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A NEW BEGINNING TEACHER INDUCTION PROGRAM

By
Thomas P. Jones

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
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Approved by
Professor

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ABSTRACT

Thomas P. Jones
A New Beginning Teacher Induction Program for Paulsboro High School
2004-2005
Dr. Robert Kern
Educational Leadership

The purpose of this study was to develop and implement a new and effective

beginning teacher support network at Paulsboro High School using an action research

approach. During the study, a total of ten teachers participated ranging from one to two in

years of experience in teaching at Paulsboro High School. The primary data collection

techniques used in the study was surveys and one-on-one interviews with all of the

teachers. The survey instrument was given to all of the teachers and one-on-one

interviews were conducted before school, after school, or during common planning

periods. The major finding of the project was that the district needed to provide better

support for all of the new teachers entering into the district. This support was found to be

both formal and informal in nature through better training of the staff prior to the start of

their careers as well as more careful pairing of the new teachers with their mentor

teachers leading to a more successful mentoring program. These two suggestions were

proposed to the administration of the school district with the idea of increasing student

achievement through better teacher performance.

Acknowledgements

I would like to start by offering my sincere thanks to my wife Amy and my daughter Abigail for their support, understanding, and most of all love throughout this endeavor. If not for everything that they did for me, going through the program at Rowan University would not have been possible. For this, I pledge my never-ending love and sincere thanks to the both of you.

I would also like to thank the rest of my family for their love and support throughout these last five years. I will never forget all that you have done for me while I was going through this program. For everything that you have done for us, I thank you from my heart.

I would next like to thank my field mentor Mr. John Giovannitti and the rest of the administration at Paulsboro High School for everything that they did for me throughout this internship experience. Your leadership and guidance have shown me what it is like to be a true leader in a school setting. I want to thank all of you for your patience and understanding in exposing me to all aspects of being a school administrator.

Finally, I would like to thank my university mentor Dr. Robert Kern and the rest of the faculty in the Educational Leadership department at Rowan University. Throughout my five years going through this program, I have learned so much about being a leader in a school setting and I feel like I am now prepared to take on this difficult task. Everyone in the department has been so knowledgeable and understanding and for this, I thank all of you. Dr. Kern, special thanks for guiding me through this internship experience. Your knowledge, understanding, and support are what got me through the tough times during the past year. Thank you for being a true mentor and leader.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

<u>Focus of the Study</u>

First year teachers are faced with the difficult task of trying to educate all of their students and making sure that they all succeed, while coping with the personal pressures of being new to the field of education. At Paulsboro High School and many other schools across the nation, there has been a great deal of difficulty in attracting quality educators and retaining these new teachers. As a result, the students in these schools have suffered and achievement scores are reflecting this ongoing trend. This study investigated the possible causes of this problem and attempted to offer and implement effective long-term solutions. The results of this study will help to develop a new beginning teacher induction program for Paulsboro High School. This program will replace the already existing program at Paulsboro for first and second year teachers. By researching other programs throughout the country and locally, this study determined what Paulsboro High School can adopt and implement for increased success. The ultimate goal was to lead to higher levels of teacher retention leading to higher levels of student achievement.

The American Federation of Teachers has provided five characteristics for effective beginning teacher education programs. They consist of: all beginning teachers participate, the program lasts at least one year, all beginning teachers are assigned quality mentors, beginning teachers have reduced teaching loads, and a summative review completes the program. The Paulsboro School District has some of these characteristics

in place in that all beginning teachers participate, the program lasts one year, and a summative review does completes the program. However, not all of the beginning teachers are assigned quality mentors. Most of the new teachers in the school district are assigned a mentor sometime in September. These teachers rarely meet, do not have common planning time, and are not regularly afforded the opportunity for peer reviews. Also, the school district does not reduce new teachers' teaching loads, but rather gives most new teachers heavier loads than veteran teachers. Based on the No Child Left Behind Act, by the year 2014, all students will be required to achieve at either the proficient or advanced proficient levels on the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA). The new induction program at Paulsboro High School attempted to steer the district in the right direction and ultimately lead to increased student achievement through better teaching.

Purpose of the Study

This study was conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Arts Degree in Educational Administration for Rowan University. In addition to the study, a yearlong internship was completed under the direction of school leaders in the Paulsboro Public School District. This internship was designed to allow for real world experiences in a shoulder-to-shoulder setting that provided for exposure to a wide variety of situations. The skills that were developed during this internship were in both the leadership and management categories. The internship also included long-term action research, which provided the opportunity to put research into practice allowing for evaluation, not just speculation.

The purpose of this study was to implement a new, effective beginning teacher induction program for Paulsboro High School. This new induction program replaced the one already in existence, using an action research design, and will eventually be implemented district wide. At this stage of the research, the beginning teacher induction program will be defined generally as a program geared towards new teachers helping them adjust to the rigorous field of education today. This study allowed for long-term educational research and evaluation of the research in a real world environment. This was an important process, as the administrator of today must constantly evaluate the educational environment of his or her school, while constantly looking toward the future to see how the next initiative can improve his or her school.

<u>Definitions</u>

In order to allow the reader a better understanding of the educational language in this thesis, the following definitions, explanations, and references are provided for the study:

Alternate Route: A program in which school administrators can conditionally hire talented college graduates who did not directly study education while in college. This program can eventually lead to permanent certification provided the teacher succeeds in the classroom and also attends classes that discuss many of the aspects of education today.

HSPA: The High School Proficiency Assessment is a test that evaluates student proficiency in math and language arts in accordance with the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards. The test is administered to all 11th grade students in the state of New Jersey regardless of classification. In order for students to graduate, there are minimum scores that they must achieve. If the student does not pass the exam, he or

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she is required to re-take the exam in the fall of his or her senior year. Should proficient levels not be attained the second time, the student is assigned to designated staff members who provide remedial assistance and assessment. Successfully completed assessments are then submitted to the state of New Jersey for evaluation in the event that the student does not pass the HSPA test again.

Induction: A system wide, coherent, comprehensive training and support process that continues for 2 or 3 years and then seamlessly becomes part of the lifelong professional development program of the district to keep new teachers teaching and improving toward increasing their effectiveness (Wong, 2004).

ISLLC: Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium is a nationwide set of model standards and assessments for school administrators to follow. This insures some form of consistency throughout the public educational system.

Master Teacher: A teacher who is considered by his or her peers as one who excels in all aspects of teaching. These individuals are the kinds of teachers' administrators should be looking for when assigning mentors to new teachers. Master teachers have worked extremely hard to develop the skills necessary to succeed in the field of education, and they should be asked to pass these skills on to the future teachers of our profession.

Mentoring: A part of an induction program in which a new teacher is teamed with a more experienced teacher or group of teachers in order to receive guidance and support while going through the early years of teaching. Mentors are available to answer any questions the new teacher may have, observe classes, solve problems, and discuss concerns in confidentiality. The purpose of mentoring is for the new teacher to be as effective as possible in the educational setting.

NCLB: No Child Left Behind-This is legislation that President George W. Bush signed on January 23rd, 2001. It is a comprehensive reform initiative of Congress. The plan has four major areas of focus. They are: stronger accountability for results, expanded flexibility and local control, expanded options for parents, and an emphasis on teaching methods that are proven to be successful (Government NCLB Fact Sheet, 2001).

Observation: An activity in which an administrator or peer teacher travels to a different classroom and sees the teaching process in action. Peer observations can be especially effective for a new teacher, as it allows him or her to enter another classroom and see what the educational process is supposed to look like. A seasoned teacher may also observe the new teacher during a lesson. After the observation, a meeting usually takes place, allowing both the new and veteran teachers to discuss problems, offer advice, and suggest alternate techniques.

Retention Rate: The rate at which new teachers return to the same job the following year. Many school districts are losing new teachers to other industries or to higher paying teaching jobs elsewhere resulting in a low retention rate. The departure rate for teachers with three to five years of experience throughout the country has been in the 20 to 30 percent range with the number rising to around 50 percent in some urban districts (Hare & Heap, 2001).

Limitations of the Study

The major limitation of this study was the small sample size. The Paulsboro Public School District only hires a small number of new teachers each year. This year was especially small, as the district has hired eight new teachers. However, of these eight new teachers, six were assigned to the high school level, which has a total teaching staff of

sixty. Thus, the turnover rate at the high school from last year to this year was ten percent.

Another limitation of this study was time. It was a challenge to manage the amount of time it took to work on all of these projects as well as teach full-time. With more time, this study could have been conducted across many different school districts that have similar demographics in order to investigate if there are any patterns throughout the schools. Also, to determine the effectiveness of the beginning teacher induction program, it should be evaluated every year and revised as needed. This study only covered the course of one year.

Setting of the Study

Paulsboro, New Jersey is an industrial town located in the western portion of Gloucester County across the Delaware River from Philadelphia. Paulsboro is bound by the Delaware River on the north, the Mantua Creek on the east, Greenwich Township on the west, and East Greenwich Township on the south.

The population of the borough in July of 2002 was six thousand, one hundred twenty-one, which represented a 0.6 percent decrease from the previous census. The borough has a total land area of two square miles. The area is economically challenged. The median average income of Paulsboro residents in the year 2000 was $35,569, yet the district does not qualify as an "Abbot District". The median house value in the borough as of the year 2000 was $78,600. The area is also very racially diverse as it is composed of 61.7% White Non-Hispanics, 31.6% African Americans, 4.4% Hispanics, 2.8% of two or more races, 1.3% that are of other races, and 1.0% American Indians (Paulsboro, New Jersey City Data, 2004).

For population twenty five years old and above, 75.4% of the residents have completed high school or higher in their educational careers, 6.0% have earned at least a Bachelor's degree, and 1.9% have earned a Graduate or Professional degree. Compared to the state average, the borough was above the state average in the following categories: unemployment rate (11.1%), African American population (31.6%), and Hispanic population (4.4%). The borough was also below the state average in the number of its students that attend college and percent of population with a Bachelor's degree. The crime index for the borough of Paulsboro was 401.3 in 2002, which was significantly higher than the national average of 330.6. In 2002, the borough reported 0 murders, 1 rape, 16 robberies, 32 assaults, 52 burglaries, 195 larceny counts, and 21 auto thefts (Paulsboro, New Jersey City Data, 2004). As indicated in these statistics, Paulsboro may not always be conducive to a quality education, as many of these crimes happen within walking distance of the high school or even a student's home. This may also be a reason why the district has difficulty attracting and retaining teachers, as the borough may be perceived as unsafe. Unfortunately, the district does not have enough money to offer teachers compensation for coming to this district as opposed to other wealthier districts.

Paulsboro High School was constructed in 1916 and consisted of 17 classrooms. Since that time, the high school has had three additions: one in 1931, another in 1965, and the final one in 2001. The building has three stories with the first floor halfway underground. The building houses 7th through 12th grades and contains an auditorium, cafeteria, gymnasium, and a newly constructed media center. In 2002-2003 a major Hollywood movie was filmed at the high school along with two commercials. The remainder of the district consists of two elementary schools; Billingsport School which houses grades Pre-

Kindergarten through two and Loudenslager School which houses grades three through six.

The current curriculum at Paulsboro High School is a comprehensive program containing academic, business, and fine and practical arts classes. Grades 7 and 8 take cycle and full year courses, while grades 9 through 12 take full year and semester courses. There are honors courses available in English, math, science, and history and advanced placement courses offered in calculus, English, and biology. All of the graduates are required to earn 130 credits. Paulsboro High School also offers a wide variety of sports and other extra-curricular activities. During the 2003-2004 school year, an alternative school program was established in order to help the most challenged students. The program operates as a school within a school and is housed in a separate area of the building, the parenting center portion of the media center. Students from Paulsboro High School, through an agreement with the Gloucester County Institute of Technology, may choose to attend each institution for half a day in order to pursue vocational training. This opportunity will not be available after the 2004-2005 school year, as the Gloucester County Institute of Technology will be a full time institution.

The administration of the Paulsboro Public School District in 2004-2005 consists of a superintendent, three building principals, three assistant principals, and a director of special services. The Board of Education was a nine-member policy body that was elected in April. The Board of Education receives input from the superintendent as well as the board solicitor and business administrator.

The teaching staff of the Paulsboro Public School District in 2004-2005 consisted of 120 professional staff members (Paulsboro School Personnel Directory 2004). Twenty

seven percent of the staff holds advanced degrees. The student to faculty ratio at the high school for 2002-2003 was 10.8, which was below the state average of 11.5. The range of teacher salaries was $32,850 for a first year teacher with a Bachelor's degree to $65,400 for a teacher at the top of the scale with a Master's Degree plus 30 credits (PEA Contract July 2004 through June 2007). The current teacher contract may be another factor in the district's inability to attract and retain quality educators. Teachers are consistently drawn to other school districts that offer higher pay and better benefits. Many new teachers take a job at Paulsboro to get some experience and then move on to another district that offers better perks.

Paulsboro High School has consistently recorded a suspension rate that is two times the state average. The suspension rate for Paulsboro High School for the 2002-2003 school year was 34.0% while the state average was 14.2%. The average class size for the 2002-2003 school year was 17.5 while the state average was 19.3. The student attendance rate of 90.7% for the 2002-2003 school year was below the state average of 94.3% and the faculty attendance rate was 95.4%, which was slightly below the state average of 96.4%. The total cost to educate a student in the Paulsboro School district during 2002-2003 was $10,725 while the state average was $11,313. The graduation rate for the class of 2003 was 85.6% while the state average was 89.4%. The combined average SAT score for the school in 2002-2003 was 960 while the state average was 1018. The school also scored well below average on the HSPA as compared to other districts around the state. In the Language Arts section of the HSPA for the 2002-2003 school year, 72.1 % of Paulsboro High School students scored in either the proficient or advanced proficient levels, which was below the state average of 80.1%. On the math section of the HSPA

test for the 2002-2003 school year, 47% of Paulsboro High School students scored in either the proficient or advanced proficient levels, which was far below the state average of 65.9% (New Jersey School Report Card, 2004). These statistics may also play a role in the district not being able to attract and retain quality teachers, as the school routinely scores below the state average on achievement tests and has above average suspension rates.

Paulsboro High School serves the communities of Paulsboro and Gibbstown for all students in grades 9 through 12 and the community of Paulsboro for grades 7 and 8. The borough of Paulsboro distinguishes itself from other communities in its close-knit nature and sense of pride. Many of the graduates from the high school routinely come back to the school during their college years to attend football games and just to revisit their roots. Also, many of the graduates return to the town of Paulsboro after completing college and remain lifelong residents. This fact was easily noticeable in that the principal of the high school, Mrs. Lucia Pollino graduated from Paulsboro High School, taught at the high school for twenty-one years, left the district to become an administrator at another school, but returned to become the principal of a school in the town where she grew up. The community is supportive of all of the school's athletic teams and takes great pride in the accomplishments of its students both in and out of the classroom. This aspect of Paulsboro may attract young teachers, as the town takes a great deal of pride in their students' achievements.

Significance of the Study

First year teachers at Paulsboro High School have traditionally struggled throughout the beginning of their careers. The school, which employs approximately sixty teachers,

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has seen fifteen non-tenured teachers leave the district within the past five years. This has resulted in a departure rate of 38 percent for Paulsboro High School, while the departure rate for teachers throughout the country with three to five years of experience has been in the 20 to 30 percent range. In some urban districts, the numbers reach as high as 50% (Education Issues Policy Brief, 2001).

One major issue facing Paulsboro High School is the type of candidates it has been attracting. Recently, many of the teachers that have been hired at the high school level are alternate route candidates. For the most part, these teachers have had no real experience in an actual classroom setting. These are individuals that would benefit most from a quality induction program, but the school district does not seem to be providing it. This has caused many teachers to leave our district in the beginning of their careers. Darling-Hammond (1997) cites the following reasons for leaving the profession: low salaries, difficult working conditions, and lack of support. With improved support and training, the district may be able to retain more of its quality teachers.

The school district, as well as the community, has a vested interest in this study, as it can lead to attracting and retaining quality teachers. In turn, this may increase overall student achievement levels throughout the district. Prior to this study, the Paulsboro Public School District was at a critical time in its history. A successful induction program was desperately needed in order to retain the pride of the district and promote a positive reform.

Relationship of the Study to the ISLLC

The ISLLC standards are significant to administrators of today, as well as future administrators. These standards are guidelines that represent the wisdom of colleagues in

schools, districts, universities, and professional associations at both the state and national levels in defining the importance and responsibilities of effective school leadership in the 21st century schools. All six of the ISLLC standards played a significant role in this research study.

Standard one states "a school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision that is shared and communicated by the school community" (2004, p. 12). This study provided an opportunity to develop skills in this standard by planning a new teacher induction program that can ultimately lead to more effective teaching. It also helped to develop beliefs and values of the educability of all, high expectations for teaching and learning, continuous improvement, and reflective practice. The research encouraged a shared vision for the entire school community that was assessed and revised as needed.

Standard two states "a school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to learning" (2004, p.14). The Paulsboro School District believes that learning for all students is the fundamental purpose of schools, that all students can learn, and that all students have multiple ways of learning. This study gave new teachers the opportunity to achieve this vision through professional development opportunities, lifelong learning experiences, high expectations, and programs designed to meet students' needs.

The third ISLLC standard focuses on the idea that "a school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of

the organization, operations and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment" (2004, p.16). During the research process, skills in these areas were enhanced through knowledge of organizational theories and models and principles of organizational development, including the use of technology. The study also provided a risk-taking venture, allowing increased responsibility for school improvement and high expectations for all.

Standard four indicates "a school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources" (2004, p.18). Skills were developed in these areas through knowledge and understanding of current research on schooling. This particular aspect of school leadership is often overlooked. Management of a school's everyday operations is no longer the only job of a school administrator. A good school administrator analyzes the needs of the school building while also keeping an eye towards the future, routinely investigating current trends in education. Our past teacher induction program was outdated, and new research in education proved that we were well behind many in initiatives. This study attempted to bring Paulsboro High School into the 21st century regarding teacher induction, leading to increased student achievement through retention of our quality teachers.

Skills relating to the fifth ISLLC standard were developed through knowledge of school leadership in modern society and knowledge of philosophy, history, and purpose of education. This standard is as follows: "a school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness and in an

ethical manner." (2004, p.20) The Paulsboro School District and administration certainly believe in ethical decision-making, as well as creating a warm and inviting school culture within the community. This study provided an opportunity to model personal and professional ethical behavior, as well as take responsibility for leadership actions.

Standard six of the ISLLC guidelines states, "a school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context" (2004, p.22). Through knowledge of models and strategies for understanding the change process and conflict resolution, this study allowed for reflection upon the process of change and what can be done differently to ensure success in the future.

In order to be an effective and successful school administrator, one must adhere to the guidelines set forth in the ISLLC standards. This research study, as well as the entire internship experience, provides an opportunity to model these standards and develop the skills necessary to become a dynamic leader of the 21st century.

Organization of the Study:

The remainder of this study was organized in the following way; Chapter 2: Review of the Literature, Chapter 3: The Design of the Study, Chapter 4: Presentation of Research Findings, and Chapter 5: Conclusions, Implications, and Further Study.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

In previous years, induction at Paulsboro High School has been a process in which

new teachers are assigned a mentor in September and these two individuals are sent off

on their own to either "sink or swim". The novice teacher does not receive any formal

training on how to instruct their students. They are thrown into the classroom, expecting

to simply survive their first year. The ultimate goal of all schools should be to increase

student achievement, not just to survive the initial years of teaching. The mentors at

Paulsboro do not volunteer; they are assigned by the administration of the school because

they seem to "fit" with the new teacher. Traditionally, there has not been a system of

checks and balances in which the mentor and protégé have scheduled times to discuss the

new teacher's progress and make recommendations for future lessons. Although all new

teachers at Paulsboro High School attend a three day in-service training session prior to

the school year on the theory of teaching, they are not introduced to the simple things that

all new teachers experience during their first year of teaching such as classroom

management, effective instruction, and adapting to different learning styles. A lack of

support and quality induction was thought to have contributed to Paulsboro's difficulty in

retaining its new teachers. In turn, this has cost the district in many ways, both financially

and emotionally. Research by Wong (2003) has shown that it costs school districts nearly

fifty thousand dollars for every non-tenured teacher that resigns. Also, it is difficult to

create a family atmosphere when the turnover rate for the members of the faculty is so

high. The new teacher induction program needed change to provide new teachers an opportunity to succeed. Revising and updating the existing mentoring program was an extremely important part of "this" process.

Over the next decade, in our country alone, more than two million new kindergarten through grade twelve teachers will be employed due to increased student enrollments, reduction in class sizes, and accelerating retirements among an aging teacher population (Darling-Hammond, 1997). These new teachers are being put into a very difficult situation, as the No Child Left Behind Act is requiring that all students, regardless of classification, perform at increased levels of achievement, or the school will lose funding. For this reason, it is becoming increasingly more important that new teachers receive proper induction in order to achieve these levels of student learning. Statistics show that, nationally, approximately 65% of new teachers with less than 3 years of experience actually participate in an induction program (Bolich, 2001). Research has shown that teachers who participate in effective induction programs are twice as likely to stay in the profession as those who do not participate in these programs (Wong, 2003). Current estimates show that more than 30% of new teachers will leave the profession within the first five years of teaching. The percentage is even higher in low-income schools, with as much as 50% or more leaving within the first five years (Hare & Heap, 2001).

Haphazard induction experiences have been associated with higher levels of attrition of new teachers as well as lower levels of teacher effectiveness (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). However, mentoring is not induction; a mentor is simply a component of a good induction program. Mentoring alone has been shown to be the least effective way to support new teachers in the field of education. Additionally, in

a recent survey, principals and new teachers rated mentoring alone as the least effective way to help first-year teachers. They believed, for the program to be successful, the mentor must be used in combination with other components of the induction process (North Carolina Teaching Fellows Commission, 1995). Mentoring is a one-to-one process whereas induction is a whole group process. Wong (2003) has illustrated the significant differences between mentoring and comprehensive induction. They are listed in Table 2.1 below:

Table 2.1

The Differences Between Mentoring and Comprehensive Induction

Mentoring	Comprehensive Induction
Focuses on survival and support	Promotes career learning and prof. development
Relies on a single mentor	Provides multiple support persons
Treats mentoring as an isolated event	Treats mentoring and induction as part of a lifelong professional development design
Limited resources spent	Investment is an extensive, comprehensive, and sustained induction program

Substantial evidence has shown that teacher qualification is tied to student achievement (Greenwals, Hedges, & Laine, 1996). Students learn what they are taught, so students will learn more if they are taught well. Research by Wong (2003) shows that

differences in teacher quality account for more than 90% of the variation in student achievement, and the only way to increase student achievement is with a knowledgeable teacher. Based on research in the state of Texas, the importance of having an effective teacher as opposed to an average teacher for four or five years in a row can close the gap in math performance between students from low-income and high-income households (Hanushek, Kain, & Riukin, 2001). The Islip, NY School District implemented a three-year induction program for new teachers in 1999. They experienced improvement in student achievement, which they view as resulting from improved teacher performance. Before induction, 80 students were enrolled in advanced placement classes with 50% achieving a score of three or higher. After induction, 120 students enrolled in advanced placement classes with 73% achieving a three or better (Wong, 2003).

It is important to note that many other countries throughout the world have comprehensive induction programs in which all new teachers are required to participate. Their students are also achieving at higher levels compared to the United States. The countries of Switzerland, Japan, France, and New Zealand have rigorous induction programs in which all new teachers take part in for at least two to five years. These countries provide a well-defined structure, many opportunities for professional learning, and constant collaboration between the new teachers and the school district. Lesson preparation groups, research groups, formal public lessons, and out of school training are common and sustained practices during their induction process. Britton et al. (2003) concluded that the United States should review the programs in these other nations and possibly adopt some of these strategies. He also believed that our country should mandate a structured induction program that can be adapted by all states throughout the nation.

According to Wong (2003), a successful induction program consists of three parts: proper selection of mentors, proper training of these selected mentors, and the actual process of inducting the new teachers into the field of education. Once all of these parts have been implemented into a new teacher induction program, the school has a much better chance of having their teachers succeed and remain in the field of education.

The first step toward creating a successful induction program is the proper selection of mentors for new teachers. Good mentors should be effective classroom teachers that are looked at by peers as "master teachers". Mentors should also be people oriented, open-minded, flexible, and empathetic. Ideal mentors are good listeners, have patience, and are willing to acquire new skills. Collaborative and cooperative skills are crucial social skills for mentors as well as receptiveness, responsiveness, openness, and dependability (Freedman & Jaffe, 1993). Menchaca (2003) came up with six essential qualities to consider when identifying mentors for novice teachers. These characteristics are: commitment to the role of mentoring, acceptance of beginning teachers, skills in providing instructional support, effectiveness in different interpersonal contexts, appropriate modeling of continuous learning, and the ability to communicate hope and optimism.

The next question that must be answered is how to pair the selected mentors with the new teachers in the school. The relationship between the mentor and his or her protégé is the heart of the induction process. A successful mentor/protégé relationship requires desire from both of the parties involved. The mentors should be matched with new teachers that are in the same building, teach the same grade level or subject area, and hopefully have a common planning period. There is some research that disputes the idea

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of assigning mentors that are within the same content area as the new teacher. Manchaca (2003) states that selecting mentors that are out of the new teachers' content area will allow the focus to be on basic classroom issues rather than on subject matter and content.

Proper selection of mentors is the first important step in creating a successful new teacher induction program. In too many instances, a mentor is a veteran teacher who has been randomly chosen by the principal and assigned to a new teacher. Once the school leader has identified a mentor to be paired with a new teacher, careful time and effort should go into the planning of the schedules of these new teachers. One excellent idea would be for these two teachers to receive common planning time in order to meet and discuss the educational process. This common planning time would allow for the team to meet and discuss problems, develop a strategy to address these problems, and reflect on whether or not the idea worked (DePaul, 2000).

After mentors have been chosen, these individuals need to be trained on how to mentor new teachers properly. Unfortunately, education has failed to realize what other industries have known from the start: formalized sustained training of mentors' matters when trying to produce leaders (Wong, 2003).

The single most important aspect to the training of mentor teachers is setting clear goals and coming up with methods for achieving these goals. Without careful planning, support, and goal setting, formal mentoring programs are destined to fail (Haensly, 1990). Successful mentoring behavior can be taught through continuous professional development opportunities and school districts should take advantage of these opportunities. These professional-development training sessions need to take place continuously throughout the entire school (Feiman-Nemser, 1996).

Once clear goals have been established, and a plan has been set for achieving these goals, the question remains, what do the mentors need to be trained in? Many mentors are frequently directed to simply "help the new teacher out", but many have forgotten what they did not know when they were novice teachers. Most good mentoring programs provide some type of orientation or training before the actual mentoring process begins. Mentors need to be trained on the educational communication skills of listening, observing, and suggesting ideas to new teachers. Many educators have not acquired all of these communication skills, as they are accustomed to being isolated in their own classrooms. The mentors need to be trained in these areas in order for the process to work efficiently. Mentor training and experiences can build the mentors capacity for leadership through structured professional development that includes training and experiences in classroom observation and working skills (Huling, 2001).

Once the question of what to teach mentors has been answered, the district must decide when the training will take place. Many mentoring workshops occur during the summer, in between school years, so as to train aspiring mentors for the upcoming year. While training usually occurs before mentors take on their new responsibilities, mentors are more likely to develop their skills if they have the opportunity to discuss questions and issues that arise during the course of their mentorship (Wong, 2003). This reflects the idea that mentors need to be trained on a continual basis. Once mentors have been selected and trained, it is time for the actual mentoring process to begin.

Novice teachers are leaving the profession at alarming rates and the main reason for this has been a lack of support. For this reason, it is imperative that school districts create formalized induction programs to train and support the new teachers. A good induction

program consists of selection of a mentor for the new teacher, training of the mentor

through professional development opportunities, and the actual induction process.

However, school districts need to make sure that all parts are carried out effectively in

order for the induction program to truly be a success. Research has proven that in order

for the process to be effective, mentors should be compensated, regularly scheduled

meetings need to occur, peer observations should take place, and training must continue

throughout the school year (Halford, 1999).

Halford (1999) believes that mentors should be paid, given release time, or otherwise

rewarded for participating in the program. This also lets the protégés feel better about

taking up their mentor's time. However, compensation of mentors is not a widespread

practice. Currently, there are only twelve states that require mentors to receive stipends

for giving their time (Brewster, 2001). In New Jersey, payment of mentoring fees is the

responsibility of the novice teacher, unless state funds are available. Generally, mentors

receive between $550 (traditional route) and $1100 (alternate route). The employing

district, at its discretion, may pay the cost of the mentoring fees. When state funds are

available, they must supplement, not supplant, district programs. Funds may be used for

stipends, release time for observation, substitute teachers, and training activities (Darling-

Hammond, 1997).

In addition to compensating mentors, regularly scheduled meetings should be set up in

order to allow for proper induction. Regular times for mentors and protégés to meet

should be built into the school's regular schedule. According to Ganet's research (2001),

the school should also provide study groups for new teachers so that they have an

opportunity to network. The administration of the school should also hold regular meetings of the new teachers to discuss school related issues.

In addition to meetings, mentors and protégés should arrange a series of peer observations in order to give the protégé a look at various teaching techniques. Peer observations provide good opportunities for inductees to visit different demonstration classrooms. A pre-observation meeting should first be conducted. The mentor and protégé can discuss what is going to take place during the lesson so that the new teacher can look at certain techniques rather than just the subject matter and what is being taught. After the peer observations take place, it is imperative that the teacher and protégé discuss the observation and answer any questions that the new teacher may have. The new teacher might choose to implement some of these strategies into his or her own classroom if improvement was needed in a certain area. He or she may want the mentor to observe again and provide feedback. This sequence of observation, assessment, practice, and evaluation should be an ongoing series throughout the school year to improve teacher quality (New York State Education Department, 2001).

It may also be beneficial for the mentor to observe the new teacher in action. A recent study of new teachers in New Jersey revealed that although nearly 75% were assigned experienced mentors in their first year of teaching; only 17% said that their mentors actually watched them teach in the classroom, most were observed only by principals or supervisors (Johnson, 2003). While assessment of new teachers by mentors is a good thing, it should never become formal in nature. Stallion and Zimpher (1991) found that mentors should never formally evaluate protégés because this undermines the trust and openness that are so critical to a good mentoring program.

In order for new teachers to succeed, there should also be a strong sense of administrative support for the program so new teachers feel that the school cares about their success. Strong support is the most critical aspect to new teachers feeling comfortable with and succeeding in the teaching profession. A school district needs to show these individuals support in everything that they do in order for the new teacher to feel like a part of the school family. Wong (2003) indicated that the easiest way to support these teachers is through effective training sessions and professional development opportunities.

In Tuscan, Arizona, the Flowing Wells School District consists of an induction program that lasts five to eight years. It is a very organized, specific, and sustained professional development program. At each level, beginning with "novice" and ending with "expert", teachers are required to participate in specific workshops covering key concepts for each year. Formative analysis of teaching also takes place using video analysis, observations; peer coaching, two "SPA" days with mentors, and conferences with the staff development coordinator. This program has produced 12 finalists for teachers-of-the-year for the state of Arizona, more than any other school district. It is so well known and replicated that they hold an annual workshop to explain their structure to other interested parties (Breaux & Wong, 2003).

The state of Connecticut also has a rather impressive process of inducting new teachers. Initiated in 1985, the Connecticut Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) Program is a statewide mandate in which new teachers must complete a three-year program before they are fully certified. Districts must provide each new teacher with a mentor or a team of mentors for at least the first year. In the second year, teachers must

complete a portfolio, designed to assess their knowledge and skill. These entries include a description of their teaching content, a set of lesson plans, two videotapes of instruction during the unit, samples of student work, and teacher commentaries on planning, instruction, and evaluation of student progress. The Connecticut Department of Education reviews the portfolios. Teachers not receiving a passing score after a second attempt are denied a license and may longer teach in the state's public schools (Youngs, 2003).

In order for new teachers to succeed, there should also be a strong sense of administrative support for the program so new teachers feel that the school cares about their success. Strong support is the most critical aspect to new teachers feeling comfortable with and succeeding in the teaching profession. A school district needs to show these individuals support in everything that they do in order for the new teacher to feel like a part of the school family. Wong (2003) indicated that the easiest way to support these teachers is through effective training sessions and professional development opportunities.

For too many teachers, the mentoring process results in a blind date. The teachers usually do not know each other and neither partner has input into the pairing (Aschheim, 2001). Educators must go beyond traditional mentoring and move to a comprehensive induction program if they hope to redesign professional development of new teachers. Every school district should offer a multi-year induction program that provides systematic help and support. This cannot be accomplished just by having another teacher with a full teaching load drop by when time permits or when problems arise (Lehman, 2003). Through proper selection and training of mentors and continued training of new teachers throughout the school year, induction programs have a better opportunity for

success. Teachers who go through comprehensive induction programs that are successful tend to focus on student learning earlier in their careers and leave the field of education at a lower rate (Wong, 2003).

A good induction program will benefit everyone that is involved, from the mentor, to the protégé, to the students, to the school district as a whole. Interestingly, the benefits that the mentor gets out of the relationship may be of equal or greater value than the benefits of the protégé. The process tends to increase the self-esteem of the mentors since they feel as though they are giving back to the teaching profession. Research by Wong (2003) has shown that the quality of teaching by mentors increases after going through the mentoring partnership. Mentors normally become refreshed and regenerated after assisting new teachers. This is a benefit for the entire school community. The process of helping new teachers also causes teachers to reflect upon their own beliefs on teaching, students, learning, and teaching as a career. More than two-thirds of mentors responded "definitely" to the statement that participation in induction programs provided positive professional growth for them (Hawk, 1986-1987). The mentors sited three reasons for the feelings of positive professional growth. They first stated that mentoring forced them to focus on and improve teaching in their own classroom so that they could model effective teaching for their protégés. Secondly, the mentoring process made them aware of the skills that are needed in order to effectively communicate with other individuals. Finally, mentoring helped the individual gain a better understanding of the roles of administrators and central office supervisors in the school district. It has also been shown that new teachers can provide veteran mentors with a new source of ideas about teaching methods

and use of technology that can improve instruction in the mentors' classrooms (Monsour, 2003).

The new teacher is also able to benefit a great deal from the mentoring process provided that the program was organized and implemented effectively. There are three major benefits that new teachers receive by going through a structured induction program. First, new teachers are able to gain fast assimilation into the school environment by participating in the program. Second, by being paired with an experienced veteran teacher, protégés are able to observe effective teaching methods and are more apt to adopt these methods into their everyday routines. Finally, the new teacher is introduced to the field of education as a continuously developing, lifelong learner (ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education, 1986).

The school district itself also benefits a great deal both directly and indirectly from a quality new teacher induction program. A school that enthusiastically welcomes beginning teachers and initiates them to active participation in the educational processes potentially reduces its teacher attrition rate (Driscoll et al., 1985). In addition, close supervision of the beginning teacher catches problems that may negatively affect the educational process or discourage the new teacher. Driscoll adds that involving experienced teachers in the induction program allows them the opportunity to pass on their expertise, which further demonstrates the school's long-term interest in professional development and creating a faculty of lifelong learners.

Chapter 3

The Design of the Study

Description of the Research Design

The purpose of this research was to develop a new, effective beginning teacher induction program at Paulsboro High School. In recent years, the district has experienced a great deal of difficulty in both attracting and retaining quality teachers. The assumption made was that a lack of support is the primary reason why new teachers in Paulsboro resigned or were terminated. This study investigated various methods of improving the district's induction program to retain quality teachers, enhance teaching methods, and ultimately lead to increased levels of student achievement.

Based upon a review of the literature, a variety of strategies and programs were examined for possible adoption at Paulsboro High School. Each program under review had strengths and weaknesses. However, the recurring theme appearing in all programs was the need for support. The question was, what could be put into place that would lead to increased support for new teachers at Paulsboro?

After studying the literature review, it was determined that gathering data from first and second year teachers currently employed at Paulsboro High School would be an essential part of the research process. In addition to exploring the attitudes and perceptions of new teachers at Paulsboro, personnel data from previous years and informal discussions with new teachers were also utilized during this study.

Development and Design of the Research Instrument

This research study primarily used a survey, Appendix A to obtain information regarding the target group's perceptions, attitudes, and perspectives. This data was used to evaluate the success of the existing new teacher support network and to guide Paulsboro in making appropriate changes to the program in the future. When developing the research instrument, there were many influences that went into the creation of each question. They include, but are not limited to, the following: the literature review, personal experiences, material learned in graduate coursework, and the perceptions of other teachers.

The questionnaire began with a positive statement, thanking each participant for completing and returning the survey. It also emphasized that the survey would remain anonymous and would be used to improve the beginning teacher program at Paulsboro High School. The survey then proceeded with forty-six questions divided into three groups. The first set of questions collected general information such as subject and grade levels taught this year, how each teacher arrived at Paulsboro High School, and the number of years in education. The second series of questions were designed using a Likert Scale with a range of strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. These set of questions asked for new teachers' perceptions on various statements regarding their first year experience at Paulsboro High School. Teachers answered questions relating to the school district's orientation program, the mentoring process, professional development opportunities, concerns such as teaching load or classroom management, and overall support by administration and faculty. The final set of survey questions was open-ended. It included four questions that provided each

participant an opportunity to describe an ideal first year of teaching and offer specific suggestions for improving the mentoring process and teacher support network at Paulsboro High School.

This study also included informal one-on-one discussions with first and second year teachers at Paulsboro High School. Again, a specific series of questions were asked in order to facilitate the discussion. They were open-ended in nature, allowing each participant an opportunity to elaborate on the new teacher support network. It was anticipated that these informal meetings would provide additional information that perhaps had not been revealed on the surveys. The discussion questions were as follows:

1. What were your expectations coming into this year?

2. Were you assigned a mentor prior to the start of the school year? If not, when were you assigned a mentor?

3. Do you have time to meet with your mentor regularly? If so, when? If not, would this be beneficial?

4. Have you been supported by the administration at the high school? How?

5. Have you been supported by the faculty and staff at the high school? How?

6. What else could the school do to support your needs?

7. How do you feel about the new teacher support network? What needs to be changed?

8. Have you had professional development opportunities presented to you? Did you take advantage of these opportunities?

9. Anything else to add?

Sample and Sampling Technique

A cluster sampling technique was used in this research study. The target population included first and second year teachers at Paulsboro High School, grades 7-12. A total of ten teachers participated. Six were first year teachers and four were in their second year of teaching. These teachers were asked to participate in the district's current new teacher induction program and mentoring process. Although the study had a relatively small sample size, the participants varied in gender, subjects taught, grade levels taught, and the route in which they arrived at Paulsboro (alternate, emergency, or traditional).

Data Collection Approach

Data was collected using several different methods. The first method of obtaining information was through an anonymous survey. This questionnaire was administered to a target group of new teachers in January 2005. At that time, six first year teachers and four-second year teachers were surveyed. Surveys were placed in teachers' mailboxes and were to be returned immediately upon completion. All responses were received within a few days.

Due to the small sample size, it was also feasible to conduct a series of one-on-one discussions with each new teacher. These informal meetings took place in January. They were scheduled during common prep time or after school. A total of ten discussion sessions took place, with each session lasting approximately 15-30 minutes. As indicated previously, each participant responded to a set of open-ended questions. Written notes were recorded in a logbook during the discussions as a method of collecting data for further analysis.

Finally, personnel data from within the last five years at Paulsboro High School was examined. This included the academic years beginning with 2000 and ending with 2005. Data collected included how many first year teachers at Paulsboro High School resigned or were dismissed during a given school year, how many teachers resigned or were dismissed before receiving tenure during a given school year, and what reasons were mentioned for leaving, if any at all.

Data Analysis Plan

The responses collected from the surveys as well as the interviews were analyzed to look for any patterns in responses from the new teachers. Each question in the survey was analyzed on its own and then groups of questions were looked at to see if there were patterns among different sections of questions.

Results from the informal discussions were also analyzed. Written notes were recorded in a logbook during each session. The notes were then further examined to determine if an overall theme or pattern existed for each question. A chart was created to organize this data and offer easier comparison. The chart listed the teachers across the top and the question numbers on the side. This allowed for a matrix to be created and allowed for easy comparisons between the teachers and their responses.

Finally, personnel files from 1999-2005 were accessed to calculate exact percentages for new teacher attrition rates each year. Specific information regarding reasons for leaving was also recorded to detect any possible patterns. Due to the time limitation of this study, statistics for the entire 2004-2005 school year were not available. However, it was anticipated that these numbers would be continually reviewed upon conclusion of the research study.

Chapter 4

Presentation of the Research Findings

The goal of any school district should be to increase student achievement. As discussed in earlier chapters, the best way to increase student achievement is by improving teacher performance. The question facing many school districts is how they go about supporting their novice teachers and improving their performance leading to increased student achievement. There are many ways to improve teacher performance; however studies have shown that the best way is through supporting these teachers with a new teacher support network and by providing professional development opportunities for new teachers. School districts should begin molding these teachers into master teachers prior to the start of their teaching careers and then continue to help them develop their skills through professional development opportunities. Through the collection of data from first and second year teachers, this study intended to find ways to improve the new teacher support network at Paulsboro High School leading to increased student achievement.

One thing that we as a society know and understand is that data is power. With initiatives such as No Child Left Behind as well as the high stakes testing that is occurring, school districts are constantly being statistically scrutinized on all levels. A highly effective school is one that looks at data gathered over a period of time, interprets the data, and then acts on these interpretations to find ways to improve the school district. However, in a study limited by time and scope such as this one, certain liberties need to

be taken when interpreting the data. This chapter focused on two main questions; what information was found, and what did it mean? The section will be broken up into two sections; findings and analysis. The survey and interview results presented in this study focused on first and second year teachers' perceptions about the New Teacher Support Network at Paulsboro High School and how it can be improved.

Findings

For this study, ten first and second year teachers were surveyed and interviewed during the time period of January 6th, 2005 through January 26th, 2005. The surveys were conducted and collected in an anonymous fashion and the interviews were conducted on a voluntary basis before the school day, after the end of the school day, or during common planning periods. The survey population was a cluster sample of all first and second year teachers at Paulsboro High School. The teachers surveyed varied in gender, grade level taught, subject taught, and route taken to Paulsboro High School and represented a valid sample of all of the teachers at the high school. Table 4.1 listed below shows the demographics of the first and second year teachers at Paulsboro High School.

Table 4.1

Demographics of First and Second Year Teachers

Teacher	Gender	Grade Level	Subject Taught	Route
A1	Male	9-12	Algebra I, Math III	Alt.
B1	Male	9-10	US History I and II	Alt.
C1	Male	6-8	Special Education	Emerg.

Table 4.1 Continued

Teacher	Gender	Grade Level	Subject Taught	Route
D1	Male	9-11	Special Education	Emerg.
E1	Male	11-12	Chemistry/Physics	Alt.
F1	Female	7-12	Special Education	Emerg.
A2	Female	10-11	CP English	Alt.
B2	Female	9-12	CP Bio. /Earth Science	Trad.
C2	Female	7-12	Spanish I-IV	Alt.
D2	Male	9-10	Honors US Hist I & II	Trad.

The data collected from the surveys and interviews were then analyzed to look for patterns of responses from the participants.

The first six questions given in the survey were general questions about the grade level and subjects taught, and courses taught in their subject area. The remainder of the questions asked in this group dealt with the route that the teachers followed (traditional, alternate, or emergency certifications) as well as whether the teacher entered the profession directly out of college and the number of years the participant had been in the field of education. Paulsboro High School houses grades seven through twelve and all of the grade levels were accessed in the surveys that were distributed and collected. Of the first and second year teachers that were surveyed, 50% taught grade levels nine through twelve, 20% taught grade levels nine through ten, 20% taught grade levels seven and eight, and 10% taught grade eleven only. There were many subjects represented in the

surveys with 40% of the respondents teaching special education, 20% teaching science, and 10% each in the areas of English, mathematics, social studies, and foreign languages. The next question discussed the route that these novice teachers took in getting into the field of education. Of the teachers surveyed, 50% of the respondents were going through the alternate route, 30% were teaching on an emergency certificate, and only 20% of the new teachers actually went through a traditional college preparatory program before going into the field of teaching. These statistics are presented in table 4.2 shown below:

Table 4.2

Route New Teachers Took

Alternate Route	Emergency Certificate	Traditional Route
50%	30%	20%

The next question asked whether or not the teacher entered into the field of education directly out of college. Forty percent of the teachers surveyed stated that they did enter the field of education directly out of college, while 60% of the teachers went into another profession directly out of college and then eventually got into education. The final general question asked for the amount of years that the teacher had been in the field of education. Thirty percent of the teachers surveyed had been in the field of education for over five years, 10% had been in the field for three to four years, and 60% had been teaching for less than three years. Table 4.3 shown on the next page displays this breakdown:

Table 4.3

Number of Years in Education Prior to PHS

0-2 Years	3-4 Years	5+ Years
60%	10%	30%

The next thirty-six questions that were asked used a Likert Scale based on the

participants opinions of a statement. The following ratings were used by the respondents

in regard to each statement: 5, strongly agree, 4, agree, 3, neither agree nor disagree, 2,

disagree, and 1, strongly disagree. The first group of Likert Scale questions discussed the

new teacher support network and the mentor-protégé relationship for novice teachers.

The first question that was asked was whether or not the goals of the new teacher support

network were outlined at the start of the school year. The teachers surveyed had a mean

of 2.8 or somewhat disagreed that the goals were discussed at the start of the school year.

On average, all of the teachers agreed, a mean score of 4.0 that the school district

provided them with an orientation program prior to the start of the school year. For all

teachers that are hired prior to August, the school district offered a three-day workshop

on putting instructional theory into practice. For the first time in 2004, the school district

used one half of one day of this training on instructing the new teachers on how to use the

technologies used by the school district.

One of the most important ways to help and support new teachers is through the

pairing of these teachers with effective mentors. The next question discussed whether or

not the school district assigned the new teacher a mentor prior to the start of the school

year. Ninety percent of the teachers surveyed indicated that they had not been assigned a

mentor prior to the start of the school year. After the new teachers are assigned a mentor,

the school district should next provide ample meeting time for mentors and the new

teachers to discuss how to improve the novice teachers' performance. At Paulsboro High

School, 80% of the new teachers felt as though they had not been provided enough time

to meet with their mentors. Table 4.4 shows the results of this Likert Scale type question

about meeting time between new teachers and their mentors:

Table 4.4

School District Provided Meeting Time for My Mentor and Myself

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
0%	20%	0%	20%	60%

Studies have shown that one of the best ways to improve teacher performance is

through peer observations of their mentor teachers and other master teachers in the school

district. Only 10% of the teachers surveyed for this study felt like the school district had

provided them enough time to observe their colleagues in the high school.

Another way of improving teacher performance is by offering new teachers

professional development opportunities to improve their teaching abilities. At Paulsboro

High School, 70% of the teachers surveyed agreed that the school district had provided

the new teachers with professional development opportunities to improve their teaching ability. Table 4.5 displays this data:

Table 4.5

School District Provided Me Professional Development Opportunities

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
30%	40%	0%	30%	60%

Another initiative that began this school year was for the entire group of new teachers to meet after school once per month in order to discuss various aspects of teaching. The meetings were intended to provide forums to discuss the everyday occurrences of the school day and any questions the new teachers may have as well as ways to improve the overall learning environment in the classroom. While all of the new teachers agree that they have had time to meet as a group, they strongly disagree with the ideas that the meetings have been helpful.

Pairing the proper mentors with new teachers is a small but important step in the induction process of new teachers. In the past, mentors have been randomly assigned to new teachers based on whom the administration felt would be a good fit. There was no established set of guidelines for selecting mentors other than who would match up well personality wise and who would complain the least about being a mentor. At Paulsboro High School, any teacher qualified to be a mentor regardless of the amount of teaching experience the person had, or even the quality of teacher that they were perceived to be.

For this reason, only 20% of the teachers surveyed felt as though their mentor teacher

was an asset to them during their first year of teaching. Table 4.6 displays the data

collected from this question:

Table 4.6

My Mentor Has Been an Asset To Me During My First Year

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10%	10%	40%	10%	30%

There was no clear majority either way on whether adequate meeting time was provided

for new teachers and their mentors to meet. A majority of the new teachers agreed that

they met with their mentors at least once per month; however only one teacher agreed

that he meets with his mentor at least once per week. Table 4.7 compares these two

statements and the responses received:

Table 4.7

Comparison of Meeting Times With Mentors

Time	Str. Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Str. Disagree
Once Per Wk	0%	10%	10%	40%	40%
Once Per Mo.	20%	40%	10%	20%	10%

Another way to facilitate more meeting times for mentors and their protégés would be to pair mentors and new teachers who have a common planning period. When mentors and new teachers are provided with the opportunity for meetings, certain topics should be discussed in order to try and improve teacher performance and in turn student achievement. The two main topics that are discussed when new teachers and their mentors' meet are classroom management and student learning.

Other than assigning a mentor to a novice teacher and properly training the new teachers through professional development opportunities, how else can school districts help new teachers to improve their teaching ability? The majority of the teachers surveyed at Paulsboro High School believed that release time provided by the school district and a reduced teaching load would lead to an overall improvement in their teaching ability. Table 4.8 displays the results from these two statements gathered from the surveys:

Table 4.8

What Would Allow Me to be More Successful during My First Year?

Idea	Str. Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Str. Disagree
Release Time	30%	40%	20%	0%	10%
Reduced Load	50%	20%	0%	20%	10%

Studies have shown that new teachers across the country usually receive the most difficult teaching assignments during their initial years in a school district. Seventy percent of the teachers surveyed for this study believed that a reduced teaching load

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would allow them to be more successful in their classroom. A reduced teaching load could consist of not having a homeroom, having a duty free period, or even having a maximum of only three different classes to teach in a particular subject area.

There have been many ideas discussed that school districts could employ to prepare new teachers to succeed in their initial years of teaching at a certain school. The next series of questions addressed whether or not Paulsboro High School has done enough to prepare their new teachers for success upon their arrival at the high school. A majority of the teachers did not have an opinion (mean of 3.1 with 80% responding with a 3) on whether or not the school district had prepared them to succeed in their classroom. There was also a majority of the teachers who felt that conditions in the school did not set them up for success in their classrooms. Finally, only 30% of the new teachers that were surveyed felt as though the new teacher support network addressed their performance during the school year and talked about ways to improve this performance.

There are many reasons for new teachers deciding to leave a job for a job in another school district or even in another profession. Low salary, a poor benefits package, and lack of job satisfaction are often some of the reasons cited for leaving a job in the teaching field. However, studies have shown that the number one reason given by new teachers for leaving the profession is lack of support. The survey that was distributed to the new teachers for this study discussed the support that these novice teachers received from the faculty and administration of the school district in a variety of areas. Sixty percent of the teachers surveyed indicated that the administration of the school supported them in the area of student discipline. In addition, 70% of the teachers surveyed felt as though the administration supported the decisions that the new teachers made in their

classrooms. Eighty percent of the new teachers agreed with the statement that the administration of the school district supported them as a whole.

While the vast majority of the new teachers felt supported by the faculty, only 30% of the new teachers believed that their mentor had supported their decisions and guided them through their initial years of teaching. Table 4.9 shown on the next page displays the data that was collected from these questions about support.

Table 4.9

Who Did You Feel Support From During Your First Year of Teaching?

Group	Str. Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Str. Disagree
Faculty	70%	20%	10%	0%	0%
Mentor	20%	10%	30%	10%	30%

As mentioned above, there are also other factors that are considered when discussing whether or not new teachers remain with a school district and continuity in the school district can be achieved. The Paulsboro Public School District has one of the lowest starting salaries for new teachers in Gloucester County in the state of New Jersey. In addition to having a low starting salary, the percent of increase in salary over the initial eight years of teaching at Paulsboro is minimal. This led to the question of whether or not new teachers were satisfied by the salary offered by the Paulsboro Public School District. Sixty percent of the teachers disagreed with the statement that they were satisfied by the salary offered by the school district and of the remaining forty percent, none of the

teachers agreed with the statement. Salary has often been cited as a main reason for promising new teachers leaving the school district for more lucrative job offers at other schools (Personnel File 2000-2003). The other factor that new teachers consider when looking at job offers is the benefits package that is offered by a school district. This led to the question of whether or not new teachers were satisfied by the benefits package offered by the Paulsboro School District. Sixty percent of the teachers surveyed are satisfied by the benefits package offered by the school district and only ten percent of the teachers surveyed disagreed with the statement that they were satisfied with the package offered. Table 4.10 displays the results of the two questions discussed above:

Table 4.10

I am Satisfied By the Salary and Benefits Offered by the District

Topic	Str. Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Str. Disagree
Salary	0%	0%	40%	20%	40%
Benefits	10%	50%	30%	0%	10%

Many experts have stated that if you are looking to make money, teaching is not the profession to enter. This statement was confirmed when ninety percent of the teachers surveyed disagreed with the statement that salary was the main factor in their decision to teach. This points out that the teachers that are entering the profession are doing so for all of the right reasons, and salary is not one of them.

The final section of Likert Scale questions discussed the areas that new teachers have been prepared and mentored in that would allow them to be successful in their classrooms. The first question asked if having the same prep period as their mentor teacher would allow novice teachers to be more effective in their classrooms. Sixty percent of the teachers surveyed felt that having a common planning period with their mentor teacher would allow them to be more successful.

New teachers should be prepared and mentored on how to complete the basic tasks that all teachers should know how to do and these questions focused on this. On average, half of the teachers surveyed agreed with the statement that they had been properly mentored in the areas of writing lesson plans and classroom management. Another important issue that needs to be addressed with new teachers is covering the required curriculum at a proper pace. Ninety percent of the teachers surveyed felt as though they had not been properly trained on how to cover the curriculum at a proper pace and were unsure if they were moving too fast or too slow in their classrooms. There were only twenty percent of the new teachers surveyed who agreed with the statement that they had been properly trained on dealing with the different learning styles of students. Table 4.11, shown on the next page displays the information gathered as to whether the new teachers had been properly trained and mentored in the areas listed:

Table 4.11

Were You Trained and Mentored in the Following Areas?

Topic	Str. Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Str. Disagree
Lesson Plans	10%	30%	30%	30%	0%
Class. Management	10%	40%	10%	40%	0%
Pacing	0%	10%	0%	60%	30%
Learning Styles	0%	20%	30%	50%	0%

The final group of questions dealt with many of the problems that first year teachers face when entering into a new school district. Only forty percent of the teachers surveyed agreed with the statement that they had been properly mentored in the area of using technology in the classroom. Fifty percent of the new teachers surveyed felt as though they had been properly trained in the area of grade and progress reporting while only twenty percent disagreed with the notion. The next problem that many new teachers face is dealing with problem students and working with the parents of students. On average, only half of the teachers surveyed felt like they had been prepared on how to work with problem students and the majority of the teachers surveyed felt like they had not been mentored on how to work with the parents of students. Table 4.12 displays the results from the survey questions of whether new teachers had been mentored on dealing with problem students and working with parents.

Table 4.12

I Have Been Mentored in the Following Areas

Topic	Str. Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Str. Disagree
Problem Students	10%	20%	30%	40%	0%
Working With Parents	0%	10%	40%	40%	10%

In addition to the Likert Scale and general questions asked on the survey, there was also a group of open-ended questions asked in order to give the participants the opportunity to share their opinions in a more free-flowing manner. One of the questions asked how the district could provide better support for its new teachers. The answers that were received the most on the question were for reduced teaching loads, assigning a mentor to the new teacher prior to the start of the school year, and a better orientation program prior to the start of the school year.

The next question discussed how the mentoring process should be changed in order to make it more effective in the future. Most new teachers felt like the process needed to undergo major changes in order to be successful for future teachers. The first change that was suggested by the new teachers was making sure that mentors and protégés were paired prior to the start of the school year. There was also a group of respondents who felt that a schedule needed to be developed that would provide for structured meeting time for the new teachers and their mentors. In addition, many felt that a schedule needed to be developed that would require new teachers to conduct peer observations and post-

observation discussions with veteran teachers in order to be exposed to various methods

and styles of teaching. The final response that was received was that new teachers should

be paired with mentors who face common challenges. Table 4.13 displays the ways that

the new teachers would change the mentoring component of the network.

Table 4.13

How would you change the mentoring component?

Change	Number of Responses
Better Pairing of Mentors	4
Scheduled Meeting with Mentors	3
Scheduled Peer Observations	2
Mentors With Similar Challenges	1

The final open-ended question on the survey asked for suggestions on how the

Beginning Teacher Support Network could be changed so that it was more effective for

future teachers. The major themes that were discussed in this question were for more

meetings with the rest of the new teachers and the administration, more structured

meetings with their mentors, and more preparation time during the school day. One

response that was on forty percent of the surveys was to allow new teachers to have a

duty free period during the school day that would allow for more prep time. The

respondents also believed that there needed to be more frequent meetings between the

entire group of new teachers and the administration at the school. Table 4.14 displays the

results from this question on how the new teacher support network could be made more effective.

Table 4.14

How would you change the New Teacher Support Network?

Change	Number of Responses
More Prep Time	4
More Meetings With All New Teachers	2
More Structured Meetings With Mentors	3
More Veteran Teachers in Meetings	1

In addition to the surveys that were distributed and analyzed, a series of short informal interviews were set up with each new teacher in order to seek out more in-depth answers to some of the questions on the survey. These sessions took place before school, after school, or during common planning times and were conducted on a voluntary basis. One question that was asked during the interview was whether or not the respondents were assigned a mentor at the start of the school year, and if not, when was a mentor assigned to them. None of the teachers surveyed were assigned a mentor prior to the start of the school year and most were not assigned a mentor until October or November when they asked for one. Another question asked in the interviews was whether or not the new teachers have the opportunity to meet with their mentors on a regular basis, and if so, when. Forty percent of the teachers indicated that they do have time to meet with their

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mentors on a regular basis. These meetings between the mentors and their protégés usually take place either after the school day has ended, or during common planning time between the individuals. The next three questions dealt with the important area of support and how the school district has supported the new teachers during their initial years of teaching. All of the new teachers that were interviewed indicated that they did feel a level of support from both the faculty and administration at the high school. These levels varied from feeling somewhat supported in their decision making to feeling extremely supported in everything that they do at the high school depending on the teacher. The final question on support asked for suggestions about what else the school district could do to support the needs of their new teachers. There were a variety of answers given to this question with giving the new teacher more release time being the most often cited response. Other responses to the question included freeing new teachers of homeroom and duty periods, following the discipline code more closely and consistently, discussing how to handle special education students, and finally going over some of the policies and procedures of the school district prior to the start of the school year. The final question that was asked was open-ended and provided the teachers the opportunity to add anything else that would be helpful to the induction process. The most poignant answer received was that the new teachers need to be assigned a "real mentor" who is a master teacher in their subject area and is willing to help the new teacher in all areas necessary in order to become a successful teacher. The responses gathered from the interviews were analyzed and the data was then coded and displayed in a matrix and this information is listed on the next page as tables 4.15 and 4.16.

Table 4.15

Teacher Discussion Themes: First Year Teachers Interviews Responses

Question	A1	B1	C1	D1	E1	F1
1	Positive	Supported	None	None	Hopeful	Positive
2	No, Oct.	No, Oct.	No, Nov.	No, Oct.	No, Oct.	No, Nov.
3	Weekly	No	No	Monthly	Weekly	No
4	Greatly	Somewhat	Somewhat	Minimal	Greatly	Somewhat
5	Greatly	Somewhat	Not Much	Somewhat	Greatly	Somewhat
6	No HR	> Consis.	No Duty	No Duty	No HR	Release Tm.
7	> Intense	> Discuss.	> Help	Neutral	> Discuss	> Meetings
8	Many	Many	Some	Many	Many	Many
9	Excited	Tch. Supp.	Enjoying	Happy	Hopeful	Excited

Table 4.16

Teacher Discussion Themes: Second Year Teachers Interviews Responses

Question	A2	B2	C2	D2
1	Hopeful	Excited	Improvement	Excited
2	No, Nov.	No, Oct.	No, Sept.	No, Nov.
3	Monthly	No	No	No

Table 4.16 Continued

Question	A2	B2	C2	D2
4	Greatly	Somewhat	Somewhat	Minimally
5	Greatly	Greatly	Greatly	Somewhat
6	Release Time	Duty Free	No Homeroom	Release Time
7	> Meetings	> Meetings	> Discussion	> Involvement
8	Many	Some	Many	Many
9	Excited	Hoping Improv.	> Support	Enjoying

In addition to gathering data from teachers that are currently employed by the school district, data from the previous five years was also looked at. During the time period of September 1999-June 2004, twenty-one new teachers were hired and of these, twelve or 57% were either not rehired by the school district or resigned from their positions. Not all of the teachers that resigned cited reasons for their departure, however of those that did, a pattern of responses was noticed. Many of the teachers that resigned from their position did so for two reasons, lack of support and more lucrative job offers at other school districts. Of the seven teachers that resigned during this time period, five stated the reasons mentioned above for their departure. The other two teachers that resigned did not give a reason for their departure other than the fact that teaching was not for them.

There have also been five teachers in the school district that were either terminated during the school year or not offered their position back for the next school year. The

number one reason given for these departures was lack of classroom management. The teachers were cited for not having control of their classrooms and the students were not able to achieve at the needed levels for these teachers to continue their employment. The only other reason that was cited for not rehiring a certain teacher was the absentee rate for one teacher. The individual missed a total of twenty-three days over a two-year period and was not rehired for this reason.

Analysis

There was an enormous amount of data collected from the surveys and interviews for this project and analyzing these data was a long, but important part of the process. Paulsboro High School has hired ten new teachers over the past two years and has had trouble attracting candidates who have been prepared to enter the teaching field directly out of college. This idea was pointed out when only two of the respondents to the survey indicated that they had gone through the traditional college preparation program prior to being hired at Paulsboro High School. With a lack of classroom experience prior to beginning their teaching careers, new teachers should immediately be assigned mentors in order to allow for the best opportunity to succeed. However, ninety percent of the teachers surveyed did not receive a mentor prior to the start of the school year meaning that a large majority of our new teachers are faced with going through their initial weeks or months of teaching without a mentor to help guide them along. In addition to being assigned mentors, adequate meeting time should be set up between the mentors and the new protégés. Eighty percent of the teachers surveyed felt that they had not been provided enough meeting time for the team and in turn, their progression may not have moved as quickly as could have been possible. In addition, only twenty percent of the

teachers surveyed felt as though their mentor teacher had been an asset to them during their first year of teaching. This shows that new teachers have not been able to establish a relationship with their mentors and this lack of a relationship could be another reason why new teachers feel a lack of support from the school district. A majority of the teachers agreed that they met with their mentors at least once per month, however they felt it would be beneficial to them if they had more regularly scheduled time to meet with their mentors, which could be accomplished through release time given to the teachers by the school district.

When new teachers and their mentors have the opportunity to meet and discuss classroom experiences, the topics of classroom management and student learning are usually discussed. A main concern of new teachers across the country is handling classroom management issues and this is also the case at Paulsboro High School. This seems to be an area where new teachers feel like they are not being supported by the administration of the high school. New teachers stated that they are reluctant to write discipline referrals on students because the administration viewed this as a lack of control of their classroom and a deficiency in their ability to teach. This idea results in the novice teachers not writing referrals and the students in the class receiving no consequences for their actions other than a detention or a call home, and the classroom management issues continue to persist.

Peer observation and peer coaching is another way that new teachers can improve their performance. However, only ten percent of the new teachers surveyed felt that they had opportunities to conduct peer observations and this lack of observation opportunities does not allow new teachers to be exposed to various teaching methods and may be one

of the reasons for a lack of feeling of support by the new teachers for the school district. In addition to effective mentors, and help from their peers, new teachers can improve their instructional abilities by attending professional-development workshops geared towards increasing achievement through improved instruction. Seventy percent of the teachers for the study agreed that Paulsboro has provided professional-development opportunities for them, which represented a step in the right direction for the school district in that they were encouraging the newer teachers to attend workshops, which may eventually lead to improvements in their teaching ability.

The majority of new teachers across the country are usually provided with the least desirable teaching assignments and this has been an issue at Paulsboro High School as well. The teachers surveyed felt as though providing release time and a reduced teaching load would be more beneficial during their initial years of teaching. The idea of release time would require the school district to bring substitute teachers into the school building so that the new teachers could go out and observe other teachers and witness various teaching methodologies in action. This would also allow the new teachers the time to discuss the lessons with the teachers that they had observed to find out why certain strategies were used during the lesson. The results of the survey have pointed to the ideas that providing new teachers with release time and also reducing their teaching load are two ways that the school district can support their new teachers and better prepare them to succeed in their classrooms.

The 2004-2005 school year brought about the beginning of the New Teacher Support Network at Paulsboro High School. One of the initiatives for the program was to have the entire group of new teachers meet together after school once per month. The results of

these meetings have been mixed with the teachers agreeing that they have had time to meet as a group but disagreeing with the idea that the meetings have been helpful. Many of the new teachers reported that they felt as though they were being talked at during their meetings and that the meetings usually offered little to no support and turned into sessions where complaints were made by teachers and actions were defended by administrators. In addition to these meetings, conditions need to be set up that would prepare them to succeed in their classrooms and the teachers need to have their performance assessed on a continual basis. Only thirty percent of the teachers that were surveyed felt as though the new teacher support network assessed their performance during the school year and offered suggestions on how to improve their deficiencies. By constantly assessing performance, administrators and mentors will better be able to identify deficiencies that the new teachers may have and will be able to offer advice on how to improve upon these weaknesses. This would also afford new teachers the opportunity to reflect on their own teaching and ways they can improve upon it.

The main reason that has been cited by new teachers for leaving the field of education is lack of support from the school district. Seventy percent of the teachers surveyed felt as though the administration supported the decisions that the new teachers made in their classrooms. Again this is very important, as teachers need to be perceived as masters in their classrooms and cannot afford to have the administration questioning all of the decisions that they make in the classroom. In addition, eighty percent of the new teachers felt as though the administration supported them as a whole. This is a good sign in that the administration is supporting its new teachers in different ways to help make their initial years in education successful. The new teachers also need to be supported by the

faculty members in a school district in order to make them a part of the teaching family in the school district. Other reasons that have been cited for leaving a teaching job are low salary and a poor benefits package. Many of the teachers that have left the district in the last two years have taken other jobs in the field of education that have offered higher salaries and a larger reimbursement for their graduate schooling. Prior to the 2004-2005 school year, the Paulsboro Public School District only offered benefits to an employee until the employee received tenure from the district. This was viewed as a negative for the school district due to the fact that many new teachers have families and these individuals were unable to receive family benefits until they were tenured teachers. This however changed at the start of the 2004-2005 school year and all new teachers now receive family benefits the day that they begin working for the school district.

How can the school district improve the mentoring component of the new teacher support network? One of the topics discussed would be for new teachers and their mentors to share a common planning period. In order for this to occur, new teachers and their mentors would have to be paired prior to the start of the school year to insure that a compatible schedule can be created and the pair can have a common planning period. Another topic that was discussed was having scheduled meetings between new teachers and their mentors in order to discuss the basic areas of teaching. Only twenty percent of the teachers surveyed felt as though they were trained by their mentor on dealing with the different learning styles of students. Master teachers are able to adapt their lessons to the different learning styles of students and novice teachers need to be instructed on how to deal with these differences and ensure that all of their students have the opportunity to succeed. In addition to dealing with the different learning styles of students, new teachers

need to be trained on incorporating technology into their lessons. Only forty percent of the teachers surveyed agreed with the statement that they had been properly trained in the area of technology. Technology is a very important aspect of successful classroom in the 21st century and new teachers need to be mentored on how to properly integrate technology into their lessons to allow their students to be more successful. This school year was the first where Paulsboro High School offered a technology in-service session for new teachers on grade and progress reporting and the results have been mixed.

The parents of students are a group that can be an ally of new teachers or can be their biggest enemy. Novice teachers need to be trained on how to work with these individuals in order to develop a working relationship between home and school. Only ten percent of the teachers surveyed felt as though they had been properly trained on the techniques in working with the parents of students. Working with parents is a talent that new teachers need to develop and effective school districts mentor their new teachers on how to develop this relationship in order to create a more successful classroom.

In addition to the Likert Scale questions on the surveys, analysis was made of the open-ended questioned posed to the new teachers. One question discussed how the school district could provide more support for first year teachers. The answers most received for this question were for reduced teaching loads, assigning a mentor prior to the beginning of the school year, and a more effective orientation program for new teachers. The start of the school year can be a very difficult time for first year teachers as they are nervous, excited, and scared all at the same time. These individuals are coming into a school where they are unsure of the policies and procedures as well as their surroundings in general. Paulsboro High School provided a three-day in-service training session for these

teachers on implementing instructional theory into practice. The teachers surveyed felt like an orientation on the procedures and policies that are in place for the school district would be more helpful than the orientation program currently in place. There was also a general consensus that teaching a reduced load would be beneficial and provide the new teacher opportunities to conduct more peer observations as well as meet with their mentors on a more consistent basis. This reduced teaching load could be accomplished through a duty free period or by not assigning the new teacher a homeroom. This period would allow the new teachers an entire extra period to plan for their classes and would also provide more opportunities for peer mentoring and coaching. Finally, the new teachers believed that pairing the mentor teachers with the new teachers prior to the start of the year would be beneficial. This would allow for the two individuals to be in contact with each other and make preparations for their upcoming venture. The mentor could compile useful information to discuss with the new teacher that would allow them to be successful earlier in their first year of teaching.

In addition to the suggestions mentioned above, a group of new teachers also believed that there needed to be more frequent meetings between the entire group of new teachers and the administration at the school. This would allow for more networking between the new teachers and would also allow for the sharing of ideas and teaching strategies. The new teachers also believed that including some veteran teachers in these meetings would be beneficial in that they could offer their expertise in certain situations. With these changes as well as the changes to the mentoring component of the support network, the new teachers believe that this program is one that could lead to success for its participants in the very near future.

This left the new teachers out on their own for the first couple of months of the school year, which is usually the most critical time for new teachers.

In this chapter, an enormous amount of data was collected and analyzed about the new teacher support network at Paulsboro High School. Surveys were distributed to all first and second year teachers at Paulsboro High School and were collected on a voluntary basis. In addition to the surveys, short interviews were set up for all of the new teachers so that they could expand on some of the answers given in the surveys. In review, the data presented many patterns and many conclusions could be drawn. The conclusions as well as further study needed are discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 5

Conclusions, Implications, and Further Study

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss the conclusions and implications that were drawn from the data collected. In a study limited by time and scope such as this, there was further study necessary and this is highlighted in this chapter. Finally, the relationship of the study to the Paulsboro Public School District as well as how the study led to leadership development was also highlighted.

This study collected and analyzed data from first and second year teachers at Paulsboro High School about the New Teacher Support Network that was implemented. New teachers are faced with the task of dealing with difficult classes, classroom management issues, writing lesson plans, and following curriculum while trying to ensure that all of their students succeed on standardized state-mandated tests. In order for success to be garnered, the new teachers must be introduced and exposed to the vision of the school district and must be supported by all of the stakeholders. The New Teacher Support Network developed ways to offer this support and led to improved teacher performance. In addition, the support network developed ways to attract and retain quality teachers in the Paulsboro Public School District.

Conclusions

A highly effective school district is one that recognizes problems and develops a plan to solve problems. An issue that Paulsboro High School had been dealing with for the last five years was attracting and retaining quality educators for its students. Studies have

shown that the number one way to increase student achievement, which should be the goal of any school district, is by improving teacher performance. This study looked into a number of different ways that the school district can improve teacher performance through the use of a comprehensive induction program geared towards new teachers. The results were changes to the mentoring program of the high school, and the creation of an induction program for all of the new teachers at the high school.

The number one reason that had been cited by teachers surveyed for leaving a job is lack of support. Based on this finding, Paulsboro High School needed to develop a comprehensive induction program that would support novice teachers through initial years. The program needed to be developed so that novice teachers are involved; it lasts a minimum of two years and contains many components.

New teachers at Paulsboro High School have consistently lacked competent mentors who were leaders for the past five years. Data was collected from first and second year teachers about the ways that the mentoring process should be changed in order to be effective. The opinions gathered from the surveys called for better pairing of mentors with new teachers, scheduled meeting times for new teachers and their mentors, and scheduled peer observations of their mentors. The first important step to change mentoring process was to insure that new teachers were assigned a mentor prior to the start of the school year. The data suggested assigning mentors to novice teachers during the summer prior to their first year of teaching in the district.

In addition to assigning mentors prior to the start of the school year, the new teachers called for scheduled meeting times between themselves and their mentors. In the past, mentors and teachers met as needed whenever mutual time was available. Based on the

findings from the surveys, scheduled meeting times needed to take place in order for ideas to be exchanged to enhance the development of the new teachers. In order for these meetings to occur, the school's schedule needed to be developed to coordinate common planning periods for the individuals involved in the mentoring process.

The study also indicated that the first and second year teachers surveyed at Paulsboro High School felt as though scheduled peer observations would benefit them in meeting their goal of becoming a master teacher. The observations should be for the novice teachers to observe other master teachers as well as for the other teachers to observe the novice teachers. Research revealed showed that in order for this process to be useful, the process of a pre-observation and post-observation needed to take place as well. These peer observations would allow novice teachers to see various teaching methodologies in action and expose these individuals to many aspects of teaching that they would otherwise not see. In addition, studies have shown that having peers critique your work is one of the best ways to improve performance. During the interviews with the new teachers at Paulsboro, it was indicated that the teachers would feel more comfortable with their peers observing them rather than administration. The new teachers indicated that peer observations allowed these individuals to improve performance through suggestions from peer coaches and mentors. In order for observation process to be successful, it was determined that they needed to be mandatory and set up by the new teacher support network. In addition, release time needed to be provided for the new teachers so that peer observations could take place.

Mentoring and peer observations also need to be supplemented by professional development opportunities for new teachers. New teachers at Paulsboro High School

have been encouraged to attend professional development workshops in order to improve instruction. In order to allow for professional development opportunities, the school district must again provide release time to their new teachers.

The next important step in the induction process was the development of roundtable discussions between the entire group of new teachers on a regular basis. Beginning in the 2004-2005 school year, Paulsboro High School set up meetings after school monthly that allowed the new teachers to sit down with an administrator and discuss school related issues. These meetings have not taken the shape that they were aimed at and the new teachers have felt like they were being talked at rather than holding discussions. During the interviews with the new teachers, changes were suggested to the meetings that occur on a monthly basis. The individuals suggested that the meetings needed to be discussions where problems were brought up and the entire group brainstormed for ideas that led to solutions to problems. In addition, the teachers believed that these meetings needed to take place on a more routine basis. The suggestion was for the meetings to occur on a bi-weekly basis rather than once per month.

All of the above-mentioned parts of the induction process lead to one word, support. The new teachers at Paulsboro High School that were surveyed felt as though the administration and the faculty as a whole supported them. However, they believed that their mentors were not much of help and that they provided little guidance through their first year.

Developing a comprehensive induction program allows school districts to mold and develop new teachers into master teachers. The program was developed and implemented to allow this process to occur. By implementing a program, Paulsboro High School is

taking a step toward alleviating their problem of retaining quality teachers and is improving teacher performance, which will lead to increased student achievement.

<u>Implications of Study</u>

Prior to the 2004-2005 school year, the idea of inducting new teachers into Paulsboro High School consisted of simply assigning the new teacher a mentor sometime during their first year. The teachers that were hired would feel a lack of support from the district and would eventually look for a job elsewhere or not be rehired due to incompetence. However, beginning during the 2004-2005 school year, Paulsboro High School instituted a New Teacher Support Network for its newly hired teachers, which led to improved instruction, a reduced teacher attrition rate, and increased student achievement.

The goal of the New Teacher Support Network was to provide better support for newly hired teachers leading to improved instruction. Research has indicated that the number one way to increase achievement is through improved instruction. The program that was in place prior to this year has not allowed for the proper support and guidance that new teachers needed and change was necessary. Data was collected and analyzed from first and second year teachers that indicated the changes that were necessary in order to develop and implement a program that would support the new teachers. In addition, a group of selected veteran teachers were sent to professional development workshops in order to be trained on the mentoring process. These individuals are being used as the mentors for new teachers this school year and this process will aid in the development of novice teachers into master teachers. Through the development of the Support Network, a plan is in place to improve instruction and lead to increased student achievement.

<u>Leadership Growth</u>

The experience of conducting a study such as this has allowed for the development of many leadership skills. The experience has taught many valuable lessons, which will now not have to be learned during the difficult task of acclimating to an administrative position. The greatest lesson that was learned from this experience was not a particular technique, or skill developed, rather that there is still so much more to learn. The body of knowledge that is required of a school administrator to make decisions on a daily basis that affect an entire community is mind numbing.

Today's school administrators must be leaders that are interested in the betterment of the entire school community. Based on this idea, the ISLLC standards were developed for school leaders and this study allowed for the development of leadership skills guided by these standards. Standard one of the ISSLC's indicates that a school administrator is a leader who promotes the success of all students through the development and implementation of a vision that is shared by all involved in the school. This standard was mastered when planning the new program and also looking to continuously improve the school district. The study planned an overhaul of a previous system that was in place and led to continuous improvement of the entire teaching staff through professional development opportunities.

A school administrator should also be a leader that encourages lifelong learning and continuous professional development. Targeting certain veteran teachers and training them on the proper strategies to be an effective leader mastered this standard. This professional development opportunity as well as the opportunities offered to the new

teachers in the district have addressed and led to achieving the school's vision and mission.

The new teacher support network was a program that came with many risks as well as rewards. As stated in ISSLC standard three, an effective school leader promotes success for all of its students through management of the organization and providing a safe and effective educational atmosphere. This standard was mastered through expecting quality instruction, regardless of the years of experience an individual has. The development of the new teacher support network allowed for success for all students in the school building through improved instruction by all of the teachers.

Standard four states that a school administrator promotes success of all students by responding to diverse community interests and needs and mobilizing resources. This study mastered this standard through the development of a program that will increase achievement of all students. All members of a community want a successful educational system and the development of this program has led to an improvement in the educational system for Paulsboro.

A school administrator should also be a leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner. This study allowed for the development of this skill through the process of conducting the surveys and interviews and implementing the ideas of the new teachers. In addition, the study allowed for the development of reflecting on a project and deciding where changed needed to occur. Understanding, and mastering the change process is a skill that effective school leaders are able to master and utilize as a tool. In order to enact change throughout a

school system, many ideas, schools' cultures, and understanding the learning community had to be understood.

Organizational Change

The development of the new teacher support network at Paulsboro High School led to an entire program being developed for novice teachers in the district. Beginning in 2004-2005, newly hired teachers participated in an induction program that provided support and guidance through their initial years of teaching. The program also developed a component where veteran teachers were targeted and trained to become mentors for newly hired teachers. These individuals were then assigned to a new teacher and provided these individuals with the support necessary to foster improved instruction. This program also developed teaching groups of new teachers that met with an administrator on a regular basis and developed solutions to problems that new teachers face on a consistent basis. Finally, new teachers and veteran teachers have participated in the peer observation process on a regular basis at the school. A schedule was developed for these observations and the novice teachers have been given feedback from their peers. This program has allowed for tremendous growth and development of the new teachers hired at Paulsboro High School and the district is attracting and retaining more quality teachers.

Further Study

The study pointed at a specific deficiency in the school system and developed a plan that addressed the problem. Once the plan had been developed, the many facets of the plan needed to be enacted. During the study, there were individuals who were reluctant to change and were satisfied with the status quo. However, change is necessary in order to continuously improve the school system. In order to determine the effectiveness of the

program, additional time is necessary to examine the changes. The need for further study given additional time includes better collection of data, a larger sample size, and ability to examine other programs already in place. This study would benefit immensely from collecting data over a span of two to three years. By extending the time period, the changes that are implemented each year can be critiqued and analyzed in order to continuously update the program and allow for the most effective support network possible. The small sample size is another reason that the time frame of the study needed to be lengthened as the more teachers that participate; the more data would be collected, allowing for more analysis and improvements implemented.

In addition to expanding the sample size through the use of the entire district, the support networks of more institutions need to be analyzed. For this study, a small number of programs that are already in place across the country were examined; however this needs to be expanded. By looking at other programs that are in place, Paulsboro High School can decide if there are other aspects of inducting new teachers that are missing from its current program and adopt these ideas for future years. In addition, during the 2004-2005 school year, Paulsboro High School sent six of their veteran teachers to workshops on mentoring and how to be an effective mentor. The district must utilize these individuals in the coming years for the mentoring portion of the support network and analyze the effect that these trained individuals have on the new teachers. By looking at additional data and examining more programs, adjustments will be made to the program in order to insure success. Continuing and expanding the study will enable consistent updating of the New Teacher Support Network, which will make the program more effective.

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Appendix A

Instrumentation

Novice Teacher Survey

Beginning Teacher Support Network Survey

The faculty, staff, and administration of Paulsboro High School hope that your first year of teaching in the district has brought about much success and gratification. If you would please complete the survey and return it to Mr. Tom Jones upon completion, it would be appreciated a great deal. The results of this survey as well as discussions with the new teachers and the administration of the high school will be used to make our beginning teacher support network more effective in the future. Thanking you in advance and good luck the rest of the school year.

1) What grade level do you teach? _____

2) What subject area do you teach? _____

3) What courses do you teach in this area? _____

4) Are you an alternate route candidate or a traditional route candidate? _____

5) Did you enter the teaching profession directly out of college? _____

6) How many years have you been in the field of education? _____

For the next group of questions, please respond in the following way: 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree.

7) The school district outlined the goals   5   4   3   2   1
   of the new teacher support network at
   the start of the school year.

8) The school district provided me with   5   4   3   2   1
   an orientation program prior to the
   start of the school year.

9) The school district assigned me a   5   4   3   2   1
   mentor teacher prior to the start of the
   school year.

10) The school district has provided   5   4   3   2   1
   enough time for meetings between me
   and my mentor.

11) The school district has provided   5   4   3   2   1
   enough time for me to observe my
   mentor teacher.

12) The school district has provided enough time for my mentor teacher to observe me.	5	4	3	2	1
13) The school district has provided me the opportunity to attend professional development workshops to improve my teaching ability.	5	4	3	2	1
14) The school district has provided time for new teachers to meet as a group.	5	4	3	2	1
15) My mentor teacher has been a great asset to me during my first year of teaching.	5	4	3	2	1
16) I have had adequate meeting time with my mentor teacher.	5	4	3	2	1
17) My mentor and I meet to discuss teaching at least once per month.	5	4	3	2	1
18) My mentor and I meet to discuss teaching at least once per week.	5	4	3	2	1
19) Classroom management is my main concern when meeting with my mentor teacher	5	4	3	2	1
20) Student learning is my main concern when meeting with my mentor teacher.	5	4	3	2	1
21) Release time provided by the school district would allow me to be more successful in the classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
22) A reduced teaching load would allow me to be more successful in the classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
23) The school district has prepared me to succeed in the teaching profession.	5	4	3	2	1

24) Conditions in the school set me up for success in my classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
25) The new teacher support network has assessed my performance during this school year.	5	4	3	2	1
26) The administrators in the school district support me in the area of discipline.	5	4	3	2	1
27) The administrators in the school support my decisions in the classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
28) The administrators in the school support me as a whole.	5	4	3	2	1
29) The faculty in the school has been supportive and helpful.	5	4	3	2	1
30) My mentor has been supportive in my decisions and had guided me throughout the school year.	5	4	3	2	1
31) I am satisfied with the salary offered by the school district.	5	4	3	2	1
32) I am satisfied with the benefits package offered by the school district.	5	4	3	2	1
33) Salary was a main factor in my decision to teach.	5	4	3	2	1
34) Having the same prep period as my mentor teacher would allow me to be more successful in my classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
35) I have been prepared and mentored in the area of writing lesson plans.	5	4	3	2	1
36) I have been prepared and mentored in the area of classroom management	5	4	3	2	1

37) I have been prepared and mentored in the area of covering the curriculum at a proper pace.	5	4	3	2	1
38) I have been prepared and mentored in the area of student learning styles.	5	4	3	2	1
39) I have been prepared and mentored in the area of using technology in the classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
40) I have been prepared and mentored in the area of grade and progress reporting.	5	4	3	2	1
41) I have been prepared and mentored in the area of working with problem students.	5	4	3	2	1
42) I have been prepared and mentored in the area of working with the parents of students.	5	4	3	2	1

43) What can the school district do to make our new teacher support network more effective for future new teachers?

44) Describe your ideal first year of teaching in a school district.

45) How can the district provide better support for new teachers?

46) How should the mentoring process be changed in the school district?

Appendix B

Interview Questions For New Teachers

Interview Questions For New Teachers

Teacher:

Date:

1. What were your expectations coming into this year?

2. Were you assigned a mentor before the start of the school year? If no, when were you assigned a mentor?

3. Do you have time to meet with your mentor regularly? If so, when? If no, would this be beneficial?

4. Have you been supported by the administration of the school? How?

5. Have you been supported by the faculty of the school? How?

6. What else could the school do to support your needs?

7. How do you feel about the new teacher support network? What needs to be changed?

8. Have you had professional development opportunities presented to you?

9. Anything else to add?