# THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR IN EFFECTIVE TEACHER INDUCTION AND MENTORING PROGRAMS

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# The Role of the School Administrator in Effective Teacher Induction and Mentoring Programs

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Research indicates that teachers' quality and abilities are the most significant school-based factors contributing to student achievement and educational improvement. Therefore, helping new teachers transition and socialize into school contexts and the profession are important for their teaching careers. Yet, unable to cope with challenges, feeling ineffective or unsupported, many beginning teachers abandon the profession. Induction programs with effective mentoring in the early teaching years are capable of positively affecting beginning teacher retention and student achievement, and reducing the waste of resources and human potential associated with early-career attrition. Induction programs and high-quality mentoring programs have been found to have positive impacts through increased teacher effectiveness, higher satisfaction, commitment, improved classroom instruction and student achievement, and early-career retention of novice teachers. Research shows that school administrators' engagement is vital in creating a structure supportive of the induction process. Principal engagement is critical for induction and mentoring programs as their effectiveness depends on school's context and alignment with vision, instructional focus, and priorities set by the principal. What is often implicit in much of the literature is that school administrators usually have a general "overseer" or "manager" role in the teacher induction and socialization processes. However, it is also necessary to explore school administrators' specific roles and responsibilities in induction and mentoring programs.

This report details the research study that examined the role and impact of school administrators' engagement in early-career teacher induction and mentoring programs. This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the mandates, duties, and responsibilities of school principals and/or assistant principals related to the organization and functioning of teacher induction and mentoring programs?

2. What are the perceived roles and influences of school administrators' engagement on the effectiveness of teacher induction and mentoring programs?

Using mixed-methods research methodology, this study examined school administrators' engagement in four (2 state-wide and 2 district-wide) induction programs in the US that are supported by the New Teacher Center (NTC). The programs that were selected for this study included state-wide programs, in one North-Eastern state and one Western state, and two district-wide programs in one Southern state in the United States. This study analyzed NTC Induction Surveys in 4 locations that were administered during the 2013-2014 school year. Overall, the study sample included surveys from school (site) administrators (SA; n=401), beginning teachers (BT; n=2403), and mentors or coaches (M; n=593). The close and open-ended responses were examined in a separate, but complementary manner. Descriptive statistics analysis of closed items was conducted, whereas open-ended responses have undergone phenomenological analysis. Finally, NTC client leads in each of the locations were interviewed. In addition to the cross-site data analysis, an in-depth case study was conducted at one of the state-wide program sites due to the fact that teacher induction and mentoring program at this location featured three different mentoring models: full-time, mixed, and school-based.

The results of the data analysis detail the administrator role expectations and the participants' perceptions of the programs. The first section details the findings from document analysis and from client lead interviews, while the second section represents the thematic analysis of survey participants perceptions of the principal engagement in teacher induction program (based on the closed and open-ended survey responses).

Based on the internal and external documents' analysis, school administrators were expected to play a key role in the development and maintenance of the induction programs and processes in their schools by being actively engaged in the operations of the programs, facilitating mentoring and professional development, communicating with participants and administrators, ensuring appropriate organizational climate, and providing formative and summative assessments to beginning teachers.

The results of this research study pointed out the significance of school administrators' leadership and commitment to the program if teacher induction and mentoring programs are to succeed. Solidifying teachers' success is the integral role of administrators in supporting, planning, and interacting with organizational and programmatic elements. First of all, school administrators played an important role in teacher induction and mentoring program implementation through the direct provision of various types of support to the beginning teachers, including mentor assignment, time allocation, provision of resources and professional development, meetings and communication, and conducting observation and evaluation of beginning teachers' instruction. In addition, school administrators were responsible for ensuring that school culture and working conditions were conducive to the successful socialization and personal and professional development of beginning teachers. Pivotal in this sense are school administrators' commitment and efforts directed at the building of collaborative cultures and the establishing, maintaining, and sustaining trust in relationships with mentors and beginning teachers.

The results of this study suggest that although mentoring processes between beginning teachers and mentors are the most beneficial and helpful aspects of induction programs, they are insufficient without the support and commitment of the school administrators. Therefore, this report concludes with the implications for theory, practice, policy, and further research. In terms of implications for theory, the findings reinforced the findings in the extant literature about the key role of school administrators in the ultimate success of the teacher induction and mentoring programs. In terms of implications for practice, the findings revealed organizational (programmatic) and personal (agentic) factors in the role of school administrators within the implementation of teacher induction and mentoring programs. In terms of policy implications, the findings revealed that principal's evaluative responsibilities created tensions in the perceptions of their supportive role in teacher induction and mentoring programs. In terms of implications for further research, this study pointed to the pivotal role of school administrator in the eclectic, collaborative support system for the beginning teachers.

*Keywords:*
**school administrator; beginning teachers; early-career teaching; teacher induction; mentorship; programs for new teachers; USA.**

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# OVERVIEW OF THE REPORT

## Introduction

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Upon reviewing the literature pertaining to school administrator's engagement in teacher induction and mentoring process and programs, this report provides an overview of methodological underpinnings and data analysis procedures. Research findings are presented based on the quantitative and qualitative data analyses across the sites and in the case study. The report concludes with the discussion of research results, which are compared, and contrasted with the extant literature, and with implications for theory, practice, policy, and further research.

# REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

## Teacher Attrition

Teachers' quality and abilities are the most significant school-based factors contributing to student achievement and educational improvement (Cochran-Smith, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005). Therefore, helping new teachers transition and socialize into school contexts and the profession are important for their teaching careers (Halford, 1998; Howe, 2006; Kauffman, Johnson, Kardos, Liu, & Peske, 2002). However, teaching has often been described as an occupation that "eats its young" and in which the beginning of new teachers' journey is similar to a "make or break," "sink or swim," "trial/baptism by fire," or "boot camp" experience. Some of the most significant challenges faced by beginning teachers include egg-crate structure of schools, isolation, reality shock, inadequate resources and support, lack of time for planning and interaction with colleagues, difficult work assignments, unclear and inadequate expectations, intergenerational gap, dealing with stress, lack of orientation and information about the school system, and institutional practices and policies that promote hazing (B. D. Andrews & Quinn, 2004; Anhorn, 2008; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2004; Johnson & Kardos, 2002, 2005; Patterson, 2005). Being unable to cope with challenges, feeling ineffective or unsupported, many beginning teachers, abandon the profession, depressed and discouraged (Boreen, Johnson, Niday, & Potts, 2009; Moir, Barlin, Gless, & Miles, 2009), with the most talented beginning teachers among those most apt to leave (Colb, 2001). Despite their heavy financial and educational investments to enable their teaching careers, the majority of teachers quit the profession in their first two to five years; in some extreme cases, teachers drop out even before the end of their first year (Black, 2001). Teacher attrition in the US has been detailed by various scholars (Darling-Hammond, 2001; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; T. M. Smith & Ingersoll, 2004) who argued the first five years are the most formative and crucial for a teachers' decision whether to remain in the profession or not.

## Teacher Induction and Mentoring Programs

Researchers (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Huling-Austin, 1986, 1988; Huling-Austin & Murphy, 1987; Laitsch, 2005; Strong, 2005, 2006) claimed that induction programs with effective mentoring in the early teaching years are capable of positively affecting beginning teacher retention and student achievement, and reducing the waste of resources and human potential associated with early-career attrition.  Induction programs and high-quality mentoring programs have positive impacts through increased teacher effectiveness, higher satisfaction, commitment, improved classroom instruction and student achievement, and early-career retention of novice teachers (Glazerman et al., 2010; Guarino, Santibañez, & Daley, 2006; Henry, Bastian, & Fortner, 2011; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Odell & Ferraro, 1992; Richardson, Glessner, & Tolson, 2010).

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

schools (Cherubini, 2009; Jones, 2002). Neophyte teacher mentoring can be an effective support when used in conjunction with other components of the induction process (T. M. Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Wong, 2004); however, failure to appropriately match mentor with mentee, unsuccessful new teacher/mentor dyads, lack of willing and/or able mentors, lack of mentor training, or individual factors (e.g., burnout, lack of professional respect) may result in failed efforts (Benson, 2008; Johnson & Kardos, 2005). New teachers become reflective thinkers and co-learners if mentoring environment is based on collaboration (Clandinin, Davies, Hogan, & Kennard, 1993; Kochan & Trimble, 2000).

## The Role of Administration in Beginning Teachers' Mentoring Efforts

Research shows that school administrators' engagement is vital in creating a structure supportive of the induction process. Reviews of the literature found considerations of principals' impact upon school culture, principals' role as instructional leaders, principals' support of new teachers, their involvement in mentor selection, and the flexibility shown by principals in meeting school needs (Long et al., 2012). Totterdell, Woodroffe, Bubb, and Hanrahan (2004) suggested in their systematic review, that the high quality of induction support, the district policy and commitment to mentor assignment, working conditions, professional development for second-year teachers, and strong instructional leadership among principals had consequences for the retention levels in these districts. Nevertheless, as Long et al. (2012) concluded, there is limited empirical evidence directly linking the role of the principal with the retention of teachers.

Principal engagement is critical for induction and mentoring programs as their effectiveness depends on school's context and alignment with vision, instructional focus, and priorities set by the principal (Moir et al., 2009). Research shows that when school administrators serve as the builders of the school culture, exhibit supportive and shared leadership, create the opportunity for shared values and vision, and promote professional relationships among novice teachers and experienced teachers, morale is improved and beginning teachers' self-concept is strengthened (Cherian & Daniel, 2008; Wood, 2005; Wynn et al., 2007). As the above literature points out, school administrators' commitment to mentoring programs for new teachers either supports and promotes the retention of novice teachers or undermines the success of induction and results in teacher attrition (Bleach, 1998; Jones, 2002; Turner, 1994; Wechsler, Caspary, & Humphrey, 2008).

What is often implicit in much of the literature is that school administrators usually have a general "overseer" or "manager" role in the teacher induction and socialization processes. However, it is also necessary to explore school administrators' specific roles and responsibilities in induction and mentoring programs. Review of the literature revealed that assignment of mentors to beginning teachers is the most widely detailed aspect of school administrator's role in teacher induction and mentoring processes (Abu Rass, 2010; Bianchini & Brenner, 2009; Bianchini & Cavazos, 2007; D. L. Bickmore, Bickmore, & Hart, 2005; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Gordon & Lowrey, 2016; Roberson & Roberson, 2009). Other duties included implementation of policy or program aimed at supporting of beginning teachers (Glazerman et al., 2010; Hellsten, Prytula, Ebanks, & Lai, 2009). Besides the supportive role of school administrators, several studies highlighted the expectations of school principals to supervise and evaluate the work of the new teachers (Abu Rass, 2010; Chatlain & Noonan, 2005). Hence, research points to the potential tensions between the principal's responsibility to foster growth-oriented professional

development for new teachers and the administrative or evaluative capacity (Cherubini, 2010).

# METHODOLOGY

## Research Sample

This study examined school administrators' engagement in four (2 state-wide and 2 district-wide) induction programs in the US that are supported by the New Teacher Center (NTC). The programs that were selected for this study included two state-wide programs, in one North-Eastern state and one Western state, and two district-wide programs in one Southern state in the United States. The selection of these programs was conducted in consultation with the researchers at the New Teacher Center that supports induction programs in these locales.

## Research Methods: Data Collection and Analysis

This study use mixed-methods approach to research methodology (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). First, this study used document analysis as a qualitative research method of data collection and analysis (Berg, 2001; Bowen, 2009; Prior, 2003). Primarily, documents were analyzed using the content analysis approach (Krippendorff, 1980; Mayring, 2000; Merriam, 1998; Neuendorf, 2002; Salminen, Kauppinen, & Lehtovaara, 1997). Document analysis was used to examine internal (NTC) documents and external (stated and district) policies and standards to elicit the information about the mandated roles and expectations for school administrators' engagement in teacher induction and mentoring programs. The following types of internal NTC documents were analyzed: promotional brochures; practice briefs; induction program standards; program model and theory of action; continuum of program development for teacher induction program leaders; and formative assessment and support conversation guides. The external document analysis included publicly available state and district policies, standards, mandates, and handbooks in the states or districts in which programs were located.

Second, the researcher worked closely with the researchers at the New Teacher Center to access and examine the data from NTC Induction Surveys. NTC Induction surveys are aimed at providing assessments of teacher induction program by collecting data from educators in a variety of roles, including site administrators, mentors or coaches, and beginning teaches. This study analyzed surveys in the above 4 locations that were administered during the 2013-2014 school year. Overall, the study sample included surveys from school (site) administrators (SA; n=401), beginning teachers (BT; n=2403), and mentors or coaches[1] (M; n=593). The initial scan of the survey determined the selection of close and open-ended questions that directly or indirectly related to the role of school administrator. The close and open-ended responses were examined in a separate, but complementary manner. Descriptive statistics analysis of closed items was conducted, whereas open-ended responses have undergone phenomenological analysis. Finally, NTC client leads in each of the locations were interviewed. The semi-structured interviews with client leads followed an interview protocol (see Appendix A), lasted from 30 to 45 minutes, and were recorded by the researcher. Combination of these research methods provided rich descriptive data for each of the program locations.

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[1] Mentors is the preferred term in this report, although the terms *mentor* and *coach* were used interchangeably in the data depending on the contextual and programmatic features in different locations.

In addition to the cross-site data analysis, an in-depth case study was conducted at one of the state-wide program sites. Because the teacher induction and mentoring programs at site B feature three different mentoring models, the purpose of this case study was to examine the differential role of school administrator in various programmatic models. To this end, two administrative locations per model were selected through the purposeful sampling approach in consultation with the NTC client lead. In a sense, this collective case study used a combination of various perspectives on case study methodology (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2010; Yin, 2009) guided this phase of research study. The case study approach allowed the researcher to strengthen inferences through an understanding of commonalities and differences in participants' experiences with school administrator engagement in teacher induction and mentoring processes in different contextual environments within one district. The case study data included document analysis, NTC induction surveys from school administrators (SA; n=79), beginning teachers (BT; n=377), and mentors (M; n=209)), and a client lead interview.

For the analysis of open-ended survey responses and interview data, the qualitative phenomenological analysis was used. This approach aims at describing the common meaning for different individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon (Creswell, 2012; van Manen, 1997). Phenomenological analysis was deemed fitting for examination of the lived, concrete, and situated experiences of the participants (whether through survey or interviews), based on their perceptions, descriptions, and discussions regarding the phenomenon of the role of school administrator in teacher induction and mentoring programs. Although data collection of phenomenological study usually involves interviewing individuals who have experienced the phenomenon, formally written responses and open-ended survey questions are also considered to be appropriate forms of data for this method (Frey, 2004; van Manen, 1997).

Systematic procedures were followed for data analysis, moving from the "narrow units of analysis (e.g., significant statements), and on to broader units (e.g., meaning units) (Creswell, 2012) with the purpose of interpreting *what* participants experienced and *how* they have experienced it (Moustakas, 1994). Participants' comments from open-ended survey responses were compiled by the researchers and analyzed both deductively and inductively following standard coding processes for etic and emic approaches to data analysis (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2006). These were clarified or complemented where necessary by the interview data. The research questions served as the initial organizing framework for the responses. In addition, the emergent codes were established according to the dominant themes recurring in the responses. Both etic and emic codes were then combined into categories, and categories into patterns or concepts (Lichtman, 2010). As a result of analysis, # thematic categories emerged, each containing several subthemes.

## Research Limitations

Two limitations are evident in this research. First, this study primarily entailed a secondary analysis of the data that were deemed related to the school administrator's role in the induction and mentoring programs. Only the client leads were asked questions that directly inquired about the role of school administrators. Also, this study did not include interviews with school administrators, beginning teachers, and mentors to further explore the phenomenon. Secondly, this study was conducted in selected sites with NTC-supported teacher induction and mentoring programs. Therefore, generalizability and transferability of the findings is limited based the contextual environments of the participating sites.

# RESEARCH FINDINGS

Based on the research questions, the results of the data analysis are presented below according to the following categories:

- Administrator role expectations

- Participants perceptions of the program

The first section details the findings from document analysis and from client lead interviews, while the second section represents the thematic analysis of survey participants perceptions of the principal engagement in teacher induction program (based on the closed and open-ended survey responses). Where fitting, the latter section includes insights from client lead interviews detailing the contextual description of school administrators' engagement in their particular locales.

## Administrator Role Expectations

Based on the data from internal NTC document analysis, several themes emerged. The common thread across all of the themes was the changing role of school administrator from that of a manager to that of an instructional leader who must create thriving school cultures, drive instructional change by helping teachers to continually improve in their professional skills, perform data driven-analysis of student achievement, and actively engage with the community. As a result, school administrators were expected to grow professionally and gain new skills as well, so that they could change their approaches from evaluating their teachers to developing teachers through feedback and support of improvement. As strong site leaders, school administrators were seen to be responsible for creating the collaborative school culture where teachers could thrive and students excel. The message, clearly conveyed in the documents emphasized that beginning teacher induction success is deeply linked to the effectiveness, abilities, and engagement of the school administrator.

Accordingly, the detailed expectations for the roles and responsibilities of school administrators were framed by four levels of program practices: establishing, applying, integrating, and innovating. Within these practices, the following program standards guided their responsibilities:

- *Support through provision of resources and policy implementation, culture modeling, and creation of working conditions conducive to new teachers' success.* In this sense, administrators were expected to address challenging aspects of beginning teachers' working environments, operational barriers, and logistical barriers as they arose. They were expected to advocate for state-wide or district-wide support policies, ensure full implementation of the local program, and problem solve the issues of site implementation. They were to seek out ways to support the mentor-beginning teacher collaboration by providing additional resources or adjusting policies and working conditions to promote beginning teachers' success.

- *Exhibit instructional leadership through well-rounded communication channels and collaboration with mentors to improve beginning teacher instructional practice.* This theme outlined expectations for administrators to be aware of mentor's role and to meet/communicate regularly with mentors to discuss program and needs of beginning teachers while respecting confidentiality of mentor role. Through these processes, principals were assumed to endorse and/or support the development of a complex, multi-faceted, and confidential mentor role. On the more pragmatic side, principals were expected to protect time for and promote mentors' work with beginning teachers.

- *Capacity building through professional development to advance beginning teacher development and mentor effectiveness.* By participating in initial and ongoing research-based professional development, they were to apply learning to ongoing support for the local induction and mentoring programs, to develop the skills that support teacher development from the start, and to capitalize upon their investments in teachers as a primary means to student achievement.

- *Coordination of induction activities with other school-based initiatives and evaluation procedures.* School administrators were to hold beginning of the year meeting to discuss induction activities and their integration into other school-based activities and to continuously discuss the ways in which induction can support other school based initiatives and evaluation procedures. They had to develop an understanding of best practices around supervision and formative feedback. They were also to ensure that mentoring is aligned with site instructional goals and evaluation timelines and to engage beginning teachers to share evidence of professional growth as a part of evaluation.

External documents and client leader interviews revealed various convergent and divergent expectations in the 4 program locations for 2013-2014 school year. The amalgam of expectations outlined in policies and state mandates can be synthesized in the following list[2]:

- Develop/implement/sustain induction program at the school level;

- Recruit/assign/select mentors for beginning teachers;

- Provide sanctioned time for mentors and beginning teachers to engage in the mentoring process;

- Provide orientations for beginning teachers to promote their successful entry into the school community;

- Provide the beginning teacher with a balanced teaching assignment/caseload whenever possible;

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[2] Identifying information and specific policy details have been removed due to the potential disclosure of participating locations.

- Ensure regular and ongoing meetings with mentors and beginning teachers to communicate about district/school context, vision, strategic plan, expectations, and progress;

- Collaborate and communicate with program leadership, district administration, and other site administrators about the induction program;

- Establish confidential, respectful, and trusting relationships with mentors and beginning teachers;

- Provide structured/targeted professional development for beginning teachers or facilitate the integration of induction practices into broader professional development initiatives for all teachers);

- Develop an understanding of the role of the mentor and expectations of the beginning teachers and provide clear/consistent communication to school personnel regarding these roles and expectations;

- Provide and maintain positive working conditions, safe school climate, and collaborative/collegial school culture;

- Conduct formative (formal and informal) assessment of teaching practice, classroom observations, and provide feedback to beginning teachers;

- Conduct beginning teacher evaluation/examination of instructional practice and student work.[3]

- Participate in training and information sessions available for school administrators in relation to their role in induction program.

As evident from the list above, school administrators were expected to play a key role in the development and maintenance of the induction programs and processes in their schools by being actively engaged in the operations of the programs, facilitating mentoring and professional development, communicating with participants and administrators, ensuring appropriate organizational climate, and providing formative and summative assessments to beginning teachers. In addition, only in one of the sites (C), the induction and mentoring program duties mentioned a specialized position of administrator responsible for teacher quality and retention. Also, teacher quality and retention administrator duties were substantially different in the 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 school years, the latter being less detailed regarding the interactions with mentors.

## Perceptions of Principal Engagement in Induction Programs

Data from the closed and open-ended NTC Induction survey responses in 4 of the chosen program locations[4] were analyzed through quantitative and qualitative approaches.

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[3] In some locations, evaluation by principal was not mentioned, while in one of the locations it only constituted a portion of the overall teacher evaluation process.

[4] Site A (state-wide); Site B (state-wide); Site C (district-wide); Site D (district-wide).

Closed ended questions were designed around the 5-point Likert-scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree). Quantitative data analysis was limited to descriptive statistics in the form of percentile representation participants' agreement (i.e., cumulative percentage of Agree and Strongly Agree) to a selection of questions.[5] The convergences and divergences in responses to the questions are presented in the figures below. Where appropriate, the quantitative analysis is supplemented with qualitative data, i.e., direct quotations from the open-ended survey responses. In addition, the following information is also included to indicate the site number (A, B, C, D) and the type of survey participants who authored the quotes: SA - school administrator; BT – beginning teacher; M – mentor; CL – client lead. For example, SA-D indicates that the response is from a school administrator from site D.

### School Administrator Satisfaction with the Induction Program

Across the 4 sites, school administrators' satisfaction with the induction program and mentoring processes varied (see Figure 1).
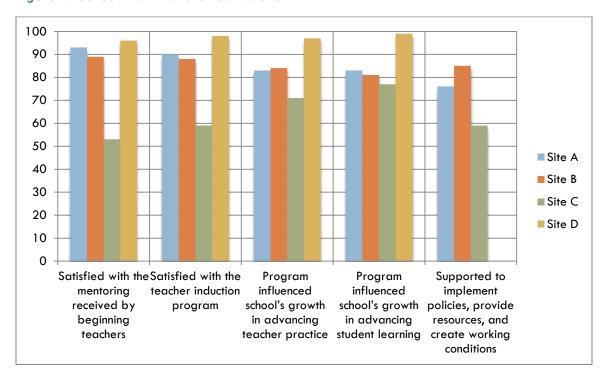
*Figure 1. School Administrator Satisfaction*



As demonstrated in Figure 1 above, the majority of School administrators in Sites A and B, were fairly close in their perceptions of high satisfaction with the mentoring received by beginning teachers, with the teacher induction program, and with the positive influence of the program[6] on school's growth in advancing teacher practice and student learning. Site

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[5] Due to customizability and adaptive nature of NTC Induction Surveys, not all items were identical in surveys at all 4 locations. Hence, empty spaces in some figures below indicate that the data were unavailable for that particular question. Furthermore, some questions differed in wording, but were deemed to be similar in meaning.

[6] The wording of questions differed regarding the influence of program (in Sites A, B, C) and mentors' interactions with beginning teachers (in Site D).

D school administrators' responses exhibited very high satisfaction compared to the other sites, while site C was considerably lower. (The latter may be explained by the fact that in 2013-2014 school year, this program location was in its second year of the current programmatic offering in conjunction with NTC). In addition, school administrators' responses indicated mixed agreement with the statement that they received support for policy implementation, provision of resources and creation of working conditions that promoted beginning teacher success (higher in sites AB and lower in C; Site D did not feature this question).

School administrators were additionally asked to comment on the most effective aspects of teacher induction program. These survey questions were also examined to elicit specific messages about the role of administrator in the effective programs.

At site A, the majority of the principals indicated that mentor's support and feedback (non-evaluative, trusting and respectful) and resources for beginning teachers were most effective for the success of the program. At the same time, considerable impact was attributed to school administrator's role in the form of regular contact with a mentor as a liaison between school administrators and beginning teachers, meetings with beginning teachers to discuss concerns, and ongoing support and provision of resources for beginning teachers. Some of the examples of direct quotes are as follows:

- The collaborative relationship between the [mentor] and administrator allows for the varied layers of support to unite and provide a blanket around the beginning teacher providing comfort for all parties. (SA-A)

- [Induction program] is providing new teachers with support and someone to listen to and help them in the ways they need. Sort of a safety net, someone they can trust and share concerns with in an open and honest way. (SA-A)

At site B, the majority of the principals indicated that well-trained mentors and supportive framework for beginning teachers through effective and consistent mentorship were most effective for the success of the program. Other factors conducive to successful program were observation and feedback, building collaborative relationships, camaraderie, and connections/network, instructional support and resources, and regular meetings and communication between mentor and teacher and mentor and administration. For example, principals noted:

- The mentors are on campus on a regular basis offering support and guidance to the beginning teachers. They are unobtrusive in that they report directly to the classroom teachers and mentor them without requiring assistance or oversight of the administrator. The beginning teachers look forward to this support/advice they receive and profit from the recommendations of the mentor. They feel supported and validated and are encouraged and enriched by the relationships that are formed with their Mentor Teacher. (SA-B)

- The mentor training and work with the mentor teachers helps the school develop leaders and the roles they play in support of the beginning teachers. I think the relationship building with get-togethers in the district is also important. It gives administrators a chance to talk with their teachers in a bonding type setting. (SA-B)

By far, at site C, the most effective aspects of teacher induction program were personal contact and interaction with mentors and personal support for beginning teachers:

- The opportunity for new teachers to meet with [mentors] on a regular basis. These meetings provide consistency in support which builds trust as well as opportunities for growth. (SA-C)

- Our new teachers feel supported and believe that they receive timely information and support in order to be successful. (SA-C)

At site D, the most effective aspect of teacher induction program was the mentoring component of the teacher induction program. Most common descriptors included mentor interactions with beginning teachers, personal contact, mentor's support, experience, guidance, training, help, feedback, ongoing communication with mentor, and consistent support. School administrators posited:

- The Mentor Program is the most effective part of the Teacher Induction Program, because it applies the part of professional development that is most effective according to research--an actual [mentor] as teachers implement skills learned from trainings. Administrators and other teachers do not have the time to give this level of support to new teachers. (SA-D)

- Having the continuous support of a mentor, along with administration, and placing the new teacher in close proximity to other teachers who support him/her has had the greatest impact." (SA-D)

- The school leadership team, working with the [mentors] and new teachers, orienting new teachers and providing targeted guidance and support throughout the year has been a critical element for success for our new teachers. (SA-D)

Across the 4 sites, school administrators prevalently pinpointed the significance of mentoring (e.g., regular interactions through meetings and communication between the mentors and beginning teachers) and consistent support for beginning teachers through resources and professional development.

In addition, school administrators' responses indicated that the following aspects had the greatest impact on student learning: feedback and observations, mentoring/coaching, teamwork (between administrators and mentors), and modeling. Some typical comments are as follows:

- The modeling that [mentor] did with her teachers was most valuable and appreciated by the teachers. When teachers can actually see strategies being used with their students, it becomes "Aha" moments for the teacher...this does work...even with my students. (SA-C)

- The school leadership team, working with the [mentors] and new teachers, orienting new teachers and providing targeted guidance and support throughout the year has been a critical element for success for our new teachers. (SA-C)

- The strong collaboration between the [mentor], beginning teacher and principal has resulted in significant growth this year. (SA-A)

- Ensuring that the mentors meet regularly with mentees in order to provide continuous support throughout the school year has probably had the greatest impact on student learning. (SA-B)

- Developing effective mentors for schools to build capacity to support new teachers. If schools have the expertise within, they can individualize and differentiate support to new teachers in the building. Support can be given in real time, not when someone's schedule allows it. (SA-B)

- Principal's role. It is necessary to provide support to the mentor and mentee. (SA-D)

As predominantly noted, both explicitly and implicitly, in responses by school administrators across the sites, collaboration between the mentors and administrators in the matters of support for beginning teachers considerably affected new teachers' growth and ultimately, student learning.

### School Administrators' Interaction with Mentors

At all 4 sites, the majority of school administrators met monthly with the mentors to discuss their work with beginning teachers, which was mostly deemed to be sufficient. The topics most frequently discussed at these meetings were:

- Needs of beginning teachers;

- Working conditions that support beginning teachers;

- Working conditions that challenge beginning teachers;

- Confidentiality;

- Establishing partnerships between the mentor and site administrator.

Overall, school administrators (in Sites A, B, and D; see Figure 2) were satisfied with their work with mentors who, they thought, understood and integrated school priorities into their work with beginning teachers and effectively communicated with administrators about their work with beginning teachers. An exception was noted at site C, where data pointed out that 15-18% of respondents have not met at all with the mentors and have not communicated with them about their work with beginning teachers).
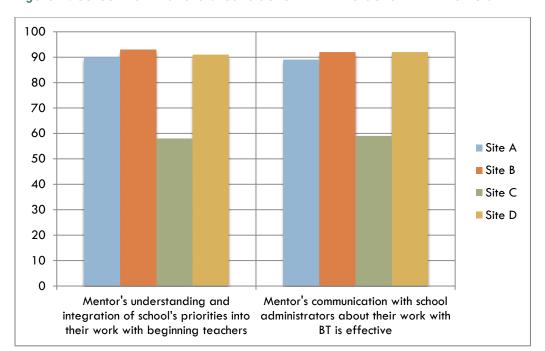
*Figure 2. School Administrators' Satisfaction with Interaction with Mentors*



Generally, as noted by beginning teachers, administrators, and mentors themselves, the role of mentor was seen primarily as a liaison between school administrators and beginning teachers. Data analysis showed that principals and mentors worked closely together at all sites to coordinate induction activities with other school based initiatives and evaluation procedures. Principals viewed mentors as the "go-between" between the administrators and beginning teachers because they communicate with the administrator and work out a plan to support the beginning teacher:

- The support, which the mentors provide the teachers, is helpful especially because it comes from someone who has a different perspective. Mentors have also helped to address any issue from my perspective with the beginning teachers. (SA-B)

- [Mentors are] a "buffer" between the administration and [beginning teachers] as they grow in experience. … The mentor provides the administration with helpful "hints" and/or clues that a newbie needs some TLC or some additional attention. The mentors are teacher advocates but work closely with the administration as needed to improve practices and learning. (SA-D)

- Mentors are able to spend time with new teachers, differentiating support as needed. As an administrator, I don't have the time necessary to provide the same level of support. While peer teachers are willing to help, their time is also limited. (SA-D)

Similar sentiments were expressed by beginning teachers who viewed their mentors as advocates for them and for their students, communicating with, and often pushing administrators for answers to important questions:

- Mentors should serve as a buffer between administration and new teachers. When it is portrayed that there is more of a friendship and relationship with administrators than those the mentor is supposed to serve and assist, it discredits the mentor. Trust is lost at that point that cannot be restored." (BT-D)

- [My mentor] has been a great go between for my principal and I. My mentor listens to the things that all her mentees say to her and words them in an appropriate way to our principal. She does this in such a way I never felt I couldn't trust her or that I had to censor what I had to say. (BT-D)

Moreover, beginning teachers viewed mentors as a source of emotional and teaching support. This was especially noticeable when there was a conflict or lack of support from the administrators):

- I believe that the emotional support that my mentor has provided me has been extremely helpful. At this moment the emotional stress that this job is giving me has made it almost impossible to work on improving myself as a teacher. Every day I learn to deal with it better, but realistically there is no time to deal with the stress and academics. I get very little support from my administration, and the textbooks that are available to me are really out of date. (BT-B)

- [My mentor] has offered a sympathetic ear when I was feeling overwhelmed or unfairly targeted by my administration and has brought sense out of chaos. I value her openness and her honesty regarding all matters of classroom instruction, management and interpersonal relations." (BT-B)

- "My mentor has been so helpful and an inspiration. This has been a challenging year especially with the drastic change of administration at my site. She supported me emotionally as well as professionally throughout the year." (BT-D)

Overall, beginning teachers were pleased to have mentors intervene or advocate for them with administrators.

Mentors also acknowledged the importance of privacy between mentor beginning teachers as a safe space in which to ask questions, try things, and get feedback without evaluation and/or consequences:

- I've found new teachers to be extremely receptive and grateful for advice and help they receive, without any evaluation or judgment. They are not afraid to raise sensitive issues or ask difficult questions, as they know our conversations are privileged." (M-A)

- The most valuable feature is that the program [is] non-evaluative. This allows teachers to feel safe when they are with their [mentor]. (M-B)

- The observations [help] to truly get a 'feel' for what is happening in the classrooms but not being [observed by] administration, just another set of eyes, ears, etc. for more collaboration and effective teaching to happen" (M-B)

However, mentors remained unsure whether being an advocate was a part of their role. This was especially evident in Site D mentors' responses to the questions of what was most or least clear about the expectations for their role as a mentor:

- Most: Support beginning teachers so that their instruction can have a positive impact on student learning. Least: What is the real expectation for communicating with principals? (M-D)

- Most clear: support teachers to be as effective as possible and push student achievement. Least clear: how to have discussions which principals about supporting my teachers when the teachers feel intimidated and not supported by the same administration. (M-D)

- I am unsure how to deal with administrators who have made their minds up of who they don't want in the school by October and refuse to give me information that will help the teacher grow and develop. (M-D)

In the same site (D), mentors expressed multiple concerns with the lack of support they felt from school administrators. In was manifested in the lack of structure, consistency, increased demands from administration (at various levels), criticism and lack of guidance and teamwork.

Because standards and expectations different among schools when it came to teachers, it was important for mentors to get well acquainted with each school administration to which they are assigned in order to facilitate this role as liaison. To this end, data across the groups of participants revealed the need for improved communication between administrators and mentors:

- Our district-wide program has strengthened communication with principals, but it is not as smooth in some schools as others. I believe that administrators need more information about the induction and mentoring program, especially ideas for improving new teacher support, and mentors need to be able to answer questions and address concerns without betraying confidentiality. (CL-B)

- I wish I had more opportunities to meet and discuss the expectations of my school and debrief the needs of my teachers with the [mentor]. I actually do not speak to her when she is on my campus except for potentially three planned meetings." (SA-A)

- This year we significantly strengthened our communication with principals via an orientation to the program, summary notes of quarterly beginning teacher PLCs, and a face-to-face conference at midyear with each principal. (M-B)

- Time needs to be built in their schedules so that the mentors are more involved on campus (i.e., faculty meetings) so that they are more embedded in our school culture and can better support the vision of the administration and the district. Monthly meetings between the Principal, Assistant Principal and mentors involved at each school could also be helpful. (SA-D)

- There should be a working relationship between the [mentor] and administrators. At this time there is no communication between [mentors] and administration and so

it is difficulty to know what is happening and the affect of the TIP on our beginning teachers. (SA-C)

- Administration should be encouraged to better explain their expectations and likewise should take time to understand the actual needs of the students and the teachers - not just the wants at best - and should be consistent in their relationships with students, teachers and families. (BT-D)

Interestingly enough, on the other hand, some school administrators noted the need for less meeting times with mentors. Several comments in Site B conveyed the point that sometimes a lack of communication between mentors and administrators is a good thing, as principals want to be informed, but don't want to (or have time to) be too involved.

### School Administrators' Engagement with Beginning Teachers' Instruction

Regular communication with administrators and administrators' support for new teachers were among the key support types for beginning teachers. However, perceptions of the significance of these types of support differed between administrators and beginning teachers. As evident from Figure 3, beginning teachers' agreement with the statements that they experienced regular communication and administrator support were consistently lower compared to the perceptions of school administrators. In addition, both school administrators' and beginning teachers' responses indicated lower agreement in Site B.

Interestingly, beginning teachers at Site C expressed the highest levels of communication with and support from school administrators among the participating sites.
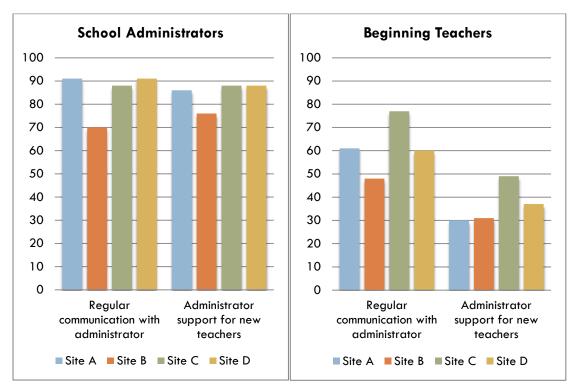
*Figure 3. Types of administrative support for beginning teachers*



21

School administrators' direct support was manifested, in part, through classroom visits and observations. Although questions about the frequency of visitation were not consistent in all site surveys[7], inferences were made (e.g., in Site B) based on the average responses to align the data across the sites.

As mentioned in Figure 4, the number of visitations as reported by school administrators was very similar in Sites A, C, and D. (At site B, on average school administrators observed beginning teachers' teaching 1-2/semester or monthly, with similar times for frequencies of feedback they provided to BT based on the observations to help them improve. Almost all of them provided support to beginning teacher(s) when dealing with highly challenging student behaviors and crisis situations). Similar to Figure 3, beginning teachers' levels of agreement with the frequency of visitations were consistently lower compared to the perceptions of school administrators.
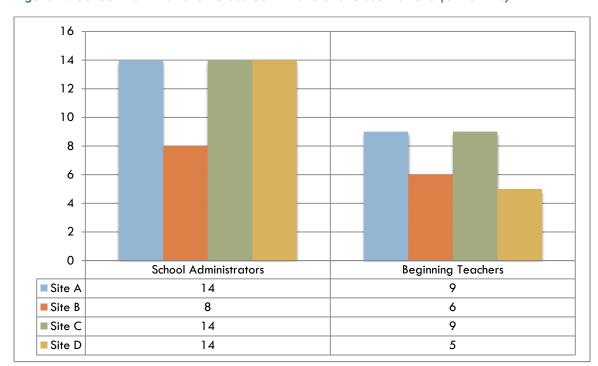
*Figure 4. School Administrator Classroom Visits and Observations (5-10mins)*

| | School Administrators | Beginning Teachers |
|---|---|---|
| ■ Site A | 14 | 9 |
| ■ Site B | 8 | 6 |
| ■ Site C | 14 | 9 |
| ■ Site D | 14 | 5 |

### Beginning Teachers' Perceptions of School Administrator Support

Beginning teachers' perceptions of school administrator support varied across 4 sites. On one hand, beginning teachers highly praised the administration's engagement in induction and mentoring programs, deeming their support to be valuable, helpful, and highly collegial. This was evident in the following responses:

- The quality of support from my [mentor] and school administrator have been excellent and have helped me excel in my new profession. (BT-A)

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[7] Site B questions were based on set frequencies like weekly, monthly, per semester, etc., while other sites included questions based on the number of 5-10 minute visitations per year.

- The most valuable feature is the support that we have from [mentors], teachers, and admin because without their support and guidance I would be lost and confused about standards and lessons. (BT-B)

- The constant support from my [mentor] and my principal helped me in all aspects. Observations, evaluations and discussions were very helpful. (BT-C)

- My site has been a pleasure to work at. The school administration and faculty have made the working conditions wonderful. Administration and faculty are always willing to help, answer questions and take time to assist you in any way. I really enjoy the site that I work at. (BT-D)

- Bravo to the administration that is able to find these excellent teachers who are able to translate their own experiences and knowledge to benefit adult learners. The impact of the whole program on my growth has been important and I look forward to continuing it. (BT-D)

Particularly significant was the fact that whenever beginning teachers commented on the quality of support received and cited appreciation of support from administrator, in almost all instances, it was mentioned in conjunction with the support received from the mentor and colleagues.

- I think I had a great amount of support this year. Between my [mentor], my administrators, and my department, I felt as though I always had someone I could turn to whenever I needed support. (BT-A)

- Meeting with colleagues, mentors and administration has helped me access valuable resources of information and strategies to improve my practice and handle the workload with a more positive attitude. (BT-B)

- The constant support from my [mentor] and my principal helped me in all aspects. Observations, evaluations and discussions were very helpful. New Teachers Orientation, CIS workshop and all the other professional developments had a great impact in me and in my students as well. (BT-C)

- I am exceptionally fortunate that the school I work for has incredible administrators, faculty, and staff. The principal continually gives valuable feedback to me, and also makes sure that he gives praise for hard work for both teachers and students. This makes a HUGE difference for both the teacher and the student because you feel valued and want to continue to better yourself. (BT-D)

On the other hand, responses highlighted negative perceptions of principals' involvement in the program, mainly due to unapproachability, lack of resources, and a lack of administrative support:

- I felt that I have received more support from my "mentor" and early childhood supervisor than I have from my own building principal. The only times that I talked with my principal at length, without students present, was during my mid year conference and one meeting in which I requested more support for to guarantee student safety in my classroom. The only times that I have seen her in my classroom

was during the two times that she evaluated me. If it had not been for the induction process … I would have had almost no support as a first year teacher in my district. (BT1?)

- I believe that I would have benefit more if my mentor was not that of an administrative or support position, and was someone from my grade level. Admin and support positions have a lot on their plate and have lot of things to handle and don't really have time for mentoring. I feel like my 5th grade teaching team has played a big role in my perseverance and success during my first year of teaching. Lots of support and guidance from my teaching team. (BT-B)

- "There were times that I felt my school and administration were not doing a good job of supporting me and it would have been nice to know what to do in that situation." (BT4)

- The administration is not supportive of its staff, and doesn't have a tolerance for new teachers. It is very difficult to work in an environment where you feel like the administrators' goal is to "getcha" everyday. I also didn't have adequate resources in my classroom even after asking for them for months. It was difficult moving to a new grade and not having any of the resources that the rest of the team was using to plan instruction. (BT-D)

However, it should be also noted that the majority of beginning teachers didn't mention what kind of support would have been helpful from their school administrators; instead, they just stated that they didn't get the support.

Overall, in contrast to the perceptions mentors as a low-stakes, non-judgmental helper across the board, school administrators were seen by beginning teachers primarily as a high stakes observer and evaluator. In this sense, observation and feedback on their teaching was considered valuable and appreciated by many beginning teachers.

- The focus on the evaluation has been a tremendous help because I can shape my teaching to ensure that any time an administrator walks into my classroom, all aspects are of the evaluation are addressed. (BT-A)

- Observations and the post-observation discussions were most helpful from my administrator and mentor. It gave us both an idea of where I stood as a teacher, and where to go (as a teacher/instruction) to become better. It also was great because it provided a specific situation to discuss versus a "what if" scenario." (BT-B)

Along with the positive experiences of evaluation, more often beginning teachers reported feeling afraid of principals' evaluations, characterized by such adjectives as "fearful," "unnerving," etc. Particularly, at sites B and D, beginning teachers reported feeling criticized or unfairly/inaccurately evaluated.

- I am very concerned that I am being observed by someone who has never taught special education. I am concerned that I am being held to impossible standards that I cannot achieve in my first year. … I feel I am being held to unreal expectations by my administrator." (BT-B)

- Feeling overwhelmed with criticism from the administration instead of support. When I ask for support, they often imply that doing so reflects poorly on me. When I discuss student behavior, they use it against me instead of helping. When evaluating, they have unrealistic expectations and reflect a lack of knowledge of both the material and the needs of the students. … The administration has gone back on their promise… (BT-D)

- I feel that my principal does not focus on what matters - my instruction. For example, she has NEVER observed me teach yet she is constantly telling me all the things I need to improve upon - many of which are irrelevant to what I am paid to do - teach! (BT-D)

One of the most frequently quoted strategies to improve observations and evaluation process was increased communication and more frequent meetings between beginning teachers and administrators.

### *School Administrators' Perceptions of their Support for Beginning Teachers*

As for the school administrators' perceptions, data showed that across all sites there was an acknowledgement among school administrators of the importance of the non-evaluative and supportive aspects of the program for beginning teachers.

- The non-evaluative layer of support in relation to teacher practice and the emotional safety net provided to beginning teachers are the most effective parts of the Induction Program. The collaborative relationship between the [mentor] and administrator allows for the varied layers of support to unite and provide a blanket around the beginning teacher providing comfort for all parties. (SA-A)

- The program helps support new teachers with an academic and a cultural mentor. Teachers learn the cycle of instruction, formative assessment, and they analyze student work. … The emotional support that is provided by school level mentors is vital in new teacher growth and in retaining teachers." (SA-B)

In addition, they saw a benefit not only for their teachers and their school, but also to themselves:

- Having a mentor to guide them and someone they can confide in has been very helpful. As an administrator, it has been a tremendous asset for me because I was in charge of the [teacher induction program] at my school [before] and I was reluctant to hire new teachers because of all the extra time involved. (SA-D)

- Having a [mentor] working with beginning teachers in year 1 is a great support not only to the teacher but also to administrators." (SA-A)

At the same time, principals expressed concern and awareness of their own shortcomings and evaluative nature of their work:

- … teachers that are hired with one year of experience [should] get a MENTOR and not be assigned to the Principal for the [teacher induction program]. Most of the 1 year of experience teachers need more support than I can give them. (SA-D)

- We need to continue the use of mentors. It is currently the only established method to coach our teachers. Administrative and Peer observations incorporate little to no time for coaching the teachers. Other than "next steps" it simply tells teachers what they are not doing effectively." (SA-D)

Discussing various administrative issues of the teacher induction and mentoring programs, school administrators emphasized the need for adequate funding as mentoring is resource-intensive – it takes time, requires clear focus, and appropriate training. The following quotes represent the scope of school administrators concerns that needed to be addressed in order for the programs to function properly:

- In order to support all new teachers according to the standards put forth, more funding is necessary. There is no way a teacher with other responsibilities is able to put enough time and effort needed with a new hire. Weekly support is required but unrealistic. Funding specifically for mentoring is needed. Personnel with expertise is also needed. The really good teachers on campus have essential responsibilities based on their skills which are needed for the school to function effectively. If I were to take my instructional leader away from her responsibilities to mentor, the new teacher will be very supported, but many other components necessary to function as a school will suffer (SA-B).

- Increase funding support for mentors. They are expected to do a lot of documentation, meeting with teachers, follow up with mentee concerns and meet with the Administration. Many of these tasks are done at the end of the school day! (SA-B)

- Very simply - more funding is needed to continue the valuable opportunity. (SA-A)

- I still have difficulty getting my best tenured teachers to take the time to go through the training to become a mentor. It's not always my best teachers that are willing to step forward. Need to look at incentives to get them to the training." (SA-B)

- Another idea would be to provide a stipend for the Principal to pay a veteran/outstanding teacher to support the 1 year experience teachers. (SA-D)

- I wish I could free [the mentor] up to do more one on one with new teachers. We focused on two teachers, when in reality all four new teachers would have benefited. (SA-C)

In site D, school administrators overwhelmingly argued that when mentors have the training, knowledge, and time, they are best positioned to ensure that beginning teachers benefit from the program:

- I feel that the quality of the mentor makes the program. This school's mentor is an example of one that could be improved. She lacks consistent communication with the administration. … She lacks the time to spend with the teacher in planning. She lacks… humbleness to relate to the new teacher and be genuinely supportive and helpful, building trust. This is due partially to the number of new teachers that are on her caseload. (SA-D)

- One of the key areas [the mentoring program affects student achievement] is classroom behavior management. This is because many factors play into the students misbehavior and the mentor is able to give the time needed to assist the new teacher; even more than the principal, administration, or "buddy" teacher on campus." (SA-D)

At all sites, the message was clear that continuous support from mentors, administration, and peers has had considerable impact on beginning teachers' positive experiences in their first years of teaching.

### The Impact of School Climate and Working Conditions on Beginning Teachers

Three of the sites (A, B, and C) included in their surveys questions related to the conduciveness of school climate and working conditions to beginning teachers' growth and success (see Figures 5 and 6). As defined in one of the documents, working conditions encompass external environment and circumstances where teaching and learning occur (i.e., physical facilities, time schedules, professional responsibilities, class size, etc.).
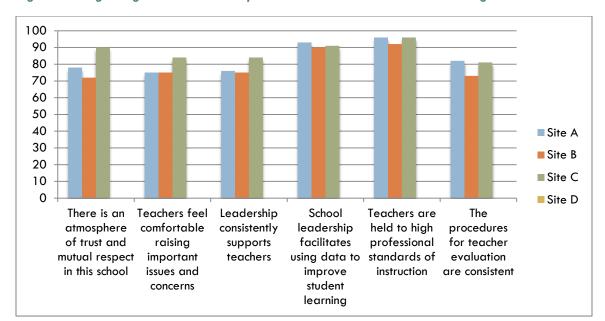
*Figure 5. School Administrator Perceptions of School Climate and Working Conditions*

Overall, the majority of beginning teachers and school administrators agreed that there was shared vision, trust, and mutual respect in their school, and safe environment for teachers to voice issues and concerns. For the most part, almost all administrators agreed that school leadership consistently supported teachers and effectively facilitated the use of data to improve student learning. Overwhelmingly, administrators at all sites (A, B, and C) agreed that teachers are held to high professional standards for delivering instructions, and are consistently evaluated. However, noticeable difference was recorded in beginning teachers' responses in comparison to principals' data. This was especially evident in relation to questions about trust and respect, comfortable conditions to raise questions, consistency of leadership support, and evaluation procedures.

### School Administrator's Influence on School Climate

The theme of school administrators' influential role in ensuring that working conditions and school climate was conducive to beginning teachers' success was evident in all 4 sites. As evident from the data analysis, just having a mentor was a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for beginning teachers' success. Multiple comments revealed that if administration is also supportive of beginning teachers, then they thrive:

- I am exceptionally fortunate that the school I work for has incredible administrators, faculty, and staff. The principal continually gives valuable feedback to me, and also makes sure that he gives praise for hard work for both teachers and students. This makes a HUGE difference for both the teacher and the student because you feel valued and want to continue to better yourself. My school is incredible. Being a first year teacher I have a lot to learn, but [the school] does an excellent job of making sure that I am informed and doing all that they can to make sure I am supported. (BT-D)

- Between my [mentor], administrator, and colleagues I could not ask for a better first year. (BT-A)

- The most valuable feature … is the ongoing support from my colleagues, administrator, and support staff. The support has helped me grow as a beginning teacher. (BT-B)

- I truly don't know that I would have been able to survive my first year without the support of a mentor and my administrative support! (BT-D)

Most evidently, the collaborative effort between peers, mentors, and administration created a sense of belonging, teamwork, trust, and community, as well as increased a sense of self-efficacy in beginning teachers:

- The open door policy of administrators and teachers has been welcoming. (BT-B)

- The availability and willingness to provide help and suggestions for questions I was to embarrassed to ask or didn't have anyone else to go to. It builds up my efficacy that I have support from district level, and that my principal has a good relationship with the mentor teacher as well. (BT-B)

- The environment that has been created including: teachers, the principal, assistant principal, mentor, reading coaches, aids, and so on, has made me feel welcomed. I feel like a meaningful part of the staff and school." (BT-D)

- [Our] staff is a big family. Teamwork is evident in my school. It's a great place to work because I have received help from the principal, administrators, and teachers during my first year. (BT-D)

- The constant support from my [mentor] and my principal helped me in all aspects. Observations, evaluations and discussions were very helpful. … (BT-C)

On the contrary, if administration was not supportive, beginning teachers remained dissatisfied. They frequently discussed challenging working conditions, very often administration related, such as lack of support, lack of consistency (especially in discipline issues), and lack of trust, as well as communication issues (miscommunication, gossip, "not walking the talk", lack of follow-through, and not keeping promises):

- There were no valuable features [of the program], I was left to fend for myself!!! My administrator/principal was biased against me and harassed me. I feel the beginning teacher program FAILED me. (BT-B)

- My most challenging working conditions seems to be a disconnect between administration with each other and administration with faculty. For example, I feel there is a lack of discipline at the school, which is also apparent to students. At a certain point I feel as a teacher, when I have exhausted my resources, I need administration to help me out. I feel that I do not get this help all the time, which is frustrating. (BT-D)

- Although we were all mentored by the same mentors with great assistance, we felt within the school we were drowning fish. I suggested a new teacher PLC to my principal, which was implemented shortly before spring break. I wish this occurred earlier in the year. (BT-D)

Challenging working conditions were also attributed to perceived divide between administration and teachers in general (not just beginning teachers). This was especially evident in responses from site D:

- [I would like to see] the development of a single plan for professional classroom growth with my [mentor], department head, mentor and administrators." (BT-D)

- There is little to no sense of community. Teachers don't work together, we feel a huge lack of administrative support." (BT-D)

- I wish the administration was less gossipy and cliquey and more supportive. (BT-D)

- Administration should be encouraged to better explain their expectations and likewise should take time to understand the actual needs of the students and the teachers - not just the wants at best - and should be consistent in their relationships with students, teachers and families. (BT-D)

In order to improve the working environment, findings pointed to the need for increased collaboration between school administrators and teachers around developing shared vision and goals. Very vividly, this was presented in comments that remarked the significance of when administrators and teachers effectively worked together:

- The collaborative relationship between the [mentor] and administrator allows for the varied layers of support to unite and provide a blanket around the beginning teacher providing comfort for all parties. (SA-A)

- Collaboration among colleagues is something valuable and is working at our school. Without the time for collaboration things will not be where it is today. Thanks to our Administrator's vision and goals that communicated to the teachers and we all are working to reach the same goal and vision. (BT-B)

- We are all working together to find ways to help children, and the administration has been fantastic and proactive in this front. (BT-D)

- I enjoy the unity between the teachers and administration to reach the higher goal of helping the kids. I am comfortable approaching and staff member for help, because people here are always more then willing to help on another." (BT-D)

Overall, the themes of the need for collaborative relationships and effective communication between all parties involved in the induction and mentoring programs were vivid across the sites and across the groups of participants. These were clearly connected to their significant influence on the improvement of working conditions and creating and sustaining of school climate that is conducive to personal and professional growth of beginning teachers.

# CASE STUDY

## The Role of the School Administrator in Different Mentoring Program Models

At site B, the state-wide teacher induction program enables each beginning teacher to participate in a comprehensive three-year induction program. The program engages beginning teachers in a system of support that includes working with the instructional mentor in order to accelerate teacher effectiveness and student learning, improve the retention of quality teachers in the profession, and strengthen teacher leadership. This particular site has a high percentage of new teachers who are in the first three years of the profession. "Beginning teacher" term referred to full-time or half-time teachers who were in their first three years of teaching and who held a state teachers license or were working towards licensure. Although Site B has a state-wide teacher induction program, each district separately addresses beginning teachers' developmental and support needs.

Induction was defined as a formal program for beginning teachers of guided entry into the profession of teaching, and as a period of socialization and enculturation into the norms and practices of the teaching profession. Teacher induction and mentoring program across the districts feature three different mentoring models (CL-B). Hence, the purpose of this case study was to examine the differential role of school administrator in various programmatic models. To this end, two district locations per model[8] were selected through the purposeful sampling approach (in consultation with the NTC client lead). Each of the models is detailed below.

> *Full-time mentoring model.* In this model, full time mentors service all first and second year beginning teachers as well as principal and self-referred teachers. The two districts sampled in this model do not use the NTC induction program model. Instead, their full-release mentor model is the Peer Assistance and Review Model, although some of the mentors have been also trained in NTC model.

> *Mixed mentoring model.* This model offers a combination of full-time and school-based mentoring options. All mentors in both districts have been trained by NTC staff. Full time mentors are rigorously selected; their role is to support school level or in-school mentors via mentor forums. School level mentors that are also full-time classroom teachers mentor only one (1) beginning teacher. Some school level mentors are curriculum coordinators or academic coaches that may have a few mentees.

> *School-based mentoring model.* In this model, mentors are school-based. All school level mentors in these districts are trained by NTC. The program coordinator supports school level or in-school mentors via mentor forums. School level mentors that are also full-time classroom teachers mentor only one (1) beginning teacher. Some school level mentors are curriculum coordinators or academic coaches that may service a few mentees. In all 3 models, program coordinators offer beginning teachers learning and growth opportunities through professional development (PD) or professional learning community (PLC).

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[8] In one of the mixed model districts (2013-2014), the model changed to full-time in 2014-15.

From the document analysis, the following roles have been assigned to school administrators (principals and vice-principals):

- provide positive working conditions for beginning teachers;

- support the development of the beginning teacher and mentor and respect the confidentiality of that relationship;

- communicate the district induction program plan and roles and responsibilities to school personnel;

- communicate regularly with the mentors and beginning teachers;

- annually conduct a minimum of four formative observation and feedback sessions scaffolded on an examination of the beginning teacher's instructional practice and student work;

- participate in data collection activities, program improvement, and program accountability;

- provide mentors and beginning teachers with sanctioned time to engage in the mentoring process.

On the more detailed side of the documents, principals were expected to sanction time (1-2 hours weekly) for meetings of mentors with beginning teachers. Sanctioned time was described as formal explicit approval for release time from other professional responsibilities that is designated for engaging in induction and mentoring activities. Furthermore, principals were expected to meet quarterly with mentors to discuss alignment of induction support with other school-based activities; review mentor contact logs on a monthly basis; plan and provide structured orientations specifically for beginning teachers upon hiring to help them with understanding of policies and procedures in school; and, integrate opportunities for beginning teachers to share evidence of professional growth as part of the evaluation procedures.

## Case Study Data Analysis

The numbers below represent the average scores from the pairs of CAs within each of the categories. Strongly Agree and Agree scores were combined and average scores (means) between the 2 representative districts in each model were produced for the figures.

### School Administrators' Satisfaction with the Induction Programs

Overall, school administrator satisfaction with the mentoring and teacher induction program (see Figure 7) across the three models was high (ranging between 88 and 100%). Similarly, school administrators prevalently believed that teacher induction program influenced school's growth in advancing teacher practice and teacher learning. At the same time, their responses indicated that they needed greater support with implementation of policies, provision of resources, and creating conducive working conditions. However, interestingly enough, responses indicated lower agreement with the statements in the full-time model.
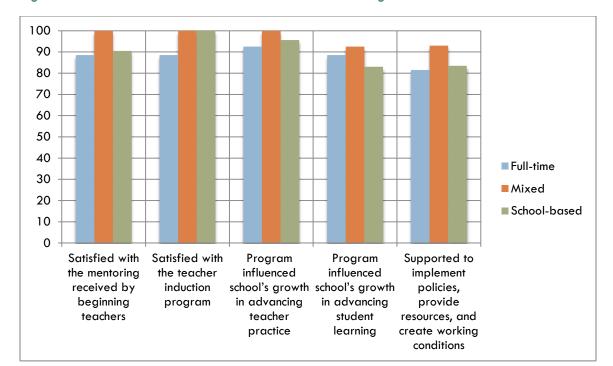
*Figure 7. School Administrator Satisfaction with the Program*



## Interactions with Mentors and Beginning Teachers

As seen in Figure 8, school administrators' perceptions of interaction with mentors and support for beginning teachers slightly varied across the models. In the full-time model, typically, school administrators and mentors discussed their work with beginning teachers on a monthly basis, with needs of beginning teachers being the most frequently mentioned topic. Typically, across all models, school administrators and mentors discussed their work with beginning teachers on a monthly basis, with needs of beginning teachers being the most frequently mentioned topic. However, two observations were significantly different. In the full-time model, high percentages of administrators' responses (up to 46%) were observed indicating that communication of roles, responsibilities, and expectations for participation in the induction process with mentors did not apply to their roles. This was contrastingly different with other models where no high frequencies of "does not apply" responses were noted. Also, in a school-based model, there were more frequent mentions of contact between school administration and mentors, with high percentages of weekly meeting, as compared to the full-time and mixed models.
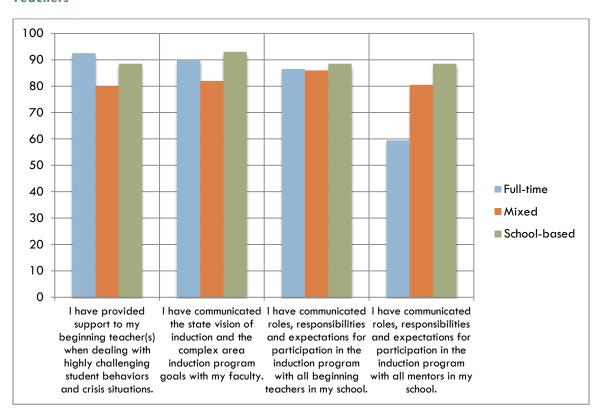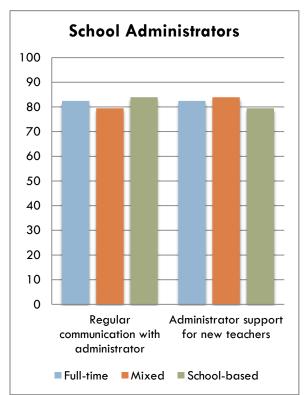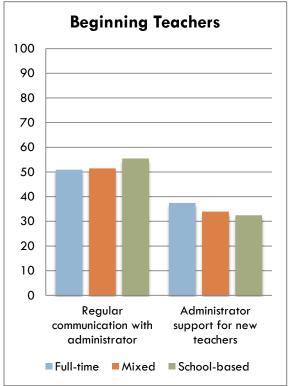
Figure 9 (below) details and compares the perceptions of school administrator support as reported in the school administrators' and beginning teachers' surveys across the models. As clearly depicted, beginning teacher' perceptions of regular communication and support from school administration was significantly lower than those of school administrators themselves.

Further analysis of the survey data in different models revealed that within the full-time model, the average frequencies with which school administrators observed beginning teachers' teaching varied between the districts. While in one, the majority of administrators observed their teaching every other week or monthly (FT1), in another district (FT2) observations were less frequent, 1-2/semester or monthly. However, similar frequencies between full-time mentoring model districts were reported for feedback. On average, school administrators provided feedback to beginning teachers based on the observations to help them improve monthly or once or twice a semester. Beginning teachers' responses indicated that administrators observed them on average 1 or 2 times per semester.

In the mixed model, the average frequencies with which school administrators observed beginning teachers' teaching were similar between the districts; predominantly the majority of school administrators reported that they observed teaching and provided feedback to beginning teachers once or twice per semester (which is less frequent than in the full-time model). In this model, beginning teachers' responses indicated that school administrators observed them on average 1 or 2 times per semester.

*Figure 9. School Administrator Support for New Teachers*



In the two districts with the school-based model, the average frequencies with which school administrators observed beginning teachers' instruction were similar; predominantly, observations occurred equally on a monthly or 1/2 times a semester basis. They provided feedback to beginning teachers once or twice per semester (which is less frequent than in the full-time model). Similarly, beginning teachers responded that they were observed on average 1 or 2 times per semester.

### School Administrators' and Beginning Teachers Views on Leadership and School Climate

School administrators' and beginning teachers' survey responses regarding leadership and school climate were also analyzed across the three models (see Figures 10 and 11). Strong agreement across the models indicated the both administrators and new teachers believed that there were high levels of trust and mutual respect, shared vision, professionalism, conducive environment for voicing of concerns, consistent and effective leadership, and recognition of accomplishments in their schools. Similarly, both parties expressed that teacher performance was objectively assessed, consistently evaluated, and feedback was helpful for teacher improvement. However, beginning teachers' agreement was significantly lower than that of school administrators.

Qualitative analysis further teased out themes pertaining to the topics of leadership and school climate. Open-ended questions varied for different groups, collectively addressing such issues as most valuable or effective aspects of the program; programmatic aspects

that had the greatest impact on student learning and achievement; meeting beginning teachers' needs; and supports necessary for school administrators for induction programs. The overview of open-ended survey responses from beginning teachers, mentors, and administrators for each of the models are presented below, followed by the summary of the divergences and convergences among the models observed in the data. Supporting quotes have added identifiers of participants (F for full-time, M for mixed, and S for school-based).

*Full-time model.* School administrators placed a great deal of value on mentors and their non-evaluative and formative support for beginning teachers. As one principal noted, without full release mentors, principals would find it difficult to effectively support new teachers: ""It is most helpful having a district assigned mentor because our school is already stretched thin and it would be a challenge to provide regular mentoring with the limited resources available at schools" (SA-BF). Similarly, mentors saw the value of administrative support as one of the most valuable features of the induction program (yet, mentioned in conjunction with the support of other stakeholders –teachers). As for the beginning teachers, the mentions of administrators were at best related to the lack of support from the administration; at worst, to feelings of being micromanaged and/or targeted by principals.

*Mixed model.* School administrators' responses showed their willingness to become involved in the program; albeit, they highlighted the need for discernment among stakeholders that the principals should be involve if there are concern about the performance of beginning teachers. Mentors had no comments about principal engagement. A number of beginning teachers mentioned effective and supportive engagement of administrators by being available to listen to novices' concerns, offering multiple observation and feedback, helping with getting "acclimated to school," and collaborative with teachers in the best interests of children. On the other hand, some teachers' responses indicated little support from administration or unwillingness on the part of beginning teachers to seek it out.

*School-based model.* In this data set, school administrators mentioned their role through sharing information and training sessions and supporting school level mentors. Mentors discussed that value of their meetings with the administration and preparing beginning teachers for administrators' observations. Beginning teachers saw administrator's role primarily in pairing up the novices with a mentor, highlighting that they don't have time for much involvement beyond that aspect.

Recognizing the research limitations, several significant similarities and discrepancies between the models were observed. First, it was interesting to see the difference in the number of times that participants (especially beginning teachers) even made mention of the administrators across the three models. The participants who had experienced the school-based mentoring model made the least mention of the role of the administration; whenever it was mentioned by teachers and mentors, it was fairly neutral. Second, the participants' responses from the full-time model most accurately reflected the overall theme of feeling a lack of support from administrators. However, that theme becomes somewhat more complex in the mixed model (i.e., sometimes they felt supported, and sometimes they did not). Third, mentors across all thee models rarely mentioned the involvement of the school administrators in induction process. Whenever it was mentioned, it was mainly limited to comments about the value of meetings and communication with the administration. Finally, in both the full-time and mixed models, the principals noted that

while the mentorship program is very important for beginning teachers' support and development, it was vital that the mentor is "not a supervisor, but a colleague and confidante to support and assist the teacher" and that there should be "discernment regarding when to involve the principal." This finding seems to point to the awareness and recognition of somewhat evaluative nature of principals' engagement in the induction process.

*Figure 10. School Administrators' Perceptions of Leadership and Climate*

**Administrators**

Legend:
- Full-time
- Mixed
- School-based

Categories (x-axis):
- The faculty and staff have a shared vision
- There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in this school
- Teachers feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them
- The school leadership consistently supports teachers
- Teachers are held to high professional standards for delivering instruction
- The school leadership facilitates using data to improve student learning
- Teacher performance is assessed objectively
- Teachers receive feedback that can help them improve teaching
- The procedures for teacher evaluation are consistent
- The school improvement team provides effective leadership at this school
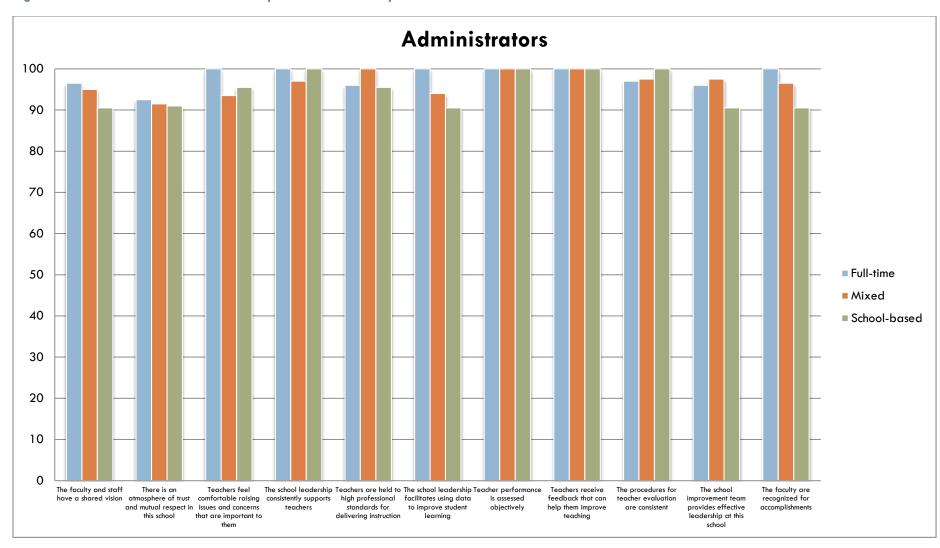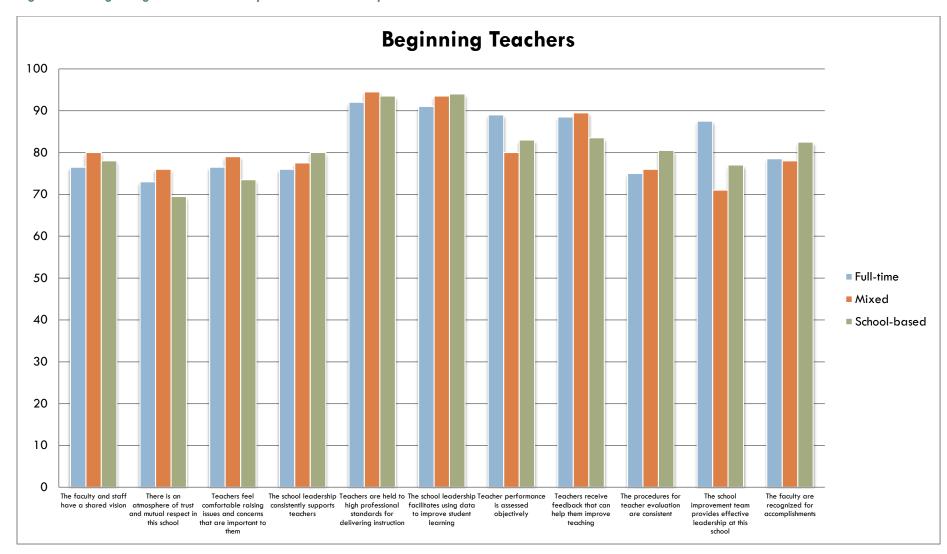- The faculty are recognized for accomplishments

*Figure 11. Beginning Teachers' Perceptions of Leadership and Climate*

Beginning Teachers

# DISCUSSION

This study examined the role and impact of school administrators' engagement in early-career teacher induction and mentoring programs. The key findings will be discussed in comparison and contrast with the extant literature within two parts. The first part will address the mandates, duties, and responsibilities of school administrators and the perceived influences of school administrators' engagement on the effectiveness of teacher induction and mentoring programs. The second part addresses the relational aspects and the role of trust for effective induction and mentoring processes. The former is aligned with the research questions that guided this study, while the latter discusses the

## School Administrators' Engagement in and Perceived Impact on Induction and Mentoring Programs

Research shows that school administrator's engagement is critical for induction and mentoring programs (Moir et al., 2009), as it is their commitment to mentoring programs for new teachers that either supports and promotes the retention of novice teachers or undermines the success of induction and results in teacher attrition (Bleach, 1998; Jones, 2002; Turner, 1994; Wechsler et al., 2008). Research findings in this study pointed to a number of direct and indirect duties and responsibilities that school administrators at the sites under study had in relation to induction and mentoring processes in their schools. Although role expectations and actual duties slightly varied across the participating sites, common patterns emerged from the data analysis.

### Direct Involvement

Direct involvement of principals typically entails overseeing and managing the everyday operations of induction programs, with the success or failure of the programs falling primarily on their shoulders (Cherian & Daniel, 2008). Direct involvement role expectations, as outlined in the policies and related NTC and location-specific documents, included development and maintenance of the induction programs and processes in their schools, active involvement in the operations of the programs, mentor selection and ongoing facilitation of mentoring relationships, provision of professional development, communication with mentors and beginning teachers, and conducting of formative and summative assessments to beginning teachers. Assignment of mentors to beginning teachers is the most widely mentioned aspect of school administrator's role in teacher induction and mentoring processes (Abu Rass, 2010; Bianchini & Brenner, 2009; Bianchini & Cavazos, 2007; D. L. Bickmore et al., 2005; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009). Other duties often include ensuring that beginning teachers are provided with mentoring, time for observations, and opportunities to reflect on practice (Catapano & Huisman, 2013; Certo, 2005). Another key direct duties is often related to implementation of policy or program aimed at supporting of beginning teachers (Glazerman et al., 2008; Hellsten et al., 2009).

From the quantitative and qualitative data analysis, it was gleaned that the three key aspects of school administrator's direct engagement were as follows:

a) the regular contact and communication with mentor;

b) meetings with beginning teachers to observe instruction, discuss concerns, and provide feedback; and

c) provision of ongoing support and resources for beginning teachers.

Mentors were often seen by beginning teachers, administrators, and mentors themselves as a liaison between school administrators and beginning teachers. Results of this study pointed to the fact that principals and mentors worked closely together at all sites to coordinate induction activities with other school based initiatives and evaluation procedures. School administrators in this study provided funding and resources, as well as sanctioned time for mentors and mentees to meet. Effective principals support induction and mentoring programs by providing time for the carefully matched mentor and mentee to plan and afforded time for the mentee to observe other well-established teachers (S. P. Andrews, Gilbert, & Martin, 2006). Principals often viewed mentors as the "buffer" and "go-between" between the administrators and beginning teachers because they communicate with the administrator and work out a plan to support the beginning teacher. However, there was some uncertainty on the part of mentor about the exact role expectations in their interactions with school administrators. Ganser (2002) argued that mentors need support in their expanding, multi-faceted, and complex role as a liaison between the principal and the beginning teachers. Similarly, others have recommended increasing and tailoring formal mentor training in order to maximize the potential of their role and argued for tailored mentor training that can assist in developing critical reflective practice and a new teacher's increasing professional autonomy (Desimone et al., 2014; Harrison, Lawson, & Wortley, 2005).

Mentors indeed are in a special position in relation to the beginning teachers, often assuming such roles as parental figure, scaffolder, supporter, trouble-shooter, and colleague, who need to perceive and understand the issues faced by their protégés. Beginning teachers in this study emphasized the role of mentors as low-stakes, non-judgmental helpers and advocates for their needs, as well as significant sources of emotional and professional support. Similarly, other researchers have drawn attention to the importance of providing emotional and psychological support by mentors to their mentees (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009; Ralph & Walker, 2010).

As evident from the results, just having a mentor was a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for beginning teachers' success; administrative support was also needed. For beginning teachers, regular communication with administrators and administrators' support for new teachers were among the key direct support types for beginning teachers. Other researchers reported that school administrators' support was found to be helpful by beginning teachers (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2011; Kapadia, Coca, & Easton, 2007; Rhodes, Nevill, & Allen, 2005). However, findings across sites revealed discrepancy in perceptions of frequency and significance of support between beginning teachers' responses and the school administrators' responses. Similarly, Andrews, Gilbert, and Martin (2006) found that although principals felt they were providing supports, beginning teachers did not perceive the supports as being provided or significant.

Mixed responses were elicited from beginning teachers, whereas some highly praised the administration's engagement in induction and mentoring programs, deeming their support to be valuable, helpful, and highly collegial, while others highlighted negative perceptions of principals' involvement due to unapproachability, lack of resources, and a lack of administrative support. Principals' personal interactions with new teachers affect teachers' needs – principals who positively meet these needs improve new teachers' practice and contribute to their retention (Wang & Odell, 2002). On the contrary, as Scherff (2008) found, principals' personal interaction deemed unsupportive and negative by teachers may lead to their dissatisfaction and potential attrition. One of the most frequent reasons beginning teachers give for leaving the profession is

the poor quality of support from the school principal (Richards, 2004). Therefore, is crucial for school-level administrators to set aside more time for mentoring, planning for instruction, observations, discussion of student achievement, and feedback (Catapano & Huisman, 2013; Certo, 2005).

Of particularly significance was the finding that support from administrators in almost all instances was mentioned in conjunction with the support received from the [mentor] and colleagues. Similarly, another study that sought to determine the relationship between the presence of administrator-facilitated support for mentoring and perceived helpfulness of mentoring suggested that novice teachers perceive their experiences with mentors as more likely to occur and more helpful when administrative support is built into the mentoring program (Clark & Byrnes, 2012). According to Vierstraete (2005), reflective practice in a mentoring process that encompasses the principal, the mentor and the beginning teacher is important to the ongoing professional learning of the new teacher within the school community.

In contrast to perceived roles of mentors, school administrators were seen by beginning teachers primarily as a supervisor, high stakes observer and evaluator. This stems from the role of principal who is expected to supervise the induction programs for beginning teachers, providing counsel for best instructional practices and classroom management skills (Correa & Wagner, 2011). Across the 4 sites in this study, school administrators' direct support was manifested, in part, through classroom visits and observations. It is the instructional leadership capacity of principals that is manifested through initiation of conversations with beginning teachers, observation of instruction, provision of feedback, monitoring of progress, and facilitation of the transition between teacher education programs and the realities of classroom teaching (Clandinin et al., 2012). The principal is deemed the instructional leader who actively supports and participates in professional development for beginning teachers (Correa & Wagner, 2011). For some teachers, observation and feedback on their teaching was considered valuable and appreciated by many beginning teachers; on the other hand, along with the positive experiences of evaluation, beginning teachers' responses revealed feelings of criticism, fear, and unfairness. Similarly, school administrators in this study expressed concern and awareness of their own shortcomings and evaluative nature of their work. Research literature notes that the supportive role of school administrators in teacher induction may be counteracted by the requirements to supervise and evaluate the work of the new teachers (Abu Rass, 2010; Chatlain & Noonan, 2005; Cherubini, 2010). This finding also raises an important issue of beginning teachers' accountability for their progress. Achinstein (2006) highlighted the importance for beginning teachers to understand and be aware of the overall role of school principal for teacher development, as well as his/her position in relation to beginning teachers' support within the broader context of schooling.

### School Administrator's Indirect Involvement

Much of the findings pointed to the significance of the *indirect involvement* of school administrators in the induction and mentoring processes. Primarily, this has been visible through their role in the establishment of supporting working conditions and organizational climate. This is significantly related to the broad, overall expectation for school administrator's role to shift from that of a manager to that of an instructional leader, as noted in the documents. As such, the indirect involvement manifested through creating positive, thriving school cultures, helping teachers to continually improve their professional skills and focusing on student achievement. The importance of principals' role as critical agent in the induction of new teachers is underscored by the fact that new teachers are more influenced by the context and support in their initial school settings than by teacher preparation programs (Cherian & Daniel, 2008). Indeed, the results pointed to the

significant influence of school administrators' engagement on the improvement of working conditions and creating and sustaining of thriving school cultures and school climates that are conducive to personal and professional growth of beginning teachers.

Wynn et al. (2007) posited that school climate reflects the supportive working conditions that include both the physical and the human dimensions necessary for a learning community. Although there were some mentions of the physical and material (resource-based) conditions that were not conducive to effective induction and mentoring processes, most of the responses related to the human or interpersonal aspects of school climate. Challenging working conditions were attributed to perceived divisions between administration and teachers in general (not just beginning teachers). This, in turn, affected beginning teachers who were dissatisfied with the programs if administration was not supportive. Most frequently discussed challenging working conditions, very often administration related, were lack of support, lack of consistency (especially in discipline issues), and lack of trust, as well as communication issues (miscommunication, gossip, "not walking the talk", lack of follow-through, and not keeping promises).

Working conditions of teachers that meet their instructional needs (e.g., appropriate space, material, and support) have been shown to influence beginning teachers' decisions to remain in the profession (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Participants' responses in this study highlighted that positive school climate, supporting administration, and collaborative relationships between peers, mentors, and administration created a sense of belonging, teamwork, trust, and community, as well as increased a sense of self-efficacy in beginning teachers. At the same time, there was a clear call on the part of all participants for the improved collaborative relationships and effective communication between all parties involved in the induction and mentoring programs were vivid across the sites and across the groups of participants. In order to improve the working environment, findings pointed to the need for increased collaboration between school administrators and teachers around developing shared vision and goals.

Because teaching in schools involves working with colleagues and administrators, a perceived lack of collaboration is one reason that beginning teachers give for leaving the profession (Scherff, 2008). Successful collaboration will ensure that school administrators are informed about the needs of novice teachers and various supportive structures and programs available to them (Rhodes et al., 2005). Meeting new teachers' working condition needs is not sufficient; schools must have collaborative cultures, where teachers can share ideas, materials, problems, and solutions in order to foster student learning (Kutsyuruba, 2011). In this matter, "school leadership as the fulcrum for organizational climate and socialization sets the tone for the beginner's first experience ... largely through the assistance and monitoring of the principal" (Angelle, 2006, p. 319). Therefore, principal leadership is a key component in creating a collaborative learning environment that contributes not only to the retention of new teachers but also to nurturing teachers who can meet the expectations of working in a complex milieu of diversity and change (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). As organizational leaders, they are responsible for creating conditions that foster collaboration among all stakeholders (Correa & Wagner, 2011) and for establishing a mentoring culture aimed at transforming learning and leveraging experience (Zachary, 2005). Guarino et al. (2006), posited that collegial and administrative support in mentoring and induction programs were associated with higher rates of retention of beginning teachers.

## Administrators and the Role of Trust in Effective Induction and Mentoring Relationships

One of the key findings in this study was the pivotal role trust in the effective relationships between mentors, beginning teachers, and administration. This was especially evident in relation to discussions of the interpersonal relationships in the mentoring processes and the perceived roles that administrators, mentors, and beginning teachers had. As such, three relational domains clearly emerged from the data analysis:

(a) beginning teacher and mentor,

(b) mentor and school administrator, and

(c) beginning teacher and school administrator.

There was a differential description of the strength, frequency, depth of interaction in each of the domains, as well as perceived value and benefit of each of the domains for the overall success of the induction and mentoring programs. It was clear that both beginning teachers and administrators placed the greatest emphasis on the mentor-beginning teacher relational domain as the most beneficial and instrumental area of the mentoring process. In a sense, this is not a surprising finding based on the overall design and supportive focus of mentoring, as well as expectations for frequency, proximity, and confidentiality of such relationships. Beginning teachers described mentors as non-judgmental guides, sources of professional and emotional support, and as advocates and "buffers" in the interactions with school administration. School administrators described mentors as the integral, "go-between" link between administration and beginning teachers. The intensity and frequency of interaction in the first two domains varied slightly across the sites, but still remained significantly strong. On the other hand, the relationships in the third domain, between the beginning teachers and school administrators, were supportive and beneficial, yet not always frequent and strong. In addition, the supportive tone of these relationships often was counteracted with the supervisory, evaluative undertone.

The potential drawbacks of such a mentoring arrangement was noted by Boreen et al. (2009) who argued for keeping the communication flowing in positive directions and avoidance of "communication triangles" where the mentor becomes the conduit for information from the building administrator to the beginning teacher and vice versa. As they noted, in order to avoid such arrangements, "mentors need to speak directly to teachers with whom they are working, and they must make sure that principals know that if they have something to communicate to teachers being mentored, they must speak directly to the teacher without using the mentor as a filter, buffer, or reinforcement" (p. 133). In addition, they suggested that mentors encourage teachers with whom they are working to speak directly to the school administrator about concerns they have about policies, observations, comments, or evaluations. Overall, there should be direct, face-to-face conversations whenever possible among the participants.

Critical in this regard is the presence of trust in the relational domains between administrators, mentors, and beginning teachers. Trust can be defined as the extent to which one engages in a reciprocal interaction and a relationship in such a way that there is willingness to be vulnerable to another and to assume risk with positive expectations and a degree of confidence that the other party will possess some semblance of benevolence, care, competence, honesty, openness, reliability, respect, hope, and wisdom (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2014). The following findings related to trust were gleaned from the data in this study. Administrators were expected and had a responsibility to establish confidential, respectful, and trusting relationships with mentors and

beginning teachers. Mentors were viewed as trusting non-evaluators, someone to trust and share concerns with in an open and honest way. Beginning teachers felt that sharing confidential information in the meetings with mentors provided consistency in support and built trusting relationships. Finally, all respondents noted that lack of trust created challenging working conditions in schools, whereas strong and effective collaboration between the participants was conducive to trust development. Trust creates a school environment where individuals share a moral commitment to act in the interests of collectivity (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2014).

Based on the above observations and discussions, and the call for increased communication and collaboration between all participants of the induction and mentoring process, it is important to consider the tridimensionality of trust (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2015) that is shared between: (a) beginning teacher and mentor, (b) mentor and school administrator, and (c) beginning teacher and school administrator. To date, research into the development of a trusting relationship has centered around mentor-mentee relational dimension, pointing out that the bond of trust and trustworthiness must exist between a mentor and a new teacher if such dyad is to succeed (Doerger, 2003). More recently, Celano and Mitchell (2014) pointed out that building trust between beginning teachers and their mentors is important for creating a sense of novices' personal teaching efficacy. Less researched, yet equally important, are the other two dimensions of trust. Although administrators do not directly participate in the dyadic relationship between the mentor and beginning teacher, their involvement entails providing teachers with orientation and resources, assigning and supporting mentors, and developing professional cultures supportive of new teachers. Therefore, establishing, maintaining, and sustaining of collaborative and trusting relationships across these dimensions not only contributes to retention of teachers, but, more importantly, promotes the development of teacher leadership among the novice educational professionals (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2015). Watkins (2016) similarly highlighted the pivotal role of trust in the mentor – beginning teacher – principal relationships. She posited, mentors need to ensure that principals understand the rationale for and support confidentiality between a beginning teacher and mentor. This way, beginning teachers can feel safe and take necessary risks to grow within the trusting environment: "A principal who understands and respects this confidentiality fosters a community of trust. Involved principals develop effective three-way relationships that sanction confidentiality and clearly demonstrate that everyone is working toward a common goal — successful teaching and learning" (p. 2).

By nature, mentoring requires trust to be at its core. Supportive and trusted relationships between all participants in the mentoring process are paramount to successfully assist novice teachers in adjusting to teaching requirements (S. J. Smith, 2002), positively influence teacher job satisfaction and retention (Leithwood & McAdie, 2007), and bridge the generational gap between new and experienced teachers (Johnson & Kardos, 2005; Kutsyuruba, 2011). Trusting relationships between school administrators and beginning teachers appear to enhance a healthy school climate and student outcomes, whereas lack of support, communication, and trust leads to teacher dissatisfaction and attrition (S. T. Bickmore & Bickmore, 2010; Guarino et al., 2006; Karsenti & Collin, 2013). Furthermore, critical role in this process belongs to school administrators, who as leaders need to build an atmosphere of trust among stakeholders in the school building, especially with novice teachers (Sergiovanni, 2005). In this sense, they need to embrace their role as that of critical agents of change in the induction and mentoring programs (Cherian & Daniel, 2008).

# CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The results of this research study pointed out the significance of school administrators' leadership and commitment to the program if teacher induction and mentoring programs are to succeed. Solidifying teachers' success is the integral role of administrators in supporting, planning, and interacting with organizational and programmatic elements. First of all, school administrators played an important role in teacher induction and mentoring program implementation through the direct provision of various types of support to the beginning teachers, including mentor assignment, time allocation, provision of resources and professional development, meetings and communication, and conducting observation and evaluation of beginning teachers' instruction. In addition, school administrators were responsible for ensuring that school culture and working conditions were conducive to the successful socialization and personal and professional development of beginning teachers. Pivotal in this sense are school administrators' commitment and efforts directed at the building of collaborative cultures and the establishing, maintaining, and sustaining trust in relationships with mentors and beginning teachers.

The results of this study suggest that although mentoring processes between beginning teachers and mentors are the most beneficial and helpful aspects of induction programs, they are insufficient without the support and commitment of the school administrators. As Birkeland and Feiman-Nemser (2009) noted, the success of a school-based induction program relies on the commitment and investment of school leaders. School administrators' commitment to and recognition of the importance of induction and mentoring programs positively or negative influences the beginning teachers' justification of their own commitment to and understanding of the need for the program (Cherubini, 2009). Furthermore, Wynn et al. (2007, p. 222) highlighted the importance of principal leadership, finding that "teachers who were more satisfied with the principal leadership in their schools were more likely to report planning to stay in the school district and at their school site." However, as much as principal leadership is key for teacher success and retention, this study findings pointed out that it is the eclectic supportive system consisting of mentors, administration, and peers that exerts considerable impact on beginning teachers' positive experiences in their first years of teaching. Uultimately it is the shared leadership, collegial decision-making, trust, and collaboration that create successful learning communities in schools (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Leithwood, Leonard, & Sharratt, 1998), help build the *collaborative instructional leadership* (Blase & Blase, 1999; Marks & Printy, 2003). Furthermore, the tridimensional collaborative and trusting relationships are necessary for teacher induction and mentoring programs to not only help beginning teachers survive the first years of teaching but also empower them to thrive and develop into school leaders (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2015).

Based on the findings of this study, several implications are offered for theory, practice, policy, and further research.

### *Implications for Theory*

In terms of implications for theory, the findings reinforced the findings in the extant literature about the key role of school administrators in the ultimate success of the teacher induction and mentoring programs. Pivotal in this role is the understanding of the impact of the administrators' direct duties and responsibilities and indirect engagement in the induction and mentoring programs. Ultimately, induction and mentoring depend on the collaborative and support structures among various stakeholders in the process within the school (administrators, mentors, teachers, and

others), but without the support and commitment of the school administrators the goal of developing beginning teachers into successful and thriving teacher leaders may not be attainable. Furthermore, it is important to further explore the role of contextual factors (social, political, cultural, educational, organizational, etc.) that frame the conditions necessary for school administrators to ensure the overall success of teacher induction and mentoring programs.

### *Implications for Practice*

In terms of implications for practice, the findings revealed organizational (programmatic) and personal (agentic) factors in the role of school administrators within the implementation of teacher induction and mentoring programs. Creating the awareness and deeper understanding of school leaders' agentic role in the establishment and functioning of the programs will enhance the quality of their interactions with mentors and beginning teachers. A critical factor for the school administrator's' agentic role is presence of trust in the relationships and communication with mentors and beginning teachers. As an instructional leader, the school administrator is responsible for observing new teachers' classrooms and being aware of their strengths and areas of improvement. Trusting relationships between the principal and beginning teacher will ensure that school administrators will not need to rely on the mentor as "buffer" or "go-between" to assess teachers' strengths and needs. Furthermore, school administrators must understand the importance of allocating sanctioned and protected time to visit teachers' classrooms for formative and summative observations and evaluations.

### *Implications for Policy*

In terms of policy implications, the findings revealed that principal's evaluative responsibilities created tensions in the perceptions of their supportive role in teacher induction and mentoring programs. Therefore, clarification of the duties, responsibilities, and expectations for school administrators' engagement in teacher induction and mentoring programs at various organizational levels (state, district, school) is recommended. Ensuring that duties and responsibilities within the mentoring process are clearly delineated will be beneficial not only to the school administrators, but also to mentors and beginning teachers. Specifically, this pertains to the administrators' duties for evaluation of teachers' performance. A deeper analysis of the evaluative role of administrators within the beginning teacher support could help to ensure future policy regarding teacher induction and mentoring is concentrated of new and beginning teacher development and growth rather than performance and competence.

### *Implications for Further Research*

In terms of implications for further research, this study pointed to the pivotal role of school administrator in the eclectic, collaborative support system for the beginning teachers. Further studies would do well to examine the mechanisms and structures that can help school administrators develop trust and sustain collaboration with mentors and beginning teachers. This study made initial steps towards exploration of the differentiated roles in school-based, mixed and full-release mentorship programs; further research in this area is needed. Potentially, an international or intercultural study of different models of mentoring and the role of school administrators in them can contribute greatly to our understanding of administrative supports necessary for beginning teachers' success. Finally, it is important to further examine the implications of the increasingly diverse contexts of schooling and ever-increasing policy requirements for administrator's role.

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# APPENDIX A

## Interview Protocol (NTC Client Leads)

1. Could you please describe the expectations for the role of the school administrator (principal/assistant principal) within teacher induction program?

2. In what ways do school administrators assume the role of instructional leaders within the teacher induction program?

3. Can you think of examples of effective principals' collaboration with mentors/school-based coaches to ensure successful teacher induction processes?

4. What are the specific aspects of school administrators' work that relate to the implementation of teacher induction program in their schools?

5. How do school administrators coordinate induction activities with other school-based initiatives and evaluation procedures?

6. To what extent does the effectiveness of teacher induction program depend on school administrators' support through resources and policies, culture modeling, and creation of working conditions conducive to new teachers' success?

7. Do you have any other comments about the observed role of school administrator in developing and sustaining a school-based new teacher induction program?