectations for students academically and behaviorally, the five P's (I was never informed about them but told to enforce them), a discipline process with set consequences for disrespectful/ disruptive behavior. Expectations for teachers! Dress code, what time we need to arrive at school and what time we can leave school, communication with parents, Google Classroom for Core-2 teachers?, committees we can/must be on (ex. Grandparents Day).
I would to have loved to known more about how the administration holds staff accountable to certain standards of teaching. For example, expectations for lesson planning, unit planning, assessments, and over all curriculum plans / choices. I would to have loved to know more about how to pursue help from administration, or seasoned teachers with any questions or difficulties. I would have loved a more formal introduction to the middle school staff, as well as the parent community (which i found to be way more hostile than I had anticipated). I would have loved to know more about what had been done in my grade level and content area prior to me coming. (I was not really given anything other than an outdated curriculum plan that wasn't even being followed).
I remember there being quite a few things that I wished I had known, but my teaching team was very supportive and answered a lot of the questions I had.

I knew going into my position that there was not a lot known about it. I did receive minimal information about what the person before me did but it was my understanding that they were looking for/ok with the position looking different than it did.
I didn't know what I didn't know. That's not a helpful answer, but there was a lot I felt like I had to figure out on my own. Could I tell you what exactly I would've liked to know? Not really.

Do you have a mentor (formal or informal)? If so, what is your relationship to that person?
Tyler was/is my mentor, usually in regards to expectations for certain events, policies, student discipline. He is a fellow 8th grade team member.
Lexi and Tyler, perhaps? I see them in team meetings and I've observed them in their classrooms. I'd put them at coworkers and friends for a relationship, is that what you mean by that?
No
I had one my first year teaching and it was Jenna Schramm (another third grade teacher at HCS) She is awesome and we are friends 😊
Tiffany is an informal mentor to me. She is my team leader, and I go to her with questions. She's always willing to help.
Not sure if I formally have a mentor, but Jen Large has been a very helpful person to me.
The closest thing I have to a mentor is Tyler, our 8th grade team lead. It is very informal in the sense that it is in writing that he is responsible to check in with me or work th rough a set of checklists throughout the year or anything like that. But, I talk with him frequently for feedback and direction.
Informal – my whole teaching team? I mostly leaned on our team leader for resources and advice. I wasn't ever told that I had a mentor... I just went to my team and used them as one.
I do not have a mentor.
Yes, Jackie became a natural mentor for me. In Jen Rysdam's role, she has become a natural mentor as well.

If you have a mentor, how much time do you spend with that person and what support do you receive from him or her?
Often quick questions answered/directions given, if needed on a daily basis, including things like Bible planning, changes in schedule, etc.
Oh, it's not that official. I doubt they'd even know I think of them that way. I don't know, we just chat sometimes and they let me steal some of their materials to tweak for Ela II. In terms of the library though, I'm on my own there.
I spent lots of time last year after school with Jenna as she was helping me learn the new curriculum.
Informally at least 30 minutes/day.
I spend two to three hours a month asking him for direction, advice, or help. The support I receive is very informal and is mostly seasoned advice through everyday conversation. The only other support I receive are regular reminders on grade level/school wide/ or community specific events and my responsibilities for those events, or just how to get involved with those events.
We meet as a team once a week. I pop into their classrooms often my first year for resources and advice.
Prep hours, before and after school, etc... lesson planning, classroom management support

Do you feel professionally supported in other ways? Please share details.
As we become more comfortable with each other, and build more of a "team" I am feeling more professionally supported through input and advice. I also feel that Chris A. is giving more feedback/ suggestions on curriculum, student issues/concerns, etc. than I received the first year here due to Lance Engbers being a temporary administrator last year.
Sure... I guess. This is my first job, so I don't have anything to compare it to. Actually, maybe more training would have been nice. Or just a curriculum to follow for teaching English? Some days I still don't feel like I really know what I'm doing.
yes, my team supports me, I feel that Jen and Chris are doing a great job this year encouraging us in our development/identification of essential standards, I appreciate the insight that Sara gives to brain stimulation activities to use in our classrooms.
Yes, through my relationships with Tricia and other staff at HCS.

Yes - I feel supported by my team leader as well as by administration.
I feel professionally supported by Chris Acterhof. Chris is far more present and available on a regular basis than our interim principal last year. Also, he has been working alongside Jen Rysdam to really give direction and focus to the curriculum planning aspect that was really missing last year. They have made substantial progress in getting the process moving in the right direction and meeting with staff to get a gauge of where we are individually and as a whole school.
This year (second year) I have been meeting with Jen Rysdam. This has been very helpful. She observed me a couple times and provided feedback which is very helpful.
I have requested and been granted permission to participate in trainings surrounding my profession.
Yes - other coworkers check in with me to ask how things are going outside of my grade-level team

If you don't have a mentor, do you feel that a mentor would be beneficial? What would you want your mentor to help you with?
yes, bounce ideas off each other, encouragement, constructive feedback about lessons or plans, help with making Bible curriculum more meaningful for students
Yes! Mentors are so important. I really think it would help with job satisfaction, retention, and consistency among educators. Personally, I would greatly look forward to speaking with, and collaborating with a mentor. The thought of sharing joys, struggles, stories, and ideas with a mentor excites me. Mentorship allows a safe space to listen, to learn; to grow! I believe mentorship time should be set into a new teacher's schedule; not before or after school.
Yes mentors are beneficial. I had a mentor at my previous school for 3 years.
I would really appreciate a formal mentor. If I had a mentor that was assigned to me and responsible for helping me assimilate and grow at HCSM during my first few years of teaching here I would like them to be available at regular and scheduled intervals of time to give me feedback on my ideas, model for me ways in which to be successful, and connect me with other staff who could help me grow in certain teaching skills, or to collaborate with.

I think it would have been nice to have an assigned person that knew if was their job to be my mentor. I would have felt less like a burden going to my team all the time. It also would have been nice to have someone check in on me every once in a while during my first year.

Not necessarily a mentor, but I could see there being a benefit to gathering with other Christian School counselors/social workers on a semi-regular basis. I did gather with a group of them at the CSA convention and it was helpful.

While I have Jackie as an informal mentor, it would be nice to have a more official mentor outside of my grade-level team. Sometimes there are other frustrations that I don't feel comfortable sharing.

Do you feel that assistance/discussion around faith formation, as part of a mentorship partnership, would be beneficial? If so, how could you see this affecting what you do?

If for the faith formation of the students, yes. By possibly giving us questions, resources, and suggestions of how to encourage student's spiritual growth, I believe we would all benefit because different experiences and perspectives in how to encourage spiritual growth help us be more effective in helping our students.

Yes, that would be great! I really want to incorporate more faith into my teaching without it coming off as contrived or shoehorned in. I feel like conversations about faith formation would make me more mindful of where I could include it in the classroom.

yes. I'd love to have someone else who could not only brainstorm ideas with me, but also actually help me put into practice ways to use the "required curriculum" (alongside other growth opportunities) to challenge students to think for themselves and more intentionally develop their faith. I would see this as an enhancement to my teaching.

Yes, discussing faith formation would be a great next step to include in our mentorship partnership at HCS. It would help to encourage me in my faith which in turn, would better assist me in growing my students' faith in God.

Yes! As a Christian Educator, we need to discuss faith formation in our individual lives, and in the lives of our students. Right now I do not know the expectation of faith formation into my music/ choir curriculum.

Yes - I would be better able to integrate faith and general christian practices into my daily lessons.

Discussion around faith formation would be a very beneficial component of a mentorship program at HCSM. I am assuming this is in the context of discussing student faith formation and not personal faith formation.
Understanding how HCSM as a whole is attempting to do faith formation, and how HCSM

has attempted to do faith formation in the past, would affect how I approach teaching Bible class certainly, but also what my role is for these students beyond being their academic teacher. As a result it would change how I assess students on reflection type questions and impact how intentional I might be to connect with students on matters beyond the academic during or outside of school hours.

I think it would be helpful especially in addressing some of the "hot topics." I think these are sensitive areas that as a new teacher, would be helpful to have some tips in how to handle questions or other things that come up in the classroom.

I don't feel like it would hurt but I'm not sure I could say how this would affect what I do.

Yes - but I don't know how it could affect what I do because I don't know what that would look like in a mentor/mentee partnership

In your opinion, what characteristics make a good mentor?
Someone who is faithful in checking in with how things are going, faithful in offering suggestions/guidance with school/student issues, and who is willing to answer questions and give input in how to be a more effective middle school teacher.
Someone trustworthy, supportive, and honest.
good listener, someone not afraid to speak the truth in love, a committed accountability partner, someone who offers a challenge and follows through with outcomes
Patience, understanding, caring, willingness to help others, kindness, selflessness, etc.
A good mentor is somebody who is an active listener, with experience in the field, has stories to share, advice to give, and ultimately comes along the mentee with passion and enthusiasm for supporting their goals and growth!
Helpful, non-judgmental, understanding, encouraging, organized, proactive
A good mentor is quick to listen, encouraging, honest, relationally intentional, organized, and seasoned in their role.
Experience, someone who's willing/committed and not forced to be in the role, servant heart
Someone who is experienced; available; ready to listen; brainstorm new ideas or solutions; able to provide resources when/if needed; willing to provide constructive feedback

Patient, good listener/advice giver, experienced

Appendix B

Priority Skills Staircase

62

Teacher:

Instructional goal:

Priority Skill Staircase

Adapted from *How To Coach Teachers to Teach (Almost) Anything* (pages 22-24)

- Classroom Management
- Student Engagement
- Behavior Management
- Lesson Planning
- Delivery of a Basic Lesson
- Instructional Goal

Actions/Strategies Needed to Reach the Next Step

Has a signal forgetting whole class attention Gives directions when students are all quiet and eyes are on the teacher Has a go to redirection routine Sets up, signals, and has a very brief time limit for transitions Modulates voice to get attention and focus students Has a routine for revving students up when their energy is waning Greets students in the morning/top of the period and gives a task right away so they enter the classroom with a purpose Has a simple routine for written responses Has a simple routine for discussion Has a simple routine for partnering	Teaches with a swift pace and mix of teacher / student talk Has written response signals in place Has physical response signals in place Has verbal response signals in place Does not rely on raised hands as engagement tool Uses engagement tools to have all students do the work Walks around the room to monitor Uses engagement techniques that do not overshadow the lesson content Explicitly teaches compliance vs. engagement Requires students to use complete sentences and academic language Uses engagement to correct and extend	Explicitly teaches and models each behavior Teaches replacement behaviors for most common behavior problems Quickly analyzes the behavior to get to the root of the issue Has clear steps in place for students choosing to repeatedly break classroom rules Has a procedure for removing students from the place of instruction without the student losing learning Has a routine for de-escalating behaviors Allows students to recover after misbehavior Expects the same behavior from all members of the class	Identifies the skill or content that students need to master by the end of the lesson Determines whether to introduce content as brand new, or link to previously mastered content Uses assessment to determine students' success criteria In the lesson plan, highlights: academic language, routines/procedures, flow of the lesson, materials needed Determines lesson length and plans engagement techniques to practice most important skills Identifies behaviors that need to be pre-taught Prepares a meaningful plan for students who finish early Designs exit ticket/wrap up	Introduces the lesson/skill Connects the lesson to previous content Pre-teaches behaviors and preps students on materials they'll need Delivers a balance - teacher talk and student action Models new concepts Uses guided practice and engagement tools so every student does the work Uses independent practice and application Uses language from curriculum/standards Monitors and adjusts lesson pacing Gives academic-based feedback Closes the lesson by recapping important information and setting the tone for what will come next	Move to instructional goal stairstep

	student responses				

Year 1:

*Meet with the teacher each month, using this Priority Skills Teacher Reflection to guide the conversation. *Ideally the conversation would happen around one topic at a time and would include a monthly observation and debrief related to the topic directly after the observation.

*This is meant to be worked on throughout the course of the first year.

*Y1 teachers do not make other professional goals for their administrator

*Y1 teachers who are not "new" teachers but new to the district will move through this at a faster pace, likely 2 topics per month, and then set professional learning goals partway through the year.

Year 2:

*Each teacher sets 2 goals within each of the priority skills areas using this form. The coach meets with each teacher each month to provide support and observations related to those goals. Typically 1-2 tiers become the focus throughout the year.

*Admin/coach decide on whether that individual also creates professional learning goals

Year 3:

*Teachers create professional learning goals

*Coaches meet with teachers each month to provide support on those learning goals

After Y3, teachers continue to create professional learning goals and meet with admin/coach according to the schedule set for all staff.

Appendix C

Induction, Coaching, & Mentorship Plan

Induction, Coaching, & Mentorship Plan

Time Frame	Induction	Mentorship	Formative Checks
Summer Before Starting	Benefits Building Tour Classroom Assignment/SetUp Team Gathering Staff Introduction Technology & Renweb Scope & Sequence Behavior Expectations (5ps & Discipline)	Mentor PD 1. Mentorship skills & responsibilities (Cognitive Coaching) 2. Priority Skills 3. Faith Formation	
Time Frame	Coaching Priority Skills	Mentorship Topics	Formative Checks
1st 6 Weeks (Aug. 28 – Oct. 6)	Classroom Management	Behavior Management Discipline (School Handbook) Management & Routines Faith & Learning: I Belong– Building Faith Communities	Blooms, Buds, & Thorns PD Selection for Teachers Convention
2nd 6 Weeks (Oct. 9 – Nov. 21)	Student Engagement	Response Signals, true engagement through modeling Faith & Learning: I Know & Understand– Daily stories of God's faithfulness, wondering, bringing the Bible to life	Blooms, Buds, & Thorns
3rd 6 Weeks	Behavior Management	Restorative Practices	90 Day Review

(Nov. 28 – Jan. 19)		Faith & Learning: I Have Hope– Seeing God at work gives us hope	
4th 6 Weeks (Jan. 22 – Mar. 8)	Lesson Planning	Faith & Learning: I Am Called & Equipped– God has a place for each of us in the work of renewing the world	Blooms, Buds, & Thorns
5th 6 Weeks (Mar. 8 – May 3)	Delivery of a Basic Lesson	Reflection & Integration Integrate an essential faith question into a lesson or unit	Blooms, Buds, & Thorns
May 6 – Summer	Gathering & Reflecting Goal Setting: Instructional goal for the next school year New Teachers Gather to Reflect		

Modified by Tiffany Kamper from:

Keeley, L., & Keeley, R. J. (2011). *Dear parent: A guide to family faith formation.* Biblica, Inc.

Appendix D

Mentorship Program Guide

Mentorship Program Guide

The Mentor/Mentee Match

PreK-6 Teachers
- Instructional Coach & Job-Alike Mentor
- The mentor will be a member of the mentee's grade level team
- From those in the grade level team; the mentor and mentee shall teach the same content

7-8 Teachers
- Instructional Coach, Job-Alike Mentor, & Same Curriculum Support
- The mentor will be a member of the mentee's grade level team

Specialist Teachers
- Instructional Coach, Job-Alike Mentor, & Same Curriculum Support
- The mentor will be a member of the specialists team
- Shared-time teachers will receive mentorship through the public school

The Mentorship Role

- Mentors and mentees check in weekly during an agreed upon scheduled time.
- Mentors will participate in professional development related to their mentorship role.
- Mentors will assist mentees in the review and implementation of the building blocks of faith, but also contribute to the mentee's understanding of the Priority Skills.
- Between Mentoring & Coaching, the mentee should receive 4 hours of support each month to make support most effective. Informal visits, coaching, team participation, formal visits, and faith formation discussions all contribute to the support of the mentee.
- The mentor will review and prepare for upcoming events with the mentee (homeroom chapels, special days, parent-teacher conferences). They will be available to walk mentees through the events, answer any questions, and assist in any preparations.
- Mentors will model collaboration and work to include the mentee in the collaboration process.
- The mentor shall practice good listening skills, develop trusting & honest relationships, and assist the coach in improving instructional practices.
- The mentor shall work to serve the individual needs of the teacher.

- Mentors will provide formative feedback for mentees and will participate in the mentee's 90 Day Review.
- The mentorship program can be used as Education–Related Professional Learning and provides SCECHes for mentors and mentees.
- A stipend will also be provided as compensation to mentors in exchange for their leadership and educational expertise.

Appendix E

Faith Formation Guide

Faith Formation Mentorship Guide

Weeks 1-6
Faith & Learning: [I Belong](#)
Building & Experiencing Faith Communities
1. Patterns & Priorities
2. Relationships with those not like us
3. Leadership Opportunities
4. Class Meetings/Community-building Activities

Living it out:
1. Remind students that their identity doesn't come from friends or teams, or what anyone says about them. They are beloved children of God.
2. Remind students that the family of God is local and global
3. Create a warm, loving, accepting, environment that reinforces a sense of belonging

Weeks 7-12
Faith & Learning: [I Know & Understand](#)
1. God's salvation plan, not morals based on Bible characters' actions (46-48)
2. God's grace is freely given
3. God's Salvation Story (Keeley & Keeley, 2011, p.49-50)
4. It's okay to say "I don't know."
5. God's story is ongoing; share stories of His work in your daily life

Living it out:
1. Help the Bible come alive. Engage multiple senses. (Resources in Keeley & Keeyly, 2011, p. 52)
2. Ask wondering questions

Weeks 13-18.
Faith & Learning: [I Have Hope](#)
1. God is always at work. Seeing God at work gives us hope.
2. Christians hope because we believe God will keep the promises He has made
3. God is with us; no matter how hard things are, we look forward in hope because we know the end of the story is positive
4. Share stories of God at work and stories of His faithfulness
5. "Tell us again how Jesus took care of you!" (Keely & Keely, 2011, p.59)

Living it out:

1. List ways God has been faithful in your lives
2. Focus on the hope we have in Christ, especially during Advent & Easter
3. Watch for the Lord to answer prayers
4. Share that every day is a gift. God is with us every day and we are on earth to bless others. Look for ways to put these truths into action.

Weeks 19-24
Faith & Learning: I Am Called & Equipped
1. Future has a purpose. God has a place for each of us in the work of renewing the world.
2. Examples from the Bible (Joshua) are called and equipped for work; so are we
3. General Calling: To become a Christian, be baptized, and take up the Christian life (Keeley & Keeley, 2011, p.61)
4. Particular Calling: A calling unique to each person that may include gifts, preparation, or networks
5. Callings may include daily abilities and tasks, not just something a few people receive
6. Discerning our Callings (Keeley & Keeley, 2011, p.67)
7. The ultimate goal of developing gifts is to use them in God's kingdom
8. Helping kids discover God's call (Keeley & Keeley, 2011, p.67-68)

Living it out:
1. Give birthday "gifts." Take time to recognize students' gifts on their birthdays.
2. If you recognize a gift in someone, look for ways to support its growth
3. Invite others to share how they discovered the gifts God gave them

Weeks 25-30
Integration
1. Identify connections between content and the Building Blocks of Faith
2. Create an essential faith question that is woven into a lesson

Reflection

Modified by Tiffany Kamper from: Keeley, L., & Keeley, R. J. (2011). *Dear parent: A guide to family faith formation.* Biblica, Inc.

The Building Blocks of Faith & Christian Schools

Appendix F

First Year Exit Survey

Onboarding, Coaching, & Mentoring

First Year Exit Survey

Distributed through google forms

What did you appreciate about your onboarding experience? Is there anything you would have added to it?

Have your behavior management skills grown this year? What is the most important skill you have learned and put into practice?

How has student engagement increased in your classroom?

What behavior management strategies have you gained during your first year?

Are you comfortable planning and executing a lesson plan? Are there any additional skills you would like assistance with in this area?

In considering your Faith Formation support, what was most impactful for your students?

Do you have any recommendations or considerations for the Onboarding, Coaching, & Mentorship Program?

Did you feel supported by the measures that are in place?

Do you feel satisfied in your work at Hudsonville Christian? Please explain.

Data Form