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Bryan T. Taulton

December 2014

RETAINING HIGH QUALITY TEACHERS THROUGH MENTORSHIP AND  
SUPPORT: THE PRINCIPAL'S ROLE

A Doctoral Thesis Presented to the  
Faculty of the College of Education  
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education  
in Professional Leadership

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT PAGE**

What a remarkable journey it has been, one that began with apprehensive steps perhaps, but through the guidance of my advisor, help from family and friends, and support of my beautiful wife and daughters, I was able to easily excel and triumph through the challenges that this capstone experience necessitated. As I complete the final chapter of my official academic career, it is only fitting and proper that I acknowledge all of the people that have supported me throughout this momentous undertaking over the course of the past two years.

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## **DEDICATIONS PAGE**

This doctoral dissertation is dedicated to my grandmother who has always inspired and guided me in spirit along this journey. My mother Charlotte, who as a single parent, made it beyond possible for me to realize my true potential; my wife Chasity and our two beautiful daughters Brylee and Channing for their unyielding encouragement and support. In addition, this masterpiece is dedicated to all the teachers and professors from over the course of my educational career who have challenged my intellect and ensured that I remained steadfast in producing high-quality work. Thank you!

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### **ABSTRACT**

Retaining teachers, especially those new to the profession, continues to emerge as a problematic task that is plaguing public school systems throughout the United States. When teachers depart from the profession so quickly, educational systems become destabilized in their ability to provide students with high quality teaching and learning experiences. The principal's role in implementing a formal campus mentorship program and conscientiously supporting beginning teachers has been found to significantly increase teacher retention.

This study applied a mixed methods approach to explore the impact that campus beginning teacher mentorship programs and supportive school leadership practices have on teacher retention. Through utilizing perception based data collection instruments that yielded numerical generalizations and invaluable qualitative insight, the results of this study documented and highlighted the influential factors and pivotal role that campus principals play in teacher retention. Beginning teachers report feeling disillusioned and unfulfilled shortly after entering the profession, and formal mentoring programs provide beginning teachers with the supportive network necessary to withstand the inevitable new teacher challenges.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter I Introduction .....	1
Background of the Problem.....	3
Statement of the Problem .....	6
The Purpose of this Study .....	9
Significance of this Study.....	9
Research Questions .....	10
Research Design .....	11
Theoretical Framework .....	12
Scope.....	13
Definition of Terms.....	14
Summary .....	15
Chapter II Literature Review .....	16
Historical Background .....	17
Category 1. NCLB/State Mandates & Excessive State Testing/Testing Pressure.....	19
Category 2. Poor Salary and Budget Cuts.....	22
Category 3. Lack of Influence/Respect as Professionals .....	25
Category 4. Dissatisfaction with Working Conditions .....	27
Category 5. Insufficient Induction/Mentorship Programs.....	30
Category 6. Inadequate Administrative Support .....	33
Recruitment Efforts.....	35
Administrative Support for New Teachers.....	37
Induction and Mentorship Support for Beginning Teachers .....	39
History on Texas Legislative Mentoring Program Initiatives .....	41

Effective Administrators .....	49
Ineffective Administrators.....	54
Effective Mentorship.....	56
Ineffective Mentorship .....	63
Gap in Literature.....	65
Chapter III Methodology.....	67
Descriptions of Research Design.....	68
Research Questions .....	69
Setting .....	69
Subjects .....	80
Procedures .....	82
Instruments .....	83
Analysis.....	85
Limitations.....	86
Chapter IV Results.....	87
Descriptions of results in terms of population sample.....	176
Conclusion.....	177
Chapter V Conclusions.....	178
Discussion of the Results .....	180
Implications for School Leaders .....	188
Implications for Further Research .....	193
Conclusion.....	195
References .....	198
APPENDIX A.....	219

APPENDIX B.....	221
APPENDIX C.....	228
APPENDIX D.....	238
APPENDIX E.....	240

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. District Student Demographics: Student Information.....	72
2. District Staff Demographics: Staff Information.....	73
3. District Teachers by Years of Experience.....	74
4. District Professional Staff Information.....	75
5. 2002 – 2014 District First Year Teachers with No Prior Experience.....	76
6. 2002 – 2014 District Retirees.....	77
7. 2008 – 2013 District Teacher Retention Data.....	78
8. 2008 – 2013 Retention Summary of Teacher Cohort.....	79
9. Breakdown of Participants: Beginning & Veteran Teachers.....	81
10. Breakdown of Participants: Former & Retired Teachers.....	81
11. Breakdown of Participants: Current, Retired, and Former Principals.....	82
12. Beginning Teacher Survey Results: Question One.....	91
13. Beginning Teacher Survey Results: Question Two.....	92
14. Beginning Teacher Survey Results: Question Three.....	94
15. Beginning Teacher Survey Results: Frequency of Responses.....	95
16. Veteran Teacher Survey Results: Question One.....	101
17. Veteran Teacher Survey Results: Frequency of Responses.....	112
18. Former Teacher Survey Results: Frequency of Responses.....	117

## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

Extensive research substantiates the magnitude of the impact that high quality teachers have on student achievement. Although many factors contribute to a student's academic performance, including individual characteristics, family, and neighborhood experiences research suggests that, among school-related factors, teachers matter the most (Rand Education, 2014). However, teacher retention continues to present challenges for public school systems considering teachers, especially beginners, leave the profession at very alarming rates, every year. When teachers leave the profession, educational systems are placed at a disadvantage, which compromises student achievement. As a result of such high teacher attrition rates, school systems are left with unwarranted attrition expenses that cannot be recuperated and professional learning communities with vacated classrooms, which create obstacles toward efficiently and effectively educating tomorrow's leaders. Teachers are critical to the enrichment of our nation. Daily they are entrusted with the responsibility to disseminate knowledge to students, which in return, increases their preparedness to thrive as they matriculate through grade school and beyond (Donker, 2005).

Statistical information on the plight of new teachers indicates that nearly one-fourth of them will leave the profession after two years of service, and a staggering one-third will leave after three years (Rebore, 2008). Although some studies cite retirement, change in residence, child rearing, health issues, and numerous other reasons for teacher turnover, other research indicates better teaching opportunities, dissatisfaction with administrative support, student discipline problems, dissatisfaction with school

conditions, poor salary, and inadequate time as the contributing factors of teacher frustration (Ingersoll, 2001).

To improve teacher turnover rates, educational leaders can take proactive measures such as implementing a comprehensive campus mentoring program, which has been indicated by researchers as one of the most essential solutions to increase teacher retention. Successful mentoring benefits all stakeholders. For school administrators, mentoring aids recruitment and retention; for higher education institutions, it helps to ensure a smooth transition from campus to classroom; for teacher associations, it represents a new way to serve members and guarantee instructional quality; for teachers, it can represent the difference between success and failure; and for parents and students, it means better teaching (The National Foundation for the Improvement for Education, 1999). Existing induction programs vary in quality from old-fashioned “buddy systems” that provide limited emotional and logistical support to comprehensive, systematized initiatives that utilize carefully selected and trained mentors and provide structured time for interaction focused on improving new teachers’ content knowledge, classroom management, and instructional skills (New Teacher Center, 2012). Considering the variations of how such programs are coordinated and implemented at respective campuses, the beneficial components of new teacher mentoring programs rely heavily on the principal’s leadership values. Einhorn (1999) lists four research-based reasons why induction and mentoring programs are vital:

- First-year teachers are expected on their first day to do essentially the same job as the 20-year veteran.

- Teachers are isolated from their peers for most of the workday, thus preventing a "natural" mentoring/induction process.
- There is a "double barrier to assistance"-novice teachers are reluctant to ask for help for fear of appearing incompetent, while experience teachers are reluctant to offer help for fear of appearing to interfere.
- Frequently, novice teachers receive the toughest teaching assignment, such as the largest classes, unruly students, or subject areas for which they are unqualified to teach.

### **Background of the Problem**

Educational leaders understand that quality teachers are critical to the academic growth and social development of our youth (Boyer et al., 2004). Principals who have been more successful in retaining teachers have characteristics of successful entrepreneurs. These successful principals understand the value of people. They value teachers as individuals and sincerely want them to succeed and grow. The most successful strategies for these principals are those that give direct assistance to teachers (Carnes & Pulliam, 2004). Regardless of such current research findings, significant numbers of teachers cite that they leave their schools because they lack the adequate leadership support. The 'Sink-or-swim' method and other lesser approaches to supportive school leadership exact a high price on beginning teachers, their students, and their school communities (New Teacher Center, 2012). Regardless of the quality or source of their preparation, new teachers encounter a steady stream of distinct challenges in their initial years in the classroom (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Many struggle in isolation to navigate the steep learning curves characteristic of these early years.

The sheer size of the teaching force, combined with its relatively high annual turnover rate, means that there are large flows in and out of schools every year. The image that the data suggests is one of a “revolving door” (Ingersoll, 2004). Teaching and learning remain the fundamental principles upon which all educational systems were established. Teachers are an extremely important facet of any society for a multitude of reasons. They are the people who educate the youth of society, who in turn become the leaders of the next generation of people (School Dee, 2013). Regardless of this, public school systems across the country continue to grapple with retaining high-quality instructors, even though every year US schools hire more than 200,000 new teachers for that first day of class. By the time summer rolls around, at least 22,000 have quit (Graziano, 2005). A 2011 study found that teacher retention is a major concern since teacher attrition has grown by 50 % over the past 15 years. The national teacher turnover rate has risen to 16.8%. In urban schools, it is over 20%, and in some schools and districts, the teacher dropout rate is actually higher than the student dropout rate (National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future [NCTAF], 2011).

Over a million new teachers received mentoring between 1993 and 2003, but we know little about the magnitude of the benefits of this experience or how the impact of mentoring varied across different types of programs. Despite the popularity of mentoring, little is known about its impact on employee turnover and skill acquisition. Nearly all published and unpublished evaluations of mentoring programs have used research methodologies that fall short of providing credible estimates of the causal impacts of mentoring (Wong & Wong, n.d). As teacher retention continues to present challenges for school systems, the financial burden associated with teacher retention is

astronomical. The monetary loss for many schools impacts already stretched budgets and adds to the hiring struggles of school leaders. Estimates put the cost of teacher attrition at \$7.3 billion a year (NCTAF, 2011).

Understanding why teachers leave is the first step in getting them to stay. Teachers leave when they encounter environments that lack essential professional support, such as support from school leadership, organizational structures, workforce conditions that convey respect and value for them, and induction and mentoring programs for new and experienced teachers (Ingersoll, 2001). After a person has been hired, the next two processes involve placing that individual in an assignment and orienting him or her to the school community (Rebore, 2008). Principals need to know exactly what their responsibilities are for such things as mentor selection, new teacher and mentor training, orientation, monitoring of mentoring activities, and professional growth planning (Novice Teacher Support Project, 2003).

Useem (2001) noted that schools with a low turnover of teachers had principals who demonstrated the following skills and management styles:

- Implementing a strong induction program that reflected the principal's personal involvement in meeting with new teachers, having his or her office door open for conversations, assigning new teachers with classroom rosters that were not heavily weighted with challenging students, and providing mentors early in the school year;
- Overseeing a safe and orderly school environment with active support for teachers on disciplinary issues;

- Maintaining a welcoming and respectful administrative approach toward all staff, students, their parents, and school visitors;
- Developing the leadership skills of school staff;
- Providing materials and supplies to all teachers in a consistent, timely, and inclusive manner.

A management style grounded in respect for everyone in the school environment, along with strong communication and interpersonal skills and effective organizational strategies, encourages teachers to feel supported and gain a commitment to the school and to their responsibilities.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The beginning-teacher turnover rates in school systems across the nation strengthens the need to address the challenges faced by beginning teachers. In recent years, beginning-teacher mentoring programs have increased in an effort to provide support and encourage beginning teachers to remain in the profession. Mentoring programs are designed to ease beginning teachers' transition into the profession, while also providing professional development opportunities to build knowledge and enhance skills. A growing body of evidence suggests that beginning-teacher mentoring programs can positively affect teacher quality, students' academic outcomes, and school costs. Simply requiring that new teachers be assigned a mentor without regard to mentor or program quality will not accelerate new teacher development, reduce teacher attrition or significantly impact student learning (New Teacher Center, 2012). Diversity in the implementation of mentoring and induction programs, combined with a lack of rigorous research on program effectiveness, make it difficult for researchers to truly determine the

impact of induction and mentoring (Eaton & Sisson, 2008). High-quality induction programs also improve teacher retention, where lesser quality approaches do not.

Research by Thomas Smith of Vanderbilt University and Richard Ingersoll of the University of Pennsylvania has demonstrated that more than half of all teachers receive only basic on-the-job support that provides no significant benefits (NTC, 2012).

The rate of teacher attrition, or those teachers leaving the profession, is higher for beginning teachers than experienced teachers. Research has shown that increased teacher job satisfaction reduces this attrition (Liu & Meyer, 2005). Teacher job satisfaction has been directly linked to teacher attrition, with higher job satisfaction being linked to lower attrition (Liu & Meyer, 2005). Lower job satisfaction has been linked to stress, teacher burnout, and attrition (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005). These findings suggest improving job satisfaction may be an important step in retaining beginning teachers.

Research indicates that teachers continue to exit the profession just as quickly as they enter, which raises a definite cause for concern. New teachers' perceptions of administrative support are crucial to their decision to remain in the field (Bobbitt, 1993). The US Department of Education's 2005 examination of departures indicated that 56% of teachers left in 2003–04, citing job dissatisfaction and a desire to find an entirely new career (Kopkowski, 2008). Only one percent of beginning teachers currently receive the ongoing support that constitutes comprehensive mentoring when they enter the profession (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004). School districts across the country aspire to have the absolute best teachers in every classroom within their school system, which gives rise to a study that seeks to see these accelerated leadership efforts not only come to fruition but also sustained.

This study focused on the significance of beginning teacher mentorship programs and the necessary support practices demonstrated by school administrators to reduce teacher attrition. Schools that provide new teachers with more autonomy and face-to-face administrative support experience lower levels of new teacher attrition (Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006). Researchers indicate that well-designed mentoring programs also lower the attrition rates of new teachers (National Association of State Boards of Education, 1998). Variation across new teacher mentoring programs is likely to be found not only in the degree of their comprehensiveness but also the nature of the program elements. Even the most frequently encountered support component, mentoring (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004), may differ according to the degree of formality of the mentoring relationship, the selection and training of mentors, the amount of release time a mentor is given, the amount and nature of the support mentors give teachers, and the appropriateness of the match between mentor and mentee. The outcomes of interest regarding the potential impact of induction programs include teacher retention, student achievement, teaching practice, and participant satisfaction (Fletcher & Strong, 2009). With teacher turnover continuing to skyrocket, there is a dire need for a study that focuses on addressing the teacher retention crisis through developing mentorship programs and initiative strategies that educational practitioners can implement to retain quality instructors. The gap in knowledge of this study centers upon the formality and beneficial components of campus mentorship programs, from the teachers' perspective, and the role that school principals play in supporting and retaining beginning teachers.

### **The Purpose of this Study**

The intent of this mixed methods study was to comprehensively explore teachers' perceptions and perspectives in regards to their mentorship experience, the impact of such programs in relation to their professional development, and the principals' role in retaining high quality teachers. In this study, perception based questionnaires and surveys were provided to beginning, veteran, and former teachers to investigate and gain insight on how mentoring programs and supportive school leadership practices effect teacher retention. Current, retired, and former principals were also interviewed in this study to inquire about how they identify their role in supporting beginning teachers, structuring a campus mentorship program, and ensuring the effectiveness of beginning teacher support initiatives.

### **Significance of this Study**

Beginning teachers who receive regular support in their first years of teaching from a carefully selected, well-trained mentor often attribute their perseverance and increased efficacy to that support. Mentors and principals echo those testimonials and attest to the importance of a strong induction experience that is focused on the beginning teacher's practice and student learning (New Teacher Center, 2011). While campus mentorship programs set the framework for sturdy collegial support systems, which can have an immediate impact on student achievement; simultaneously, campus administrators serve as an integral component of new teacher proficiency and retention. A 2003 survey of 1,288 first, second, and third-year teachers conducted by Puget Sound ESD found that "Support from the administrator" was one of the top three items, along with "Positive school climate" and "Support of colleagues," on a list of benefits that

would influence teachers to stay in their current school building/district (Puget Educational Service District, 2003).

Effective principals must exhibit enthusiastic and inspiring leadership qualities that respect and value the input of all stakeholders. Insufficient organizational leadership structures and administrative support practices, ones that fail to go above and beyond to support teachers in the challenging realms of the school setting, create teacher burnout that ultimately leads to teacher turnover. The purpose of this study was to uncover the most valuable elements of campus mentorship programs and ideal campus leadership support practices that cultivate teacher retention. This was accomplished by gathering perspective and perceptive data from teachers and administrators at differing stages of their professional development. The research questions were designed to guide the research study and each question was answered in explicit detail in the results.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are principals' perceptions of their role in structuring, implementing, and evaluating a campus mentorship program?
2. From the teacher's perspective, what impact do campus mentoring programs have on teacher retention?
3. What specific aspects of mentoring programs do teachers find most beneficial to their professional development?
4. Do teachers' perceptions of the supportiveness of campus administration influence their decisions to change schools or leave the profession?

## **Research Design**

This study applied a mixed methodology in order to obtain authentic research data. The principal researcher provided surveys and questionnaires to a sizeable number of current, retired, and former educators which yielded quantitative generalizations, and priceless perceptive information based upon their experiences in regards to beginning teacher mentoring programs. The instruments utilized in the study were perception based and designed to gain valuable insight on how teachers characterize the benefits of the support they received upon entering the teaching profession on behalf of their mentor and or the campus principal's leadership practices. Data was collected from beginning, veteran, and former teachers through personalized questionnaires and surveys to collect meaningful qualitative and quantifiable information on the formality of mentorship support they received upon entering the teaching profession. School principals and executive school leaders were interviewed by the principal investigator to inquire and distinguish how they perceive beginning teacher mentoring programs, and their role in organizing, implementing, and assessing the effectiveness of the program to support and retain high quality teachers.

A backwards design approach was utilized in order to meticulously examine and uncover the reasons why beginning teachers are leaving the profession shortly after beginning their career. Understanding why teachers leave is rudimentary to retaining them.

A.) Setting/Participants/Subjects: A small urban school district in southeast Texas: staff members, colleagues, current beginning teachers (year 1 through 3), veterans (10 years or more), former teachers, retired teachers, and principals.

B.) The instruments and methods that were utilized to collect data in this study included research-based/personalized Likert scale question surveys; personalized questionnaires, and conducting interviews.

C.) The procedure(s) of this study began with a thorough review of the literature, which includes national trends on the current reasons behind teacher turnover. Most importantly, this study investigated how campus administrators play an intricate role in retaining quality teachers and organizing structured mentorship programs that educational practitioners can implement to retain quality instructors.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework was derived from a review of literature on teacher attrition trends, new teacher mentorship, teacher efficacy, and job fulfillment. Campus-based mentorship programs are essential to retaining quality teachers, but there is a lack of knowledge about how such programs are organized, implemented, and supported by principals. Lack of professional support is often cited as the primary reason why teachers leave the field (Griffin, Winn, Otis-Wilborn, & Kilgore, 2004). As a result, classrooms have become revolving doors as teachers continuously exit the profession shortly after entering. Six categories have emerged as indicators to teacher job dissatisfaction and turnover, which forms the framework for the literature review of this study: No Child Left Behind /State Mandates: Excessive State Testing/Testing Pressure, Poor Salaries: Budget Cuts and Underfunding, Lack of Influence/Respect as Professionals, Dissatisfaction with Working Conditions and Resources. Insufficient Induction & Mentoring Programs, and Inadequate Administrative Support of Teachers in Regards to Student Discipline and Parental Concerns also continue to emerge as critical

factors surrounding teachers leaving the profession, which places a profound emphasis on the supportiveness of campus leadership.

Teachers content with the categories listed above are more likely to remain in the teaching profession. Based on current research, teachers displeased with the categories noted above, however, are more susceptible to changing schools or districts or completely leaving the teaching profession. Several studies have shown that good mentoring programs can reduce attrition rates by as much as half (Graziano, 2005). However, principals are failing to organize such programs on their campuses to address the problems associated with teacher attrition listed above. The impact of addressing the causes of teacher turnover through a well-structured mentorship program that incorporates the principal's direct involvement sets the theoretical framework of this study. Throughout Chapter 2 of this study, the categories listed above are discussed in detail and supported through a review of the literature.

### **Scope**

This research study was conducted in a small school district located in southeast Texas. The qualitative and numerical analysis data contains information based upon the perceptions and perspectives of current, retired, and former educators. As a result of this research criteria, there were delimitations to this study. This research is a representation of a specific group of participants which consists primarily of middle school educators. The delimitations stem from the teacher turnover rates at the middle school level versus elementary and high school levels whereas turnover rates may differ. Another potential limitation of this study may arise from scheduling conflicts for principals to partake in the interview process. Ensuring that all participants were provided with an ample amount of

time to complete to surveys/questionnaires is also a limitation. Often times, educators view their participation in educational research as extra work to their overloaded schedules. Getting all subjects to actively participate presented a challenge because if the vast majority of subjects did not take part in the study, the results would be inconclusive.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Attrition:** Refers to teachers who leave their current school position on their own terms.

**New Hires:** Teachers who enter the profession with no previous teaching experience.

**Retention:** Refers to teachers who remain in their current teaching position from year to year.

**No Child Left Behind Act:** The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 is a landmark in education reform designed to improve student achievement and change the culture of America's schools.

**BTIM:** Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring is a mentoring program designed to increase retention of beginning teachers. The purpose of the Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring (BTIM) program is to establish or enhance a beginning teacher induction and mentoring program designed to increase retention of beginning teachers.

**Mentee:** A beginning and or novice teacher who is advised, supported, trained, and counseled by an experienced teacher.

**Mentor:** An experienced teacher helping a new teacher adjust to the profession of teaching.

**TxBess:** Texas Beginning Educator Support System launched in 1999, and was a research based mentoring program designed to support teachers as they move from their teacher preparation programs into Texas classrooms. Under TxBESS, beginning teachers

received support from a team of education professionals from their school and district as well as from a teacher preparation program.

### **Summary**

Research conducted by (Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005) concluded that teacher retention happens at the school level since new teachers make their decisions to stay in teaching based on the level of support and acceptance they receive at the building level. Research on why teachers leave the profession or opt to migrate to another school system indicates that addressing retention through professional development 1) improves organizational structures and working conditions and 2) improves professional support through targeted leadership preparation, which are most effective in retaining high-quality teachers. With such excessive teacher retention challenges, there is a definite need to investigate this issue and implement proactive campus initiatives that are focused on supporting and retaining the absolute best teachers since they hold the keys to student success. Teacher satisfaction depends on a complex mixture of internal attributes and external conditions, some of which are beyond the control of schools. Most school leaders are not in a position to guarantee lucrative contracts, pristine working conditions, or model students. But many strategies are available to provide support in the crucial early years of teaching, and the most positive approach for school leaders is to attempt to improve as many conditions as possible (McCann, Johannessen, & Ricca, 2005).

## **Chapter II**

### **Literature Review**

#### **Introduction**

Each school day, more than 53.6 million students walk into more than 94,000 K–12 schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002) in the hopes that the 13 years of schooling they will experience will dramatically enhance their chances of success in the modern world. There is a growing consensus among researchers and educators that the single most important factor in determining student performance is the quality of his or her teachers. If the national goal of providing an equitable education to children across the nation is to be met, it is critical that efforts be concentrated on developing and retaining high-quality teachers in every community and at every grade level (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005). Teacher attrition rates continue to grow, considering even those who make it beyond the trying first year are not likely to stay long since about 30% of new teachers flee the profession after just 3 years and more than 45% after 5 years. According to the National Education Association, 37% of the education workforce is over 50 and considering retirement, which presents a devastating setback —tens of thousands of new teachers leaving the profession because they can't take it anymore and as many or more retiring (Graziano, 2005).

This literature review focused on the issue of teacher retention and the pivotal impact that campus mentorship programs, which include induction and administrative support methods, have on remedying the national attrition dilemma. This study aimed to expose and highlight research findings regarding not only why teachers remain in but also decide to leave the profession. This review will provide educational practitioners

with comprehensive and strategic teacher retention initiatives that can be implemented on their campuses to decrease teacher turnover rates.

### **Historical Background**

Teachers represent one of the largest workforces in the United States. There are more educators than doctors, nurses, and lawyers combined; and according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, US schools employ 3.5 million K–12 teachers. The education industry employs roughly 12.5 million people, slightly fewer than the healthcare industry, the largest employment sector in the country (Graziano, 2005). With approximately 1.6 million teachers set to retire within the next decade, replenishing America's teaching force should be a top priority. Filling classrooms with teachers is only half the battle. Retaining them is equally important (Smollin, 2011).

Current research findings indicate that teacher retention is a major concern, since teacher attrition has grown by 50% over the past 15 years. Across the United States, approximately half a million teachers leave their schools each year. Only 16% of teacher attrition at the school level can be attributed to retirement. The remaining 84% of teacher turnover is due to teachers transferring between schools and teachers leaving the profession entirely (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008). As veteran teachers leave the profession due to retirement following long, productive careers, beginning teachers are provided with an opportunity to continue their legacy by fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of their predecessors.

The careers of these young and eager educators are short lived since they tend to exit the profession shortly after entering. Fourteen percent of American teachers leave teaching after only 1 year, and 46% leave before their fifth year, according to McKinsey & Company's report, *Closing the Talent Gap* (Auguste, Kihn, & Miller, 2010). In recent years, public education systems across the nation have seen a steady surge in teacher attrition rates, which disproportionately destabilize schools systems, considering teachers are cycling in and out of classrooms. The statistical facts regarding teacher retention speak for themselves: the turnover rate is substantially higher than other professions (NCTAF, 2002). While some teachers leave the profession due to retirement and family-related, mitigating factors, current research cites several other reasons for teacher turnover.

Many assume that retirement is the primary reason for teacher attrition, but when the facts are examined closely, it becomes clear that the number of teachers retiring from the profession is not a leading cause. In an analysis of teacher turnover, teachers reported retirement as a reason for leaving less often than because of job dissatisfaction or to pursue another job (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005). The Department of Education hired 3,818 teachers in 2011–12, which was almost 600 more teachers than hired in the previous year. But of those new hires, 354, or 9.4%, quit even before the end of their first year. This compares with previous first-year attrition rates of 7.8% (United Federation of Teachers, 2013). Teacher retirement has been consistently exaggerated. Policymakers and administrators blame retirement in a case of "wrong diagnosis and wrong prescription." You can't do a whole lot about retirement, but you can do something about the way schools are organized, operated, and managed (Ingersoll, 2004).

### **Category 1. NCLB/State Mandates & Excessive State Testing/Testing Pressure**

During the 2012–2013 school year, the State of Texas tested more students than any other state in the United States. To graduate from high school in Texas, students must pass 15 standardized tests (Iglee, 2013). Hence, by the time students graduate from a public high school in Texas, they will have spent 34 school days taking state-mandated standardized tests. Testing has become so “out of control” in Texas that even members of the State Board of Education have called it excessive. As more states have adopted new common core state standards, not only are students assessed in reading, writing, and mathematics, but testing will extend to other content areas and begin to assess students as early as kindergarten (Dawer, 2013). In the State of Texas, by the end of the 2012–2013 school year, 750,000 students will take the end-of-course exams in math, science, social studies, writing, and reading (Majcher, 2013). House Bill 5 was signed by Texas Governor Rick Perry in June 2013, which will reduce the number of standardized tests from 15 to five. The five assessments under HB 5 include Algebra I, English I (combined reading/writing), English II (combined reading/writing), Biology, and US History (University of Texas System, 2013). Currently, it is still unclear how this new testing system will be implemented; current high school students will be caught in transition, considering the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) system is in year two of its inception.

Texas students are hardly the only ones drowning in a deluge of tests. In Tennessee, 32 days are currently devoted to testing; in California, 28; and in Oklahoma, 25 (Dawer, 2013). In New York State, more than 1,100 college professors are rallying against excessive, high-stakes K–12 standardized testing, adding their names to a petition

that was sent to the Board of Regents (Monahan and Riede, 2012). The professors claim that such exams have failed to improve schools over the last 10 years and oppose the state's new teacher evaluation law that requires 20% of a teacher's evaluation to be based on how much his or her students improve on the tests (Monahan and Reide, 2012).

In regards to teachers' frustrations with the teaching profession and standardized testing, Schwartz (2013) went so far as to creating a web log where he and others openly express their frustrations with the American education system. He states:

"I entered teaching as a typical new teacher: bright-eyed, idealistic, and ready to inspire tomorrow's leaders. And then the reality of teaching slowly, but surely, squeezed the passion out of me. When I tried to shield my students from the problems that plague the system, it seemed useless. It became hard to face the students, parents, administrators, colleagues, and myself knowing all the problems with the education system and feeling not only powerless to solve them, but forced to contribute to them (I'm looking at you, standardized testing)."

"I felt like a teenager who just got a summer job at her favorite fast food restaurant. Instead of eating what I loved every day, I never ate it again after I saw how it was prepared. So when I left teaching, I stopped struggling with the gap between what I wanted teaching to be, and what it actually was. My anger towards the system has dissipated, but a small bit of frustration will always be there because I still care about students" (Life After Teaching, Part One: Four Reasons Why I'm Better Off, para. 4).

Amid the testing frenzy comes the accountability associated with student success rate, which adds an additional layer of stress on teachers across the country. Since the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001, standardized test scores in math and reading have become the most essential accountability measure used to evaluate public school systems. Teachers face challenges with high-stakes standardized testing that reflects federal academic standards. Studies show teachers fear that if too many students fail, harsh consequences could follow, such as teacher firings and even school closures (Mancini, 2013).

Such an environment has contributed to increased teacher stress and reduced teacher satisfaction (Mancini, 2013). Many educators resent narrowing curriculum and stifling creativity in favor of teaching to the test. A report conducted by the National Center for Education Information, "Profile of Teachers in the U.S. 2011" revealed that the majority of comments submitted by survey respondents were "expressions of strong opposition to the current emphasis on student testing." As states increasingly rely on standardized test scores to evaluate individual educators, determine teacher pay, and make layoff decisions, testing pressure will only increase (Smollin, 2011).

Many testing advocates believe that students should be assessed more in order to be college ready and/or prepared to thrive in an educated workforce. It is important to state policymakers that all high school graduates be college ready regardless of their specific educational or career plans (American College Test [ACT], 2005). Students nearing the end of their high school careers must be academically prepared to take the next step in their lives. Earning a passing score on an assessment that is used to determine grade promotion or high school graduation is one indicator of this

preparedness (ACT, 2005). Some testing corporations believe that standardized tests are reliable and objective measures of student achievement. Without them, policymakers would have to rely on tests scored by individual schools and teachers who have a vested interest in producing favorable results. Multiple-choice tests, particularly, are graded by a machine and therefore are not subject to human subjectivity or bias (Phelps, 2012). Standardized testing is a contributing factor that adds to the teacher turnover rate. Research also indicates poor salary and budget cuts as notable motives for teacher turnover.

## **Category 2. Poor Salary and Budget Cuts**

Teacher salary has been an ongoing discussion topic for many years, because educators believe they are substantially underpaid to take on the numerous challenges that the job necessitates. In comparison to the average American real estate broker who will experience a salary increase of about 500% over a 20-year span, the average American teacher will only experience a salary growth of about 170% over that same 20-year period (Schumacher-Hodge, 2011). Increased cost of living over the past years and unattractive entry and/or progressive salary increases cause college graduates to steer away from the teaching profession and to pursue more lucrative careers. Presently, average teacher pay is on par with that of a toll taker or bartender. Teachers make 14% less than professionals in other occupations that require similar levels of education. In short, teachers' salaries have plummeted for 30 years. The average starting salary is \$39,000; the average ending salary after 25 years in the profession is \$67,000. Such meager wages price teachers out of home ownership in 32 metropolitan areas and makes raising a family on one salary practically impossible (Eggers & Calegari, 2011). In

hard-to-fill areas such as math and science, school systems face tremendous challenges recruiting individuals with expertise since other careers tend to pay relatively more. Auguste, Kihn, and Miller (2010) polled 900 top-tier American college students and found that 68% would consider teaching if salaries started at \$65,000 and rose to a minimum of \$150,000. Currently, teacher salaries continue to stagnate, the workload continues to grow, and budget deficits remain.

Over the past several years, the teaching profession has also taken several disproportionate financial blows in terms of budget cuts, which have led to teacher attrition. As a result, the teaching profession no longer has the stability that has been deemed enticing to many of those who pursue a career in the field. A national survey conducted by the American Association of School Administrators found that two-thirds of respondents eliminated jobs during the 2009–2010 school year, and 83% expected further job losses in the 2010–2011 school year. Across the nation, the percentage of districts laying off employees nearly quadrupled between 2008 and 2009, growing from 8% to 31% (Frahm, 2010). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2011), Texas lost 900 jobs in local school districts. As states' public education systems continue to face budget deficits, many lack the essential funds to hire the teachers and support staff necessary to provide students with the best opportunities for success (Weber, 2011).

When teachers are laid off due to budget cuts, their fellow colleagues bear the burden of such shortcomings as their accountability increases, class sizes magnify, and the overall workload expands. The federal government wants more accountability for teachers and supports evaluating teachers based on student performance (Bruce, 2010). Larger class sizes are more difficult learning environments than a classroom that has a

smaller amount of students. This environment will not enhance the test results that politicians are looking for and do not allow students an opportunity to have more one-on-one time with their teacher (Conrad, 2013). In 2005, Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario surveyed members about the amount of time they spent on work-related activities and their attitudes about workload. The study revealed that full-time public elementary teachers work, on average, 53 hours per week. Over 27 of those hours are spent on non-classroom duties such as preparing for classes, marking, working with individual students, supervising students, attending meetings, completing paperwork, and contacting parents. The survey also found that almost all teachers feel overworked and report that work-related demands have had a negative impact on their personal lives and on their health. Today's teachers have an increasing number of demands on their time. In addition to state, district, and parental demands, teachers must manage parent conferences; attend staff meetings; and monitor buses, hallways, bathrooms, and cafeterias, among other tasks (Fisher, 2011). As teachers are continuously required to do more with low wages, dissipating funding, and increased job demands with stringent time restraints, teacher burnout is at an all-time high, which leads to high attrition rates.

Underfunding also adds to the teacher retention issue because teachers are often faced with performing tedious tasks that tend to take away from time that could be utilized to enhance instruction. Recently, copy paper has become a hot commodity on campuses and teachers complain that they do not have basic school resources. A lack of resources can also contribute to teachers' job dissatisfaction (Buckely, Schneider, & Shang, 2004). In interviews with New York City public school teachers, a large

percentage of new teachers said they did not have basic supplies and had to use their own money to purchase them (Buckely, Schneider, & Shang, 2004). Because they often do not have enough textbooks, photocopying becomes an unwelcome part of their job. In addition to low wages, budget cuts, and underfunding, the lack of influence that educators have on school policy displays a deficiency within school systems in which teachers feel they are not respected as professionals.

### **Category 3. Lack of Influence/Respect as Professionals**

Many teachers cite lack of influence over school policy among other reasons for leaving the education profession or transferring schools (Kain, 2011). These teachers believe that their opinions are not listened to or acted on in regards to the policies and procedures at their campuses. A combination of factors, including a lack of voice in district and state education decision-making, contribute to teacher turnover (Brooks, 2013). More recent assertions in the shared decision-making literature suggest that teachers must do more than simply participate. Teachers provide leadership, thus teachers need to be empowered to lead (Taylor & Tashakkori, 1997). The evidence suggests that teachers, acting as leaders, have a greater commitment to change (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999). Shared decision making should be seen as a means for teachers to lead in the school and beyond the classroom. Such extended influence and involvement enhance commitment to systematic change because it enables more empowered and efficacious teachers (Smylie, 1992).

When teachers enter the field, they have high expectations of making a difference. Too often, however, they realize quickly that they do not have the professional support, feedback, or demonstration of what it takes to help their students succeed; instead,

teachers are “teaching to tests and fighting bureaucracies rather than experiencing the thrill of opening young minds” (Omer, 2011). Teachers say they want a sense that they are making progress in their careers, that they can extend their knowledge and expertise beyond the walls of their own classrooms, and that they are being valued (Kopkowski, 2008). A new survey of 17,500 teachers by the largest teachers' union, the National Association School Union of Women Teachers, reveals a startling level of unease in classrooms across the country. A third of teachers (34%) do not feel respected as professionals, a quarter state that their classroom expertise is not valued, 77% have experienced more workplace stress in the last year, and nearly half (49%) have considered leaving the profession (Boffey, 2012).

In regards to teacher appreciation, Vilson (2013) went so far as to suggest that educational leaders should allow teachers to have more input in the decision-making process. He states:

“Teachers shouldn’t just have a seat at the tables currently reserved for wealthy businessmen, technology experts, policy wonks, fresh out-of-the-Ivy-League newbies, and politicians . . . They should get the opportunity to create the table, creating the consortia, and developing the protocols for how we discuss our profession. Respect for expertise goes a long way towards making teachers feel appreciated” (If America’s Serious about Appreciating Teachers, Here’s what it Takes, para. 5).

As teachers gain recognition and become more recognized as professionals, the “authority paradox” becomes more apparent, creating a need for change to more distributed forms of leadership (Blase, 1993).

#### **Category 4. Dissatisfaction with Working Conditions**

Dissatisfaction with working conditions plays an immense role in retaining quality teachers. Teacher satisfaction is important to study and consider for several reasons because schools with more satisfied teachers are more effective (Ostroff, 1992). Teaching has been reported to be one of the most stressful jobs in the United States (Dworkin, Haney, Dworkin, & Telschow, 1990). Teachers who are dissatisfied could negatively affect the morale of their students and fellow teachers, which could result in decreased motivation of students and staff (Ostroff, 1992). Evidence continues to mount that teachers' working conditions are unacceptable; state statistics show class sizes in the Houston Independent School District average above 40 students (Radcliffe, 2007). Another first-year teacher described her working conditions by stating, "We weren't allowed to use the copy machine [for handouts], so I had to stop at Kinko's every morning on my way to work . . . There was never any toilet paper in the bathrooms for the kids, so I had to bring that, too." After reading a student's journal that depicted violent acts directed towards her, she decided to leave the profession (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Today's teachers also have an increasing number of demands on their time. In addition to state, district, and parental demands, teachers must manage parent conferences; attend staff meetings; and monitor buses, hallways, bathrooms, and cafeterias, among other tasks (Fisher, 2011). Amid all of the extra job responsibilities lie the apprehensions regarding school safety.

In recent years, campus safety has been a very hot topic among parents, teachers, and school leaders. With the occurrence of devastating school shootings over the past two decades, teachers are concerned about breaches in campus safety such as unlocked

doors, faulty surveillance systems, and unpreparedness of crisis drills. Teaching can exact a considerable emotional toll on those in the profession. Teachers have to break up fistfights and be very conscientious about the possibilities of students bringing weapons to school (Graziano, 2005). The United Federation of Teachers (2013) reports that breaking up fights is the primary cause of school-related injuries among its members.

Campus climate and school culture are also noteworthy factors that can contribute to teacher attrition. School climate is created by the attitudes, beliefs, values, and norms that underlie the instructional practices, the level of academic achievement, and the operation of a school. School climate is driven by how well and how fairly the adults in a school create, implement, model, and enforce these attitudes, beliefs, values, and norms. Climate is largely created by the adults in a school and has been described as the “feel” of a school’s general atmosphere. The product of good school climate is a strong school culture. School culture is “the way we do that here.” The “that” can reflect any attitude, belief, value, norm, procedure, or routine, including “how we do relationships at this school.” In a school with a strong culture, any staff or student will be able to explain and demonstrate “how we do that here.” Culture and climate are aspects of an interactive system in that changes in one produces changes in the other. However, school culture varies from school to school because it is dependent on how the adults in learning communities enact those rules, values, and norms (Saufler, 2006). If the climate and the culture of a school building do not support the induction activities of mentoring, collaborating, and growing professionally, then new teachers will not be successfully socialized into the school organization. While the climate refers to the morale or attitude of the organization, the culture refers to the expectations or unwritten rules that the

organization establishes as its norm behaviors (Gruenert, 2008). For example, suppose a recent college graduate arrives at a first teaching assignment with a wealth of knowledge, including best instructional strategies and groundbreaking practices. This teacher is eager to implement these and other ideas that have been part of pre-service training. Once in the classroom, however, this teacher discovers that he or she needs assistance in curriculum planning, time management, and ideas for how to manage student behavior. However, the teachers at this school have a sink-or-swim mentality and do not believe in helping new teachers. Many of them have even stated that they made it on their own so the new teachers should do the same (Joiner & Edwards, 2008).

Teachers in California cite a lack of collegial support amongst teachers, meaning they did not have “a strong team” to draw on at their school and there was too little trust and respect among the staff (Berry, Raspberry, & Williams, 2007). School climates and working conditions that include teacher decision-making practices regarding both instruction and school governance issues, enforce student discipline policies, incorporate professional development opportunities, strive for teaching assignments aligned with certification and background, and provide extra compensation for difficult and time-consuming duties facilitate the sharing of knowledge and skills among new, mid-career, and more experienced teachers (Boyer et al., 2004). The climate within a school building and the workforce conditions it encompasses act as either a support or a deterrent for teacher retention (Ingersoll, 2001). Workforce conditions that encourage the capabilities and emphasize the worth of individuals contribute to retention (Council for Exceptional Children [CEC], 2001).

Research has shown that in schools where students perceive an organized school structure, fair discipline practices, and more positive student-teacher relationships, the “probability and frequency of subsequent behavioral problems” is lower (Gregory & Cornell, 2009). In the last 30 years, a growing body of research has confirmed the importance of the learning climate for children and adolescents. Compelling empirical research shows that a positive and sustained school climate promotes students' academic achievement and healthy development. Not surprisingly, a positive school climate also promotes teacher retention, which itself enhances student success (National School Climate Council, 2007).

#### **Category 5. Insufficient Induction/Mentorship Programs**

Since the advent of public schools, education commentators and reformers have perennially called attention to the challenges encountered by newcomers to school teaching. Although elementary and secondary teaching involves intensive interaction with youngsters, the work of teachers is done largely in isolation from colleagues. This isolation can be especially difficult for newcomers who, upon accepting a position in a school, are frequently left to succeed or fail on their own within the confines of their classrooms—often likened to a “lost at sea” or “sink or swim” experience. Other commentators go further, arguing that beginners tend to end up in the most challenging and difficult classroom and school assignments, akin to a “trial by fire.” Indeed, some have assailed teaching as an occupation that “cannibalizes its young.” These are the very kinds of issues and problems that effective employee entry, orientation, and support programs—widely known as induction—seek to address. Teaching, however, has traditionally not had the kind of induction programs for new entrants common to many

skilled blue- and white-collar occupations and characteristic of many traditional professions (Ingersoll, 2012).

Researchers suggest that campus leaders should understand that their conscientious selection of mentors and stewardship of campus induction/mentorship programs are critical in retaining quality teachers. New teacher induction programs are designed to help transition beginning teachers into the classroom and acculturate them to the specific school and district setting in which they will work (Mutchler, 2000). Mentorship programs help beginning teachers learn by doing, apply theory in practice, and also inspire them, keeping them motivated to persevere. New teachers experience anticipation and excitement as they begin the new school year. Soon after the start of the school year, life can become overwhelming for these beginnings. They become overwhelmed and disillusioned with the career choice they have made. Mentors can be invaluable in getting the teacher through these difficult moments of survival and disillusionment and can offer guidance and support (Myers, 2009). Research data indicates that teachers make their decision to stay or leave a campus based on the support they receive from the administration (Johnson et al., 2001). Strong induction and mentorship programs stem teacher turnover rates. Several studies show that good mentoring programs can reduce attrition rates by as much as half. Richard Ingersoll, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania and a respected researcher in the field of education, analyzed statistics from 10 studies on mentoring and teacher induction to sort out what works and why. His analysis, published in the *American Educational Research Journal* (Ingersoll, 2004), concludes that new teachers who receive no induction are twice as likely to leave teaching after their first year compared to those who receive all

six of the supports his study identifies. These supports include having a mentor from the same field, collaborating regularly with other teachers in the same subject, and being part of an external network of teachers (Graziano, 2005).

Mentoring and induction programs for new teachers are a mainstay in most states, not all programs are created equal. Of the 28 states that have state-level teacher-induction programs, only 10 actually provide funding for such programs as well as mandating them, according to a nonprofit organization that advocates national reform for teacher recruitment and development (Johnson et al., 2001). Only 1% of beginning teachers currently receive the ongoing support that constitutes comprehensive induction when they enter the profession (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004).

Insufficient induction and mentorship programs deter quality teachers from the profession, which undermines the principles of teaching and learning by failing to support teachers when they need it most, as they enter the profession. Pam Zabel, a former high school science teacher in Charleston, Rhode Island, explains her mentor and induction support by stating:

“In practice, the induction program turned out to be something of a pep rally for new teachers, not a training exercise. The mentor teachers who had promised to help did what they could but were either teaching different grade levels or classes, and once the semester got under way had their own teaching concerns to address” (Public Education Faces a Crisis in Teacher Retention, para. 30).

As the lack of support continued, the teacher eventually stopped asking for assistance, succumbing to the challenges to being a first-year teacher, and no one offered any assistance. The principal provided a few tips on classroom management as she conducted

classroom observations but failed to provide adequate instructional feedback (Graziano, 2005).

The New Teacher Center research reveals that few states have comprehensive policies requiring high-quality induction for beginning teachers—and the state policies that do exist are implemented too sporadically. Among the 316,000 U.S. educators NTC surveyed in 2010 and 2011 through our Teaching & Learning Conditions Initiative, 10 a sizeable percentage (between 7 and 30 percent)<sup>11</sup>, of first- and second-year teachers reported that they were not formally assigned a mentor, even in states that had a mentoring requirement. Many new teachers were assigned a mentor but never planned instruction with them, observed them, or received support analyzing student work. Inducting new teachers into a weak professional community will limit the impact of high quality induction. Weak professional environments rob new teachers of the opportunity to achieve their full potential, or push good new teachers to schools with a stronger professional community or out of the teaching profession entirely (New Teacher Center, 2012).

### **Category 6. Inadequate Administrative Support**

School administrators and their support of teachers serve as an integral component in whether or not new teachers decide to leave a particular campus or the profession overall. The relationship between administration and teachers is also a strong indicator of teacher turnover. A qualitative study, “Teachers Who Left the Profession,” conducted by Gonzales, Brown, and Slate (2008), discovered that seven out of eight respondents agreed that administration was one of the biggest influential factors in not returning to the profession. Current research has also found that the most important

factor influencing commitment was the beginning teacher's perception of how well the school principal worked with the teaching staff as a whole. This was a stronger factor than the adequacy of resources, the extent of a teacher's administrative duties, the manageability of his or her workload, or the frequency of professional-development opportunities (Tierney, 2012). Participants cited disrespect from administration as one of the biggest problems. Administrators, according to the respondents, tend to put teachers down instead of motivating them and encouraging them to try harder with students. In the case of the novice teachers, poor relations with principals come through in disagreements over school or district policies, evaluations of teacher performance, and expectations that teachers work beyond their contractual requirements. The atmosphere of distrust is often magnified as teachers discuss their complaints with one another (Tierney, 2012). Corrupt administrations or administrators with reduced moral ethics were a large problem.

A study conducted by The Center for Comprehensive School Reform (2007) cites that leadership was identified by more than one-quarter of teachers as the most crucial issue in making their decisions about whether to stay in a school. Additional studies in the report showed that when comparing schools with high and low turnover rates, they found that the reason given for turnover was often leadership and empowerment. Some teachers in the study commented that they derive greater satisfaction from their work when they are encouraged by school leaders to make decisions about scheduling, selection of materials, and professional development. Considering that some administrators discouraged teachers from sending students to the office illustrates a lack of support since it puts classroom instruction at a standstill. When a student's behavior

warrants a discipline referral and he or she needs to be sent to the principal's office, the teacher has to first stop and fill out a referral form, and even then the student is usually sent right back to the classroom, his or her behavior unchanged (Kopkowski, 2008).

Student discipline issues and how the campus administration responds can ruin a school's reputation, which could possibly hinder recruitment efforts.

### **Recruitment Efforts**

Due to such high teacher attrition rates, efforts to lure teachers into the profession have been made by many school systems. Incentives such as signing bonuses, performance pay, housing assistance, and tuition assistance have been offered to increase retention rates. Sawchuk (2010) reports that performance-pay policies have been tried at many different points in the last several decades. Most offer monetary bonuses to teachers who boost student scores, participate in professional development, or meet other criteria, but they do not change base pay.

In Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina, the school district offers a variety of incentives to attract and retain quality teachers to their FOCUS (Finding Opportunities, Creating Unparalleled Success) schools. Any educator can receive up to \$3,000 in signing bonuses for working in these high-needs schools, while master teachers with a demonstrated record of success can earn an additional \$2,500 in retention bonuses. Another \$1,400 can be earned based on high academic change or achievement levels by students on several state tests. The State Teacher Assistance Resource (STAR) Program of Arkansas provides 2 years of forgivable loans in a 4-year program for education students willing to teach math, science, special education, or foreign languages. The normal \$3,000 loan forgiveness for each year is doubled to \$6,000 if the student is

willing to teach one of these high-needs subjects in an area of the state that has a critical shortage of teachers. A total of 465 students were funded in 2006–2007, up from 264 students in 2004–2005 (Berry, Raspberry, & Williams, 2007). In 2006, the US Department of Education launched its \$99 million Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) designed to recruit and retain teachers for high-needs schools and to pay them more for higher student performance. Since its inception, the funds have increased and, in 2010, \$400 million was apportioned for participative teachers and administrators (US Department of Education, 2013). This federal program has funded 34 states and school district programs thus far, including Denver, where the teachers' union and school administrators have collaboratively designed a comprehensive incentive package that focuses on redesigning the teacher development system.

University settings also provide another opportunity for teacher recruitment. Examples include forgivable loans and scholarships, paid internships in school systems, and opportunities to work toward an advanced degree through 5-year programs. Partnerships between schools and universities can provide incentives that are helpful in attracting teacher candidates. Such incentives include bonus or salary increments for teachers willing to teach in hard-to-staff schools, earlier job offerings, and streamlined job application processes. Many of these programs attempt to counteract the reasons that pre-service teachers give for not entering the teaching profession (Cooper & Alvarado, 2006). In the state of Mississippi, the teacher shortage has been so large in needy districts that schools are offering incentives like college scholarships that cover tuition, fees, books, and the average cost of room and meals. In addition, moving incentives and housing assistance are offered to those who relocate to such places in order to attract

good teachers (Kieffer & Mader, 2013). While school systems continue to devise new initiatives to attract new teachers, the administrative support that teachers receive is a determining factor in their success, and retention.

### **Administrative Support for New Teachers**

In a survey in Alabama, when teachers were asked to identify the most important factor in teacher retention, “supportive school leadership” (39%) clearly trumped “salary and benefits” (22%) (Hirsch, 2006). Teachers who said they were unwilling to teach in a high-needs school were far more likely to believe that their school leaders would not support them, overall working conditions would not allow them to be successful, and they were not sufficiently prepared to teach students in these challenging schools (Cooper & Alvarado, 2006).

Successful principals understand the value of people. They value teachers as individuals and sincerely want them to succeed and grow. The most successful strategies for these principals are those that give direct assistance to teachers. These principals provide continual feedback to their teachers and find ways to provide teachers with professional development opportunities, both in-house and off campus. They ensure teachers have the opportunity to work collaboratively with their peers and to increase leadership abilities. They also demonstrate valuing teachers by actively involving them in meaningful decision making. These principals understand the most effective use of discretionary dollars is to provide additional personnel who support and assist teachers in being successful with their students (Charlotte Advocates for Education, 2004).

Good principals provide support as teachers need to feel supported. Teachers need to believe that when they have an issue in their classroom, they will get the help

they need. According to a survey of the Detroit Federation of Teachers, one-third of the over 300 teachers who resigned in 1997–1998 did so due to lack of administrative support (Brouillette, 1999). This situation has not changed that much in the past decade. This is not to say that principals should blindly back teachers without using their own judgment. Obviously, teachers are human beings who make mistakes too. Nonetheless, the overall feeling from the principal should be one of belief and support (Kelly, 2013).

When people talk about what effective school principals do, they reach for metaphors from geometry, physics, and architecture. The principal must "up-end the pyramid," some say, supporting the school structure from below, not directing it from above. The principal serves as the "fulcrum of the change process," keeping a delicate balance between the often conflicting pressures coming from teachers, community, district, and state. The principal introduces a "blueprint for change," then adapts it continually in response to those who will have to live with it (Cushman, 1992). A public opinion research organization based in New York City found in 2007 that given the choice between a more supportive principal or a significantly higher salary, over 70% of first-year teachers would prefer a more supportive principal. Good school leaders ensure that their teachers have the resources and training needed to meet high expectations while also creating environments that aspire toward continuous improvement. Perhaps even more importantly, effective principals can influence the whole culture of a school through building and creating a "set of norms, values and beliefs, rituals and ceremonies, symbols and stories that make up the persona of a school," (The Hechinger Report, 2011). School principals should implement clearly defined and detailed induction and mentorship programs on their campuses to proactively remediate the teacher turnover challenge.

## **Induction and Mentorship Support for Beginning Teachers**

New teacher support is a critical component of a comprehensive solution to achieving excellence in teaching quality. High-quality support programs for new teachers, often referred to as induction and mentoring programs not only increase the retention of beginning teachers, but also their impact on student learning (New Teacher Center, 2012). Today, 27 states require new teachers to participate in some form of induction or mentoring and, as a result, more new teachers receive mentoring or induction support than ever before (NTC, 2012). Although induction and mentoring are not the same, these two terms are used interchangeably, even though mentoring is only one component of the induction program (Becouvarakis et al., 2009). The quality of the mentor is critical in the success of new teacher induction. Good mentors are committed to the role of mentoring and are accepting of the beginning teacher, can articulate the elements of effective instruction, have good interpersonal skills in a variety of contexts, model continuous learning, and communicate hope and optimism (Rowley, 1999). Successful teacher induction systems focus on student learning and teacher effectiveness. Strong programs include instructional mentoring by carefully selected, well prepared, and released mentors; professional learning communities for mentors and new teachers; engaged principals; and supportive school environments and district policies (New Teacher Center, 2013). Released mentors relates to the amount of time that is provided to the mentor to provide tutelage to the mentee, which enhances the impact of the program.

Comprehensive, high-quality teacher induction can accelerate professional growth and teacher effectiveness, reduce teacher turnover, and improve student learning.

However, teacher induction involves much more than just assigning a mentor to a teacher as an informal “buddy” to help orient them to a new school. Effective teacher induction provides systemic support to new teachers over at least 2 years, including opportunities for collaboration with peers, regular formative and evaluative assessment of progress based on state teaching standards, and professional development that is tailored to the challenges a new teacher faces (National Association of State Boards of Education, 2012).

Mentoring is a nurturing process in which a more skilled person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels, and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter’s professional development. Mentoring functions are carried out within the context of an ongoing, caring relationship between the mentor and the protégé (Anderson & Shannon, 1988). The mentor’s role is to promote the growth and development of new teachers to improve student learning. When new teachers are hired, they are expected to learn on the job and impact student learning immediately. Mentors are critical supports in guiding new teachers to enhance their planning, instruction, and content knowledge and help orient new teachers to the profession. They also serve as collegial and emotional supports for this challenging phase of a teacher’s career (New York City Department of Education, 2013). Trained mentors help beginning teachers plan lessons, assist them in gathering information about best practices, observe the new teachers' classes, and provide feedback. Beginning teachers reflect on their practice and apply what they have learned to future lessons (Holloway, 2001). In an analysis of the initial impact of the mentor program, several researchers found that most of the mentees said that mentoring played a significant role in

their professional growth as new teachers. Specifically, the program's design helped new teachers hone their practice in planning lessons, for example, and reflect on the effectiveness of their instruction. Mentors also found that working with beginning teachers engaged them in reflection about their own instructional practices (Holloway, 2001). Efforts to improve new teacher induction, and teacher effectiveness generally, must address teacher working conditions including the critical role of school leadership, opportunities for teacher leadership and collaboration, and customized professional development—that greatly impact teachers' chances of success (New Teacher Center, 2012).

### **History on Texas Legislative Mentoring Program Initiatives**

In an effort to increase retention of beginning teachers, the Texas Legislature (80th Texas Legislature, General Appropriations Act, Rider 73) authorized and funded the Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring (BTIM) program with appropriations in Fiscal Year 2008 and Fiscal Year 2009. The first appropriation (\$15 million) funded 50 Cycle 1 grantee school districts distributed among approximately 470 campuses for use in the 2007–08 and 2008–09 school year. The overall goals of the BTIM program are to: (a) increase beginning teacher retention, (b) improve beginning teacher performance, and (c) improve overall student achievement. The program also works to provide support and training to mentor teachers and administrators. The purpose of the Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring (BTIM) program is to establish or enhance a beginning teacher induction and mentoring program designed to increase retention of beginning teachers. Texas Education Code §21.458 states that public school districts and open enrollment charter schools may assign a qualified mentor teacher to each classroom

teacher who has less than two years of teaching experience in a subject area or grade level. School districts must apply for grant funds which aids with the implementation process.

Grant funds can be used for:

- mentor stipends,
- mentor training, and
- mentor release time to meet/observe the beginning teachers

To the extent practicable, a teacher mentor must:

- teach in the same school;
- teach the same subject or grade level as applicable; and
- meet qualifications as determined by the commissioner.

Mentor teachers are required to have:

- have at least three complete years of teaching experience and a superior history of improving student performance.
- have completed of a research-based mentor and induction training program approved by the commissioner;
- have completed of a mentor training program provided by the district

The elements of the (BTIM) program include:

- ✓ Adequate and on-going mentor training
- ✓ Mentors who teach in the same subject and or grade level as applicable
- ✓ Providing on-campus mentoring to a beginning teacher including weekly meetings and at least 5 classroom observation (release time) for the mentor and mentee to conduct observations.

- ✓ On-going reflection of the mentee's development and completion of the required data collection and reporting as outlined by the campus and or district.

The BTIM program is an effort to retain beginning teachers at the campus, in the district, and ultimately in the teaching profession by providing a mentoring relationship with an established teacher at their campus. The program also aims to provide these beginning teachers with ongoing professional development opportunities that will positively impact student achievement (Eaton & Sisson, 2008). The BTIM program's design replaced and is an enhancement to the Texas Beginning Educator Program (TxBESS).

The Texas Beginning Educator Support System (TxBESS), launched in 1999, was a research based mentoring program designed to support teachers as they move from their teacher preparation programs into Texas classrooms. Under TxBESS, beginning teachers received support from a team of education professionals from their school and district as well as from a teacher preparation program. TxBESS included training for support-team members, stipends for mentor teachers, formative assessments for the beginning teacher, and opportunities for professional growth for beginning teachers and their teams. The Texas Beginning Educator Support System (TxBESS) focused on developing a beginning teacher support system for Texas.

The program allows flexibility at the local level and can be adapted to meet the needs of the district, campus, and participating teachers. TEA reports that the program has served 10,000 beginning teachers in more than 300 school districts across the state and has been shown to effectively retain Texas teachers (Texas Education Agency, 2008). Funded by the U.S. Department of Education and the State Board for Educator

Certification (SBEC), TxBESS addresses three major goals: (1) increasing teacher retention, (2) assisting teachers in developing and refining sound teaching practices that support high-quality instruction, and (3) improving student performance. TxBESS offers a comprehensive program of support, training, and formative assessment to assist beginning teachers in Texas public schools. Support for beginning teachers comes from a mentor and other support-team members who may include a school administrator, a staff member from the Education Service Center, and/or staff from teacher preparation entities such as colleges and universities. Education Service Centers provide training for school districts that addresses TxBESS familiarization, mentor preparation, professional coaching, and standards for good teaching. In an effort to enhance TxBESS the implementation of the Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program served as its successor.

The New Teacher Center (2011) conducted a comprehensive review of state policies on teacher induction that provides guidance and concluded that Texas' state policies should be amended to adequately support beginning teachers through mentorship and induction. The recommendations highlight enhancements to the Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program as outlined below:

- The state does not require new teachers to receive induction support. State policy provides that “each school district may assign a mentor teacher to each classroom teacher who has less than two years of teaching experience in the subject or grade level to which the teacher is assigned.” [Texas Education Code § 21.458 (pg.1)]. It requires all participants in educator preparation programs to be provided a “campus mentor” during their internship year. [Texas Administrative Code Rule §

228.35 (pg.1)] The state operates the Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program to which a school district may apply for funds to establish a mentoring program for first- and second-year teachers. The state should have formal program standards that govern the design and operation of local teacher induction programs. The state does not have formal induction program standards.

- State policy should require a rigorous mentor selection process. State policy requires that a mentor teacher must “have at least three complete years of teaching experience with a superior record of assisting students, as a whole, in achieving improvement in student performance.” [Texas Education Code § 21.458 (pg. 1)]
- State policy should require foundational training and ongoing professional development for mentors. State policy requires that a mentor teacher must complete “a research-based, mentor and induction training program” approved by the state education commissioner and complete “a mentor training program provided by the district.” [Texas Education Code § 21.458 (pg.1)] State policy should address how mentors are assigned to beginning teachers, allow for manageable mentor caseloads, and encourage programs to provide release time for mentors.
- State policy requires that a mentor teacher must teach in the same school and, to the extent practicable, teach the same subject or grade level as the beginning teacher. [Texas Education Code § 21.458 (pg.2)]. In addition, an induction program funded through the Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program must provide “scheduled release time in order for a mentor teacher to

fulfill mentoring duties” (NTC, 2011, “State Policy Review: Teacher Induction,” pg. 2).

- State policy should identify key induction program elements, including a minimum amount of mentor-new teacher contact time, formative assessment of teaching practice, and classroom observation. A local induction program funded through the state’s Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program (BTIM) “must be a research-based mentoring program that, through external evaluation, has demonstrated success in improving new teacher quality and teacher retention” (NTC, 2011, “State Policy Review: Teacher Induction,” pg. 2). BTIM programs must provide orientation and mentoring for beginning teachers and include the following elements:
  - A recruitment process for mentor teachers; (2) A structured mentoring component based upon research on teacher induction, beginning teacher development, and quality professional development; (3) Regular teacher observations and standards-based assessments; (4) Continuous support and ongoing professional development for beginning teachers that includes collecting and analyzing student performance data, classroom management, and pertinent topics related to pedagogy and student achievement; (5) Continuous support and ongoing professional development for mentor teachers that includes collecting and analyzing student performance data, classroom management, and pertinent topics related to pedagogy and student achievement; (6) Scheduled release time for mentor teachers; and (7) Training for administrators on implementing and supporting an induction and mentoring program. [Texas Administrative Code Rule § 153.1011] The rule also prescribes

specific mentor duties, including: (1) Participation in beginning teacher orientation; (2) Weekly meetings with the beginning teacher; (3) Documenting mentor/beginning teacher activities; (4) Attending regularly scheduled campus mentor support meetings and trainings; (5) Providing support to new teachers in collecting and analyzing student data, classroom management, curriculum planning, and other activities related to pedagogy and improved student achievement; (6) Conducting observations and assessments of the beginning teacher; and (7) Completing all requirements of the school district's beginning teacher induction and mentoring program. [Texas Administrative Code Rule § 153.1011]

- The state should provide dedicated funding to support local educator induction programs. The state supports an annual grant program — the Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program — to which a school district may apply for funds to establish a mentoring program for first- and second-year teachers. Funds may be used only for providing: (1) Mentor teacher stipends; (2) Scheduled time for mentor teachers to provide mentoring to assigned classroom teachers; and (3) Mentoring support through providers of mentor training.
- The state should require participation in and/or completion of an induction program to advance from an initial to a professional teaching license. The state does not require new teachers to participate in an induction program in order to advance to a professional teaching license. However, state policy does require all participants in educator preparation programs to be provided a campus mentor during their internship year. [Texas Administrative Code Rule § 228.35]

- The state should assess or monitor program quality through accreditation, program evaluation, surveys, site visits, self-reports, and other relevant tools and strategies. The Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program allows the state education agency “to audit mentor program funds, and requires each district providing a program to submit progress reports to the commissioner” (NTC, 2011, “State Policy Review: Teacher Induction,” pg. 2). A final evaluation report must include: (1) the total number of beginning teachers and mentor teachers who actually participated in the beginning teacher induction and mentoring program; and (2) the use of funds and activities conducted. [Texas Administrative Code Rule § 153.1011]

While the comprehensiveness and funding of these state policies vary widely, they have been enacted to ensure the provision of induction support and the assignment of a mentor or coach, thereby enhancing the quality of teaching and increasing student learning (New Teacher Center, 2012).

Case studies with Texas school districts participating in the Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring (BTIM) program yielded the following recommendations for program improvement (Eaton & Sisson, 2008):

- Reduce paperwork.
- Start the program earlier in the year.
- Have a lead mentor or facilitator at each school.
- Hold trainings that mentors and beginning teachers attend together.
- Distribute a structured timeline for completing milestones and submitting paperwork.

- Increase the amount of support provided by district and school administrators.

The data analysis of the program evaluations conducted on the (BTIM) and (TxBESS) concluded that both initiatives were effective, but through on-going program evaluation could easily be improved to be even more effective. Above all, they both had an immediate and substantial impact on teacher retention rates. When (BTIM) replaced (TxBESS), school districts were required to apply for grant funds to support the program, but also had to expend additional funds to efficiently and effectively run the program which placed an additional strain on bulging school district budgets. As a result, the implementation of (BTIM) has diminished in most school districts across the state which requires campus leaders to be strategic and proactive in implementing meaningful mentoring programs using limited resources.

### **Effective Administrators**

There are principals who were born to do the job and hold the “internal humane” qualities of what a good school principal should be. Those principals are respected and are mostly loved by students, parents, and staff (Guilbeau-Sheppard, 2011). But there are several qualities that effective principals should possess in order to successfully achieve the expectations that the job requires. Transformative leaders engage in reflective processes that enable self-evaluation of personal values, beliefs, and experiences, and they intentionally promote the conditions and experiences for transformation in their staff. This includes nurturing the voices of others and building their capacity to take leadership in the school community (Coalition of Essential Schools, 2013). Such individuals lead schools in a collaborative and transformational manner, exemplify leadership ability through data analysis and ongoing reflection, connect with the learning

community, have a shared philosophical vision, build trustworthy relationships, lead ethically, and communicate effectively.

Research is clear that transformational leadership practices have the greatest impact on student achievement. Behaviors of this type highlight and depend on social interactions and relationships to motivate all stakeholders to work toward a common higher goal. Principals really do not influence student achievement directly like a teacher does in a classroom, but the activities of the principal have a trickle-down effect on teachers and students (Prater, 2012). When school leaders engage in transformative leadership, they intentionally become critically aware of their own tacit assumptions and expectations and assess their significance and consequence in decision making.

A principal must also exhibit leadership, a characteristic that every effective principal must possess. The principal is the instructional leader of his or her school. Good leaders take responsibility both in the successes and failures of the school, put the needs of others above themselves, always look for ways to improve their school, and then figures out how to make those improvements no matter how difficult it might be. Leadership defines the success of any school (Meador, 2013). According to Marzano, et al (2005), effective principals continuously monitor the impact of school programs on student learning and use this information to inform future practice. They are results oriented and realize that translating high expectations to academic achievement will benefit their students with greater opportunities in the future (McEwan, 2003).

Effective principals consistently walk around, know the students, can better identify areas where teachers can improve, and set the tone for practices to be emulated throughout the building. The human factor is extremely important. Great principals

establish a positive school culture by treating people the way they would like to be treated. How they smile, say hello, and engage in conversations are important factors in setting a positive tone (Sheninger, 2011). Evidence continues to mount in favor of the notion that when schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more. Though they cannot do it alone, school principals are, of course, key players in making these connections. Professional development for school leaders should provide lessons and tools concerning school, family, and community relations and partnerships (E-Lead, n.d.).

Having a stated vision for the school and a plan to achieve that vision is the most important quality in school leaders according to Education World Files (2000). The school principal is key in leading the process of creating the shared vision for the school. In identifying standards for school leaders, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC, n.d.) has identified six standards. 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 of learning that is shared and supported by the school community” (Standard 1, para. 3). Learner-centered leaders work with a common vision for the high achievement of all children and are clear about their performance results. Being learner-centered means that leaders create processes and structures that enable adults, as well as students, to participate and learn. These leaders are committed to increasing their own knowledge, skills, and capacities through professional development, peer mentoring, and the establishment and support of school-wide learning communities. To share learning and

knowledge across the learning community, effective leaders create information and administrative systems that align schedules, budgets, facilities, communications, transportation, and human resources functions to instruction. Learner-centered leaders help others understand that they are part of something greater than themselves and provide hope and belief that by working together, everyone's performance can improve (National Association for Elementary School Principals, 2008).

Recent research shows that social trust among teachers, parents, and school leaders improves much of the routine work of schools and is a key resource for reform. Distinct role relationships characterize the social exchanges of schooling: teachers with students, teachers with other teachers, teachers with parents, and all groups with the school principal. Each party in a relationship maintains an understanding of his or her role's obligations and holds some expectations about the obligations of the other parties. For a school community to work well, it must achieve agreement in each role relationship in terms of the understandings held about these personal obligations and expectations of others. The principal needs faculty support to maintain a cohesive professional community that productively engages parents and students. Teachers' work, in turn, depends on decisions that the principal makes about the allocation of resources to their classrooms. Parents depend on both teachers and the principal to create an environment that keeps their children safe and helps them learn. Such dependencies create a sense of mutual vulnerability for all individuals involved. Consequently, deliberate action taken by any party to reduce this sense of vulnerability in others to make them feel safe and secure builds trust across the community (Bryk & Schneider, 2003).

Effective principals are ethical and treat all people with respect all the time (Whitaker, 2003). Effective principals believe honesty is always the best policy and understand they must demonstrate ethical behavior on a daily basis (McEwan, 2003). Effective principals do the right thing, keeping in mind that the student's welfare is the bottom line (McEwan, 2003). At the same time, they must be able to consider what is best for the school in order to make the right decisions (Whitaker, 2003). While this can be a difficult task, the effective principal is able to sort out conflicting values (Bolman & Deal, 2002).

Effective leaders should have the ability to communicate orally and in written form. Principals work close to the ground, where the action is. Parents care not so much about big policy issues but more about what is happening in their child's school and, most especially, in their child's classroom. So the credibility of a principal is key to parental satisfaction with school and the school system, and good communication makes a substantial contribution to that credibility (Lee, n.d.). Effective principals provide resources and support to teachers, parents, students, and the community through valuable communication. They set the tone by expressing the school's values and holding teachers and students accountable for their actions with clear and fair expectations. Principals can maintain this communication by sending out regular newsletters; getting to know the parents, staff, and students; and providing honest, valuable feedback (Scott, n.d.). While effective principals are needed in schools across our nation, reluctant, ineffective principals contradict the educational principles and do not have the necessary attributes to build productive learning communities.

### **Ineffective Administrators**

To be able to lead people, there are certain things a leader must be, know, and do. Not many of these come naturally but are achieved through continual study, practice, and reflection (Ullah, 2011). Unfortunately, there are some individuals who do not have the necessary attributes to take on the principal's role. These individuals display ineffective leadership qualities such as not following through, avoiding conflict, lack presence and visibility, not listening, not telling the truth, and not having the capability to communicate and carry out a clearly defined vision for a learning community.

Ineffective principals do not finish things. They do not get back to people who were promised answers, don't respond positively to people who have differing viewpoints, and may propose great ideas at faculty meetings but do not follow up on them (Capalleuti & Nye, 2004). Leaders who lack the focus and attention to detail needed to apply leverage and resources in an aggressive and committed fashion will perish. Leaders who do not possess a bias toward action or cannot deliver on their obligations will not be successful. Leadership is about performance; intentions must be aligned with results for leaders to be effective (Myatt, 2012).

The ineffective principal wants to get along with everyone. These principals make statements like "Until everyone is on board, we're not going forward." Such inaction causes staff members to lose respect for the principal and his or her ideas. Conflict or resistance, unless it paralyzes an individual or organization, is a healthy part of the work culture (Capalleuti & Nye, 2004). While conflict is a normal part of any social and organizational setting, the challenge of conflict lies in how one chooses to deal with it. Concealed, avoided, or otherwise ignored conflict will likely fester only to grow

into resentment, create withdrawal, or cause factional infighting within an organization. Addressed properly, conflict can lead to change, innovation, personal and professional growth, and countless other items that often end up as missed opportunities (Myatt, 2012).

Ineffective principals tell everyone what they want to hear, saying "yes" to everyone but don't take action (Great schools, n.d.). Principals who shape their responses to satisfy their listeners will be enmeshed in a web of conflict and half-truths (Capalleuti & Nye, 2004). A leader who lacks character or integrity will not endure the test of time. It doesn't matter how intelligent, affable, persuasive, or savvy a person is, if they are prone to rationalizing unethical behavior based upon current or future needs, they will eventually fall prey to their own undoing (Myatt, 2012).

The ineffective principal uses his or her office as a refuge from school issues and problems. The principal who is rarely seen during the hustle and bustle of the school day will become the butt of the quips in the teachers' lounge. Teachers, students, and parents want to feel that the principal knows them, understands what is going on in the classrooms, and is sensitive to the pulse and climate of the school (Capalleuti & Nye, 2004). If administrators would only realize how important it is to be visible to teachers, parents, and students on a daily basis, they would be well on their way to running a successful school (Bonilla, n.d).

A leader with poor communication skills is someone who will be short-lived in their position (Myatt, 2012). Some principals are impressed with the sound of their own voices and do not actively listen to others. When another person is talking, an ineffective principal, instead of listening, thinks about what he or she is going to say next.

People want their principal to hear between the lines and understand what they are saying. People know when they have a voice, and they will become quickly disenchanted by a principal who does not listen (Capalleuti & Nye, 2004).

Principals who are not visionary leaders are likely to be ineffective. These principals fail to plan and therefore plan to fail. Every successful school needs a vision for the future and an effective principal will provide the guidance necessary to involve the entire school community in creating this vision (Capalleuti & Nye, 2004). No vision equals no leadership. Leaders satisfied with the status quo or who tend to be more concerned about survival than growth won't do well over the long run (Myatt, 2012). Pejza (1985) stated, "Leadership requires a vision. Without a vision to challenge followers with, there's no possibility of a principal being a leader" (pg.12). The vision provides guidance and direction for the school staff, students, and administration. Niece (1989) reported that several authorities include providing vision and direction for the school as a component of instructional leadership.

### **Effective Mentorship**

Mentoring is the practice of matching a beginning teacher with an experienced, veteran teacher to provide personal guidance during their first years in the classroom. Mentoring may be a component of beginning teacher induction and is characterized by the one-on-one relationship between an experienced teacher and a novice (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Research suggests that mentoring induction programs may offer the beginning teacher professional development opportunities combined with the personal support of an experienced teacher who can work with them individually to address classroom challenges, strengthen their teaching skills, and provide advice (Whisnant et

al., 2005). In today's world of education, it has become increasingly difficult to effectively train and keep teaching professionals. Historically, nearly a full third of novice teachers leave the profession within their first three years of service. With today's diverse student population and the recently heightened learning standards, it has become critical that new teachers become equipped with the knowledge and experience necessary to be both successful and happy in their profession. One successful way of supporting new teachers in being successful is through a mentoring, or induction programs. The New Teacher Center (2007) states that research and experience suggests some critical elements that high-quality induction and mentoring programs have in common include:

- A multi-year program, spanning at least the first two years of teaching;
- Sanctioned time for mentor-new teacher interaction;
- Rigorous mentor selection criteria;
- Initial training and on-going professional development and support for mentors;
- Pairing of new teachers and mentors in similar subject areas and grade levels;
- Documentation and evidence of new teacher growth.

Mentoring programs, if implemented properly, can help to both retain new teachers and provide satisfaction for them in their new profession. Indeed, many state education departments have begun to place a greater emphasis on induction programs, some even tying participation in mentoring programs into certification requirements (Myers, 2009).

In regards to effective mentorship, Cutler (2014) reflects on the sustenance of his mentorship experience. He states:

“I’m 23, almost fresh out of graduate school when I move to Miami to teach American history at Palmer Trinity, an independent school in Palmetto Bay. I have no friends or family nearby, and I’m completely unfamiliar with my surroundings. I’m also feverishly trying to get a firmer handle on my curriculum, and on making my lessons more relevant and engaging. Today, my success as a teacher -- not to mention the lives of all the students I hope I have inspired and changed in my seven years in the classroom -- is directly related to the caring, high-quality mentorship I received during my first year of teaching. Without it, I would have become another statistic, quitting after my first few years on the job” (para. 1).

The Alliance for Excellent Education (2004) cites the components of a comprehensive mentoring program as including high-quality mentoring, common planning time and collaboration, ongoing professional development, participation in an external network of teachers, and standards-based evaluation. Beyond the program components, Whisnant et al. (2005) discuss the conditions (both environmental and programmatic) that enable a successful mentoring induction program. These include a perspective on induction that is multi-year and developmental; strong principals; high-quality providers of the induction program, including dedicated staff; additional support for new teachers with little preparation; incentives for novice and veteran teachers to participate; alignment among induction, classroom needs, and professional standards; cooperation with unions; and an adequate and stable source of funding and commitment to outcome evaluation. All these reviewers agree that a successful mentoring program is not a one-time or short-term effort.

One policy option in response to the problems of high turnover and inadequate preparation is to support teachers with a formal, more comprehensive induction program during their initial years in the classroom. Support that is intensive, structured, and sequentially delivered is sometimes referred to as “comprehensive” induction. It is often delivered through experienced, trained, full-time mentors and may also include a combination of school and district orientation sessions, special in-service training (professional development), classroom observations, and constructive feedback through formative assessment (National Center for Education Evaluation, 2010). Such mentoring would automatically assign an experienced teacher with a beginning teacher at the beginning of the term (Ingersoll, 2004). An experienced teacher, or one who teaches the same subject and/or grade level, may be considered a mentor. This allows the mentee to be shown the trials and tribulations of teaching from the mentor’s personal experience (Algozzine, Gretes, Queen, & Cowan-Hathcock, 2007). Mentors are responsible for observing and evaluating their mentees and are to be considered partners in the mentoring relationship (New York State Education Department, 2005; Siebert, Clark, Kilbridge, & Peterson, 2006); an example of this would be collaborating with or even team teaching alongside their mentees.

Not only do good support programs retain teachers, but they also attract teachers. Harvard’s Next Generation of Teachers reports that teachers entering the field are attracted to districts that offer specific professional development programs that increase their professional knowledge and skills, rapidly integrate them into the culture of the school, and support their professional growth as successful educators (Johnson et al., 2001). To be effective, mentoring programs need focus and structure (Holloway, 2001).

When mentors are well selected, well trained, and given the time to work intensively with new teachers, they not only help average teachers become good, they help good teachers become great. The mentors' effectiveness ultimately determines to what extent programs support new teachers in helping kids succeed (Barlin, 2010).

Successful mentors have many important aptitudes, but above all they are exceptional educators with a track record of fostering significant student learning gains in diverse settings (Barlin, 2010). After they are hired and placed, new teachers need to become acquainted with the way their new school does things. Assigning experienced teachers to guide and support beginning teachers provides valuable professional development for both new and veteran teachers. Mentors provide guidance in curriculum and lesson planning and offer critique and feedback about teaching methods (Kopkowski, 2008). Mentors can also provide additional support such as classroom management to preservice and first-year teachers (Algozzine et al., 2007). Mentoring helps beginning teachers face their new challenges; through reflective activities and professional conversations, they improve their teaching practices as they assume full responsibility for a class (Danielson, 1999). Mentoring fosters the professional development of both new teachers and their mentors (Danielson, 1999). Well-designed mentoring programs also lower the attrition rates of new teachers (National Association of State Boards of Education, 1998).

Principals can help meet this need by sponsoring a building-level orientation at the opening of the school year to review key policies and procedures. In addition, principals may assign mentor or buddy teachers, thereby establishing a formal network of support from the beginning. Principals can also help the new teacher obtain needed

resources and supplies. As the year unfolds, effective principals tailor their actions to meet the individual needs of new teachers (Carver, 2003). New teachers find it reassuring to know that their principal can be trusted to physically maintain the building and hold students accountable for acting in a responsible manner. Principals who facilitate a disciplined and orderly school environment enable the new teacher to concentrate on teaching students rather than just managing them. Of all the efforts effective principals undertake to support new teachers, building and sustaining a supportive school culture may be the most elusive. All teachers benefit from pleasant and collegial work environments, professional standards, and the development of a shared language around a common mission (Carver, 2003). When mentoring programs thrive, schools systems are also more likely to develop a comprehensive vision for assessing and supporting instructional excellence and to reconfigure their evaluation and tenure structures around that vision. More importantly, they have a much greater chance of transforming their schools into vibrant learning communities capable of helping all teachers, and all students, succeed (Barlin, 2010). The qualities of effective mentors as identified by participants in mentoring programs nationwide may be organized into four general categories: attitude and character; professional competence and experience; communication skills; and interpersonal skills. Together with a willingness to serve and a vote of confidence by colleagues, these characteristics comprise guidelines for selecting mentors (NFIE, 2009). The implementation of beginning-teacher mentorship programs have been proven to increase teacher retention rates.

The mentor-beginning teacher relationship may serve as an opportunity to foster a beginning teacher's self-efficacy. For the mentor-beginning teacher relationship to be

successful, the individuals involved should have similar beliefs and attitudes (Greiman, Torres, Burris, & Kitchel, 2007). Beliefs are “one’s convictions, philosophy, tenets, or opinions about teaching and learning” (Haney, Lumpe, & Czerniak, 2003, p.367). In the field of education, two belief systems are prominent: traditionalism (or didactic view) and constructivism. A traditional belief system includes a teacher-centered classroom where students are often passive learners and the teacher disseminates knowledge (Brooks & Brooks, 1999). Constructivism asserts that knowledge is actively constructed by the learner and the classroom should be student-centered with the teacher serving as a facilitator who helps students construct their understanding (Brooks & Brooks, 1999). These belief systems are not inclusive; teachers may hold traditional beliefs, support constructivism, or develop a teaching style that draws from both schools of thought, depending on the context or subject area. Negative mentoring relationships are more likely to be reported by beginning teachers when the mentor has dissimilar attitudes, values, and beliefs (Cherian, 2007). A review of the research has shown that mentors’ beliefs about teaching can exert both positive and negative impacts on beginning teachers’ learning, depending on whether mentors’ beliefs are consistent with the kinds of teaching beginning teachers are expected to learn (Wang et al., 2008). Additionally, beginning teachers’ beliefs play an important role in shaping what and how they learn in induction contexts (Wang et al., 2008)

The Institute of Education Sciences, Impacts of Comprehensive Teacher Induction Request for Proposals (RFP) developed in 2004 sought to comprehensively provide an overview for beginning teacher mentoring. The (RFP) specified that mentoring programs should include several components that earlier research and

professional wisdom gleaned from practice had suggested were important features of successful teacher mentoring programs (Alliance for Excellent Education 2004). A group of outside expert reviewers ranked the proposals submitted by Educational Testing Service of Princeton, New Jersey (ETS) and the New Teacher Center at the University of California-Santa Cruz (NTC) as most closely meeting the study's specified requirements. The two programs were roughly comparable in structure and included the required components:

- Carefully selected and trained full-time mentors;
- A curriculum of intensive and structured support for beginning teachers that includes an orientation, professional development opportunities, and weekly meetings with mentors;
- A focus on instruction, with opportunities for novice teachers to observe experienced teachers;
- Formative assessment tools that permit evaluation of practice on an ongoing basis and require observations and constructive feedback; and
- Outreach to district and school-based administrators to educate them about program goals and to garner their systemic support for the program.

### **Ineffective Mentorship**

To support beginning teachers, most districts offer some form of teacher induction or mentoring, but they often provide a limited set of services in response to an unfunded state mandate and with modest local resources (Berry et al., 2002; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). This usual level of induction support is referred to as informal or low-intensity teacher induction, which may include pairing each new teacher with another full-time

teacher without providing training, supplemental materials, or release time for the induction to occur (National Center for Education Evaluation, 2010). Perhaps the most potent weapons in the fight against teacher attrition are teacher mentoring and induction programs (Wong, 2004). A teacher's first year on the job is often difficult. According to research, student achievement tends to be significantly worse in the classrooms of first-year teachers before rising in teachers' second and third years (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005). The steep learning curve is hard not only on students but also on the teachers themselves: 15% leave the profession and another 14% change schools after their first year, often as a result of feeling overwhelmed, ineffective, and unsupported (Ingersoll, 2001; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). The sink-or-swim nature of many first-year teachers' experiences frequently surfaces as another significant challenge. As a result, new teachers are placed alone in the classroom for their first year and are expected to shoulder the same responsibilities as veteran teachers. New teachers are expected to assume a full schedule of classes, create their own lesson plans, and develop teaching techniques and classroom-management strategies in relative isolation. They are also expected to learn the administrative ins and outs of the job quickly, from taking attendance and communicating with parents to navigating the schools' computer network and finding the faculty bathrooms. The result: New teachers must weather a frazzling first year that many veterans view as a rite of passage (Graziano, 2005).

New teachers often report difficult interactions with colleagues, ranging from "benign neglect" of administrators (Fry, 2007) to lack of cooperation or even hostility from veteran teachers. A first-year teacher reported that a colleague flatly refused to share his lesson plans, which was "unfortunate my first year, sinking down and getting no

help" (Van Hoover & Yaeger, 2004). Another teacher reported that a veteran member of her department came into her classes, propped his feet up on her desk, and disrupted her teaching by throwing out historical facts. "It was so degrading," she said (Van Hoover & Yaeger, 2004).

More than anything else, beginning teachers often appear to yearn for, yet seldom receive, meaningful feedback on their teaching from experienced colleagues and administrators (Fry, 2007). Regrettably, teacher mentors, ostensibly assigned to provide this support, were sometimes part of the problem, dispensing little guidance, if not bad advice (Fry, 2007). In the words of one new teacher, "Some of the teachers who are mentors shouldn't be. They're not nurturing people; they've just been here the longest, and they want [the mentor position]" (Van Hoover & Yaeger, 2004, p. 20). Both mentors and their protégés respond favorably to the mentoring process (Holloway, 2001).

### **Gap in Literature**

Beginning-teacher mentorship programs are prevalent in school systems across our nation. Though we understand that mentorship and induction programs are best practice, there is a gap in the literature when it comes to the structure, effectiveness, and implementation of how such programs are organized and supported by campus leaders in schools that have effective/quality programs and low attrition rates. Bennetts (2001) reports that there is little empirical evidence to support specific mentoring practices. Mentoring burst onto the educational scene in the early 1980s, yet a review of 20 years of claims about mentoring reveal that few studies exist that show the context, content, and consequences of mentoring. More direct studies are needed about mentoring and its effects on teaching and teacher retention (Feiman-Nemser, 1996). The current study

conducted a thorough exploration of how teachers' perceptions and perspectives in regards to their mentorship experience, the impact of such programs in relation to their professional development, and the principals' role in retaining high quality teachers.

This in-depth investigation was accomplished by conducting research on teachers at varying stages of the profession whereas beginning, veteran, retired, and former teachers were provided with an opportunity to provide priceless insight on how mentoring programs and supportive school leadership practices effect teacher retention through the use of perception based surveys and questionnaires. Current, retired, and former principals were also interviewed in this study by the principal investigator to inquire about how they identify their role in supporting beginning teachers, structuring a campus mentorship program, and ensuring the effectiveness of beginning teacher support initiatives.

## **Chapter III**

### **Methodology**

#### **Introduction**

Although quality teachers remain in high demand, retaining them once they enter the profession continues to be problematic for school leaders across the country.

Teachers are leaving the profession in drastic proportions, citing numerous factors surrounding the inadequacy of support at the campus level as the basis of their decision.

Therefore, proactive and strategic initiatives must be implemented to reduce teacher attrition rates and ensure that all classrooms are provided with a devoted and highly qualified teacher. Exploring why teachers leave the profession is inevitable in retention efforts. The methodology of this study was designed to solidify and showcase the usefulness of the research study by exploring and authentically reporting teachers' perceptions and perspectives in regards to their mentorship experience, the impact of such programs in relation to professional development, and the principals' role in retaining high quality teachers. This was accomplished by collecting data from the participants of the study through surveys, questionnaires, and interviews which derived both qualitative and quantitative data.

As the literature review indicated, diversity in the implementation of mentoring programs, combined with a lack of in-depth research on program effectiveness makes it hard for researchers to truly determine the impact of such programs (Eaton & Sisson, 2008). For this study, a mixed methodology was used to collect data from teachers with varying amounts of experience through the use of surveys and questionnaires to gain

insight on their mentorship experience as a mentee, mentor, or as a principal implementing a beginning teacher mentorship program. The principal's role in teacher retention and their leadership methods were measured by the participants as the literature review concluded that they are influential factors in teachers' decisions to leave a campus and or the profession overall.

Conducting present-day research allows educational practitioners to develop an understanding of the contributing factors that entice new teachers to remain in and/or exit the profession whereas they can strategically design campus mentoring programs for beginning teachers and augment leadership support practices. Consequently, based upon the extensiveness of this analysis, school leaders can take preventative measures to provide beginning teachers with the diligent and copious support systems necessary to increase their efficiency upon entering the profession and nurture their development. Research substantiates the notion that teachers want to thrive in the profession; however, meager support by principals coupled with the challenging demands of the occupation lead to job dissatisfaction and, subsequently, teacher attrition. Perhaps, this comprehensive research study may aid principals and school systems in their efforts to increase teacher retention rates, and provide beginning teachers with a mentorship experience that is profusely beneficial to their professional development. As fewer teachers exit the profession, teacher efficacy will be strengthened, professional learning communities will be restored, and student achievement will be amplified.

### **Descriptions of Research Design**

The function of a research design is to ensure that the evidence obtained in the study methodically and effectively address the research questions associated with the

investigation in clear and distinctive manner. The data collection methodologies of this study sought beginning, veteran, and retired teachers to complete one questionnaire and an on-line survey to provide definitive perceptive data regarding their mentorship experience as a beginning and or mentor teacher, the value of mentoring programs, and the principal's role in establishing and sustaining strategic support systems for beginning teachers. In addition, this study included interviewing current, veteran, retired, and former principals to gain insight on their overall beliefs in regards to the relative importance of mentoring and how they perceive their role in structuring, implementing, assessing, and overall beliefs in regards to the relative importance of new teacher mentorship programs at their respective campuses.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are principals' perceptions of their role in structuring, implementing, and evaluating a campus mentorship program?
2. From the teacher's perspective, what impact do campus mentoring programs have on teacher retention?
3. What specific aspects of mentoring programs do teachers find most beneficial to their professional development?
4. Do teachers' perceptions of the supportiveness of campus administration influence their decisions to change schools or leave the profession?

### **Setting**

At the epicenter of every community are its schools because they are entrusted with the responsibility of educating tomorrow's leaders. Since its creation as a suburban school district in the 1940s, the school district in this study has been nationally renowned

for providing a quality education to its students. The district's dedication to small neighborhood schools is credited with contributing to the success of the school organization and the students it serves. The school district is located west of downtown Houston and encompasses an area of approximately 44 square miles. Each school day, the district welcomes more than 35,000 students through the doors of its 45 campuses including:

- 26 elementary schools
- 7 regular middle schools
- 3 charter middle schools
- 4 traditional high school
- 1 alternative high school

In the school district where this study was conducted, the (BTIM) Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring program was implemented for a few years, and teacher retention data and program evaluation reports indicated that the program was highly effective. However, the program's sustainability became problematic due to additional costs associated with implementation across the district. The costs of the (BTIM) program fell into several categories - substitutes for mentor observations, books and materials, TxBESS training and the mentor stipends. Substitute expenses were nowhere near the expected amount. Most campuses planned carefully and utilized one substitute for several mentor observations throughout the day. They were able to cover many mentors with only a few substitutes. Some campuses chose to use support staff for teacher observations instead of the grant substitute funds. Many secondary teachers chose to observe during an off-period and this also negated the need for a substitute and

substitute funds. Unfortunately, due to a lack of additional district funds the (BTIM) program is no longer being implemented across the district which solidifies the purposefulness of this study which aims to explore the organization, operation, and impact of mentoring programs that are being executed by school principals at district campuses, which happens to be post (BTIM). Considering state developed beginning teacher mentoring and support programs are no longer being implemented in the school district places an even greater emphasis on campus principals' and their role in designing and implementing clearly defined mentoring programs and establishing the support structures necessary to retain high quality teachers. Tables 1- 4 profiled the district where the research study was conducted.

*District Profile***Table 1***District Student Demographics: Student Information****Total Students: 35,000***

	Enrollment	Percent
<b>Student Distribution</b>	<b>35,000</b>	<b>100.0</b>
African American	1,916	5.5
Hispanic	20,283	58.3
White	9,692	27.9
American Indian	220	0.6
Asian	2,138	6.1
Pacific Islander	28	0.1
Two or More Races	495	1.4
Economically Disadvantaged	20,354	58.5
Limited English Proficient (LEP)	11,071	31.8
At-Risk	18,024	51.8

The data in Table 1 showcases the district's student demographics breakdown as reported in the 2012-2013 AEIS Report retrieve from the Texas Education Agency.

**Table 2***District Staff Demographics: Staff Information****Total Staff: 4,239***

	Teaching Staff	Percent
<b>Staff Demographics</b>	<b>4, 238.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>
African American	125.9	5.8
Hispanic	567.9	26.0
White	1,374.5	63.0
American Indian	6.0	0.3
Asian	62.4	2.9
Pacific Islander	0	0.0
Two or More Races	44.7	2.0

The data in Table 2 showcases the district's staff demographics breakdown as reported in the 2012-2013 AEIS Report retrieve from the Texas Education Agency.

**Table 3***District Teachers by Years of Experience*

Staff Information	Count	Percent
Beginning Teachers (First Year)	98.7	4.5
1–5 Years Experience	472.5	21.7
6–10 Years Experience	569.5	26.1
11–20 Years Experience	597.0	27.4
Over 20 Years Experience	443.6	20.3

The data in Table 3 displays the district’s teachers by years of experience as reported in the 2012-2013 AEIS Report, retrieved from the Texas Education Agency. The data reveals that a substantial portion of the district’s teaching staff consists of beginning teachers as if you were to sum up the beginning teaching staff along with those who have 1 – 5 years of experience that places the overall count of relatively beginning teachers at 571.2, making this staffing group the second largest category of teachers by years of experience in the district.

**Table 4***District Professional Staff Information*

Staff Information	Count	Percent
<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>4,239</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Professional Staff Total	2, 724.4	64.3%
Teachers	2,181.3	51.5%
Professional Support	390.8	9.2%
Campus Administration (School Leadership)	121.6	2.9%
Central Administration	30.6	0.7%
District Turnover Rate for Teachers	309.7	14.2%

The data in Table 4 displays the district's professional staff information as reported in the 2012-2013 AEIS Report, retrieved from the Texas Education Agency. The data reveals that teachers make up 51.5%, more than half of the district's professional staff.

The district turnover rate for teachers is 14.2% with the state average being 15.3%.

*First Year Teachers, Retirees, District Attrition Rates & Trends*

For the current study, the principal researcher requested and was granted access to archival attrition data from the school district where the study was conducted. This information was reported below by noting all noteworthy trends, including the number of new teacher hires, retirees, and teacher attrition within the first five years of entering the profession. The data presented in Tables 5–8 showcased district teacher retention statistics in regards to first-year teachers hired per year, district retirees per year, and beginning teacher and overall district teacher attrition. The district monitored teacher

retention rates through the use of cohorts for beginning teachers and all teachers new to the school district. Tables 5–8 are each followed by descriptive and factual information.

**Table 5**

*2002–2014 District First-year Teachers with No Prior Experience*

Year	Number of First-Year Teachers
2002-2003	119
2003-2004	149
2004-2005	215
2005-2006	152
2006-2007	144
2007-2008	125
2008-2009	148
2009-2010	80
2010-2011	88
2011-2012	51
2012-2013	120
2013-2014	158

The data in Table 5 showcase teacher retention data in the school district where this study was conducted. The figures are indicative of the number of beginning teachers hired who were new to the profession and had no prior teaching experience over the course of the last 12 years. Table 5 also contains data that are of statistical significance as it includes

the number of first-year teachers hired per year before, during, and after the implementation of the Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program (BTIM) that was implemented in the district during the 2008–2009 school year, and was retracted after the 2011–2012 school year due to district budget shortfalls.

**Table 6**

*2002–2014 District Retirees*

Year	Number of Retirees
2002–2003	7
2003–2004	12
2004–2005	5
2005–2006	51
2006–2007	34
2007–2008	34
2008–2009	24
2009–2010	49
2010–2011	59
2011–2012	64
2012–2013	63
2013–2014	26

The data presented in Table 6 outline the number of district retirees over the course of the last 12 years. These data conclude that the district attrition data as they relates to

retirement fluctuate from year to year with the highest number of retirees being 64 during the 2011–2012 and the lowest being seven at the end of the 2002–2003 school year.

**Table 7**

*2008–2013 District Teacher Retention Data*

	2008–2009	2009–2010	2010–2011	2011–2102	2012–2013
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
	Initial Cohort	N / % Retained			
Retention	306	261 / 85.29%	220 / 71.90%	190 / 62.09%	162 / 53.94%
Attrition		-45	-41	-30	-32

The data presented in Table 7 display district teacher retention statistics that were collected by utilizing a cohort method whereas all new hires were placed in a cohort beginning with the 2008–2009 and ending with the 2012–2013 school year. During this time period, the district actively monitored its teacher retention rate by conducting a 4-year study on the 2008–2009 cohort of newly hired teachers. This initial cohort began with 306 teachers; 45 teachers departed after Year 1; 41 more after Year 2; 30 after Year 3; and 32 after Year 4. Over the course of a 4-year period, the district had a steady decrease in teacher retention whereas the average per year was 37 teachers.

**Table 8***2008–2013 Retention Summary of Teacher Cohort*

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
2007–2008	100.00%	82.35%	71.97%	65.05%	59.52%	53.29%
Cohort	289	238	208	188	172	154
2008–2009		100.00%	85.29%	71.90%	62.09%	52.94%
Cohort (BTIM)		306	261	220	190	162
2009–2010			100.00%	81.91%	70.35%	52.26
Cohort (BTIM)			199	163	140	104
2010–2011				100.00%	76.56%	62.50%
Cohort (BTIM)				192	147	120
2011–2012					100.00%	86.67%
Cohort (BTIM)					105	91
2012–2013						100.00%
Cohort						295

The data presented in Table 8 provide a summary of the district's teacher retention rates utilizing the cohort method over the course of a 6-year span, which includes experienced and beginning teachers. It also includes teachers who participated in the district's Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring program (BTIM), which was implemented in the 2008–2009 school year. Looking at the district data, they noticeably reveal that there is a steady decline in teacher retention rates; whereas the district had to hire 295 teachers during the 2012–2013 school year, which surpasses the number of teachers hired during the initial cohort school year, 2008–2009, which was 289 new teachers. The next

segment of results contains qualitative and quantifiable data that explores teachers' perspectives on their mentorship experience and support provided by the leaders at their campuses upon entering the profession.

### **Subjects**

Current teachers, former teachers, and principals participated in this research study. Beginning teachers are those who are in their first through third year of the teaching profession. Veteran teachers are those with 10 or more years of experience in the teaching profession. Former teachers are those who left the profession overall. Retired teachers are those who have retired from the profession after 20 or more years of teaching. Current principals are those who are presently assuming the role of school principal in a Southeast Texas school district. Retired principals consist of principals and assistant principals who were in such roles upon retirement. Former principals are those who were once principals and have now transitioned into executive school leadership roles such as director of curriculum, assistant superintendent, superintendent, and director of human resources. These individuals were invited to partake in this research study considering they each possess a wealth of authentic information based on their professional experiences. In order to holistically gather sizeable and pragmatic research data, staff members from two different campuses were sought to participate in the research study.

**Table 9***Breakdown of Participants: Beginning and Veteran Teachers*

School	Beginning Teachers	Veteran Teachers
A	13	30
B	16	32

\*Beginning teachers (1–3 years in the profession)

\*Veteran teachers (10 years or more in the profession)

**Table 10***Breakdown of Participants: Former and Retired Teachers*

Former Teachers	Retired Teachers
2	6

\*Former teachers are those individuals who left the teaching profession to pursue another career.

\*Retired teachers are those who have retired from the profession after 20 or more years of teaching.

**Table 11***Breakdown of Participants: Current, Retired, and Former Principals*

Current Principals	Retired Principals	Former Principals
11	4	12

\*Current principals are individuals who are presently assuming the role as a school principal.

\*Retired principals consist of principals and assistant principals who were in such roles upon retirement.

\*Former principals are individuals who have transitioned into executive educational leadership positions such as assistant superintendent, director of curriculum, superintendent, etc.

### **Procedures**

The University of Houston, Committee of the Protection of Human Subjects, granted permission to conduct this study as outlined (See Appendix A). A total of 126 subjects were asked to partake in this study, including a total of 29 beginning and 62 veteran teachers from two different campuses, two former teachers, six retired teachers, 11 current principals, 4 retired principals, and 12 former principals. Beginning, veteran, and former teachers completed one questionnaire and an online survey via Survey Monkey. Current, retired, and former principals were interviewed, in person. The data collection methods utilized in this study were designed to gain valuable insight from the participants' perspectives in regards to the role they perceive campus mentoring programs for beginning teachers and support from school administrators play in teacher retention. The data collection instruments that were employed for this research study

comprehensively explored the quality and extent of support teachers receive upon entering the profession, and the ideal attributes and behaviors that teachers look for in a supportive school leader at varying stages of their professional development.

The questionnaires included questions centered on the participants' perceptions and perspectives of best practice school leadership, whether they deem mentoring programs have positive effects on teacher retention, and views on why they believe teachers are exiting the profession, shortly after entering. The surveys contained perception based selection questions, open-ended response questions, and Likert-scale questions to holistically explore current discernments and viewpoints of beginning and veteran teachers in regards to support from campus administration and their mentorship experience as a mentee or mentor.

### **Instruments**

Specifically designed Questionnaires were distributed to: Beginning, Veteran, and Former Teachers. (See Appendix B).

- The Beginning Teacher Questionnaire consists of 16 total questions including selection and open-ended response.
- The Veteran Teacher Questionnaire consists of 19 total questions including selection and open-ended response.
- The Former Teacher Questionnaire consists of 14 total questions including selection and open ended response.

Likert-scale model surveys (via Survey Monkey) <https://www.surveymonkey.com/>:

Beginning, Veteran, and Former Teachers. (See Appendix C).

- The Beginning Teacher Survey consists of three selection response questions, and 31 Likert-scale questions utilizing Strongly Disagree, Disagree, No Opinion, Agree, and Strongly Agree as response items.
- The Veteran Teacher Survey consists of one selection, three open ended response, and 29 Likert-scale questions utilizing Strongly Disagree, Disagree, No Opinion, Agree, and Strongly Agree as response items.
- The Former Teacher Survey consists of 24 Likert-scale questions utilizing Major Factor, Moderate Factor, Minor Factor, and Not a Factor as response items.
- Personal Interviews were conducted on Current, Retired, and Former Principals consists of seven questions relating to their perspectives on mentoring, and their role in developing and implementing a campus mentoring program. (See Appendix D).

For the projected study, several instruments were used to collect authentic research data. All subjects who wished to participate in the educational research study received and were required to sign and submit the University of Houston Consent to Research” that outlines and explicitly explains the purpose of the study, procedures, confidentiality, risks and discomforts, benefits, alternative, and publication statement.

Personally designed questionnaires were provided to the beginning, veteran, and former teacher participants of this study. Copies of the questionnaires can be found in Appendix B. The Likert-scale surveys were distributed via survey monkey and the researcher utilized customized questions in addition to question banks from the program evaluations titled, *Role of Principal Leadership in Increasing Teacher Retention: Creating a Supportive Environment Charlotte Advocates For Education, Teacher Exit*

*Survey Ohio State Department of Education, and Illionois 5 Essentials Survey*, which are reliable and frequently utilized instruments for collecting data on teacher retention.

Copies of the surveys can be found in (Appendix C).

Personal Interviews were conducted in person or via phone by the principal investigator with current, retired, and former principals. All principals received a copy of the interview questions in advance in order for them to reflect upon and prepare to respond to the questions articulately. A total of seven open-ended questions were asked. A copy of the principal interview questions can be found in (Appendix D).

The overall purpose of the instruments utilized in this study were to methodically and comprehensively investigate and report current findings on the value of mentoring program experiences from teachers' perspectives, and the extent that administrative support practices have on teacher retention. The research also investigates how principals perceive their role in implementing mentoring programs and support structures for beginning teachers upon employing them at their respective campuses.

### **Analysis**

The data collection instruments utilized in this research study derived definitive quantitative and qualitative results which were methodically analyzed by the principal researcher. The beginning, veteran, and former teacher survey results produced quantifiable data which were documented by calculating, analyzing, and reporting the participants' selection percentages and Likert-Scale response count statistics in a data table format which also included a brief summary of the information presented in the table. The survey and questionnaire findings included data that were perception based and provided perspectives from teachers' as their rationales from the open-ended

questions were transferred, classified, and directly expressed in the results segment of this study. The current, former, and retired school principals' responses to the interview questions were themed to expose commonalities, and quoted straightforwardly as stated during the interview process to provide authentic insight on how principals perceive their role in supporting beginning teachers and structuring, implementing, and evaluating a campus mentoring program.

### **Limitations**

This educational research study consists of data collected from a group of participants who are primarily middle school educators. The limitations of this study stem from the teacher attrition rates at the middle school level versus elementary and high school whereas the turnover rates may differ. Another potential limitation of this study may have been due to scheduling conflicts for principals to partake in the interview process. Ensuring that all participants were provided with an ample amount of time to complete the surveys and questionnaires was also a limitation. Often times, educators view their participation in educational research as extra work to their overloaded schedules. Getting all subjects to actively participate also presented a challenge because if the vast majority of subjects did not take part in the study, the results would be inconclusive considering there were only 126 participants sought to contribute to the research study.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Results**

#### **Introduction**

The principal researcher of this study utilized a mixed methodology that derived substantial amounts of authentic qualitative data, and presents a numerical and descriptive analysis of perception based implications that align with and address the research questions of this study. The purpose of utilizing this methodology was to comprehensively obtain authentic data from teachers by investigating and generalizing their perceptions of their mentorship experience. A total of one hundred and two subjects participated in this research study, including a total of twenty-nine beginning, forty-five veteran, two former, and six retired teachers. Also included were eleven current principals, four retired principals, and five former principals.

The overall purpose of this study was to recount through conducting present-day research, teachers' perspectives and perceptions of the benefits of mentoring programs, and supportiveness of school leadership at varying stages of their professional development as it relates to teacher retention. Current research provide school principals and executive school leaders with a profound understanding of how teachers identify their role in establishing, sustaining, and gauging the effectiveness of campus mentoring programs in order to nurture teachers' professional development and increase retention rates. The data collection procedures for this research study yielded from distinctively surveying beginning, veteran, and former teachers via Survey Monkey and having these participants also complete a perception-based questionnaire.

In addition, current, former, and retired school principals were personally interviewed by the researcher. The methodologies of this study were designed to adequately address the following research questions:

- What are principals' perceptions of their role in structuring, implementing, and evaluating a campus mentorship program?
- From the teacher's perspective, what impact do campus mentoring programs have on teacher retention?
- What specific aspects of mentoring programs do teachers find most beneficial to their professional development?
- Do teachers' perceptions of the supportiveness of campus administration influence their decisions to change schools or leave the profession?

The data of this research study were collected from beginning, veteran, and former teachers through questionnaires and online surveys. Based upon the participants' years in the profession, they received a specific survey and questionnaire instrument. Each survey and questionnaire contained a series of different questions that relate to how teachers perceive their mentoring experience and the principal's role in supporting and cultivating their success in the classroom.

### **Beginning, Veteran, and Former Teacher Surveys**

The first portion of the research asked beginning, veteran, and former teacher participants to complete an online survey that consisted of perceptions based on questions that required them to select two responses and/or openly share their personal experiences and ideas. This was followed by queries utilizing a Likert scale model, which were reported by calculating the selection percentages and numerically analyzing the

frequency of response data. The three different groups of teachers were sought to participate in the research study in order to holistically explore teachers' perspectives and perceptions of their mentorship experiences, and how they characterized the supportiveness of their campus principal as a beginning teacher new to the profession, a veteran teacher with 10 or more years of experience, or a former teacher who decided to leave the profession overall. Gathering data from these participants added value to the research study as it provided valuable insight from teachers at different career stages on the principal's influence on teachers' decisions to change schools or leave the profession.

### **Beginning Teacher Survey Results**

A total of 29 beginning teachers completed the Beginning Teacher Survey, which began by asking participants questions that required them to select two choices for the first three questions. Questions one, two, and three were created to gain insight from beginning teachers' perspectives on the essential factors of retaining beginning teachers in the profession.

1. As it relates to new teacher effectiveness and job fulfillment, what support do beginning teachers need to keep them in the profession? Answer Choices: Select 2.

- Informal/formal peer support
- Formal mentoring programs
- School administrative support
- Adequate and meaningful professional development
- Ongoing feedback/systemic evaluation of their work.

Question number one was designed to answer research question three.

- What specific aspects of mentoring programs do teachers find most beneficial to their professional development?

2. As it relates to new teacher mentoring and campus leadership, what do beginning teachers need the most to keep them in the profession? Answer Choices: Select 2.

- Support in regards to student discipline
- Reasonable teaching assignments (smaller class sizes, students with less discipline problems)
- Extra planning time to meet with mentor for coaching sessions/observe mentor's instructional methods
- Practical preparation and support for inevitable new teacher challenges (an unruly class, an angry parent, a tough evaluation, or curriculum concerns) from mentor and school administrators
- A respected voice: means to provide valuable input to campus administration in order to address (student/school) concerns in student achievement/reform efforts

Question number two was designed to answer research question three.

- What specific aspects of mentoring programs do teachers find most beneficial to their professional development?

3. What barriers do you believe are hindering and discouraging highly qualified individuals from entering the teaching profession? Answer Choices: Select 2.

- Lack of respect/status as professionals
- Low beginning salaries
- Timely salary increases
- Unacceptable working conditions

- Career advancement opportunities
- Challenges with student discipline

Question number three was designed to gain insight from beginning teachers on why they believe highly qualified teachers are deciding not to enter the teaching profession. This question was designed to add value to research on teacher retention.

**Table 12**

*Beginning Teacher Survey Results*

***Question 1: 29 Participants***

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1. As it relates to new teacher effectiveness and job fulfillment, what support do beginning teachers need to keep them in the profession? Select 2.

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percentage</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Informal/formal peer support	51.72%	15
Formal mentoring programs	44.83%	13
School administrative support	68.97%	20
Adequate and meaningful professional development	37.93%	11
Ongoing feedback/systemic evaluation of their work	27.59%	8

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The data displayed in Table 12 are based upon teachers' responses to Question 1 of the Beginning Teacher Survey, concluding that beginning teachers need school

administrative support (68.97%) and informal/formal peer support (51.72%) to keep them in the teaching profession.

**Table 13**

*Beginning Teacher Survey Results*

**Question 2: 29 Participants**

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2. As it relates to new teacher mentoring and campus leadership, what do beginning teachers need the most to keep them in the profession? Select 2

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<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percentage</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Support in regards to student discipline	51.72%	15
Reasonable teaching assignments (smaller class sizes, students with less discipline problems)	34.5%	10
Extra planning time to meet with mentor for coaching sessions/observe mentor's instructional methods	48.28%	14
Practical preparation and support for inevitable new teacher challenges (an unruly class, an angry parent, a tough evaluation, or curriculum concerns) from mentor and school administrators	51.72%	15
A respected voice: means to provide valuable input to campus administration in order to address	24.14%	7

(student/school) concerns  
in student  
achievement/reform  
efforts

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The data displayed in Table 13 are based upon teachers' responses to Question 2 of the Beginning Teacher Survey, whereas the participants were to select two answer choices in terms of keeping them in the profession as it relates to mentoring and administrative support. The data conclude that beginning teachers were even in terms of what they believed beginning teachers needed the most to remain in the profession. Of the beginning teacher participants, 51.72% believed that they needed more support in regards to student discipline and 51.72% deemed that practical preparation and support for inevitable new teacher challenges (an unruly class, an angry parent, a tough evaluation, or curriculum concerns) from mentor and school administrators would incline them to remain in the teaching profession.

**Table 14***Beginning Teacher Survey Results**Question 3: 29 Participants*


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3. What barriers do you believe are hindering and discouraging highly qualified individuals from entering the teaching profession? Select 2.

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<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percentage</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Lack of respect/status as professionals	41.5%	12
Low beginning salaries	58.62%	17
Timely salary increases	34.5%	10
Unacceptable working conditions	13.8%	4
Career advancement opportunities	6.9%	2
Challenges with student discipline	58.62%	17
Other (please specify)	18.8%	3

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The data displayed in Table 14 are based upon participants' responses to Question 3 of the Beginning Teacher Survey, concluding that beginning teachers perceive that low beginning salaries (58.62%) and challenges with student discipline (also at 58.62%) were tied as the two primary reasons that are hindering and discouraging highly qualified individuals from entering the teaching profession.

**Table 15***Beginning Teacher Survey Results: Frequency of Responses**Survey Questions (31): 29 Participants*

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
I was assigned a mentor at my campus upon entering the teaching profession.	3	2	1	11	12
The campus leadership team ensured that I had an adequate support system to ensure my success as a first-year teacher.	2	8	4	8	7
The school principal met with all new teachers and their mentors to discuss/establish the structure, purpose, and expectations for the mentorship program for the course of the school year.	6	10	3	6	4
My mentor has provided assistance with classroom management, lesson planning, and instructional methods.	1	6	3	8	10
I have opportunities to visit and observe my mentor/exemplary veteran teachers.	7	5	3	9	5
I received little to no support from my mentor and/or school administration upon entering the teaching profession.	4	9	8	6	1

My overall mentorship experience has contributed to my success as a teacher.	1	9	6	7	6
My mentor teacher is empathetic.	1	2	9	12	5
Working with my mentor has been a positive experience.	1	2	8	11	7
I feel like I have autonomy in making decisions about my class.	1	4	5	14	5
The administration has oriented me to the school and staff.	1	6	6	12	4
The administration at my school encourages me to be an effective teacher.	2	2	1	17	7
The administration at my school provides appropriate feedback for my discipline decisions.	3	8	5	7	6
My mentor teacher encourages me to reflect about my teaching.	1	8	6	8	6
I have ongoing face-to-face communication with my administration.	1	7	3	10	8
The principal takes a personal interest in the professional development of teachers.	1	6	5	10	7
I trust the principal at his or her word because he or she always follows through.	3	7	3	9	7

It's OK at this school to discuss feelings, worries, and frustrations with the principal.	2	6	5	8	8
The school principal clearly and effectively communicates his/her vision to the staff and expectations for meeting instructional goals.	2	5	5	7	10
The discipline in my classroom is supportive of a conducive learning environment for my students.	0	6	1	14	8
I have the curriculum materials and resources I need to teach effectively.	0	5	4	15	5
The school administration's behavior toward the staff is supportive and encouraging.	0	8	4	8	9
My principal enforces school rules for student conduct and backs me up when I need it.	1	6	5	8	9
In this school, staff members are recognized for a job well done.	0	7	8	9	5
State testing or district curriculum content standards have had a positive influence on my satisfaction with teaching.	3	11	9	4	2
I am satisfied with my teaching salary.	6	11	4	7	1

The stress and disappointments involved in teaching at this school are not really worth it.	7	9	6	5	2
If I could get a higher paying job I would leave teaching as soon as possible.	5	11	4	6	3
I think about transferring to another school.	6	6	3	7	7
I do not seem to have as much enthusiasm now as I did when I began teaching.	4	8	4	10	3
I am thinking about leaving the teaching profession because overall I am dissatisfied.	8	8	2	6	5

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Table 15 displays the frequency of responses from the Beginning Teacher Survey in regards to participants' mentorship experience and magnitude of support that they received upon entering the profession from campus administrators, department leaders, and overall job fulfillment as a beginning teacher. The data indicate that 13 of the 29 beginning teacher participants (44.8%) received a mentor, but 16 (55.2%) deemed that the principal did not establish the structure and/or provide any guidance to the program.

## **Veteran Teacher Survey Results**

A total of 45 veteran teachers completed the Veteran Teacher Survey, which began by asking the participants perceptions based on questions in which they were required to select two choices for the first question and openly respond to the subsequent three questions. Questions one through five were designed to gain insight from veteran teachers' perspectives on essential factors in regards to retaining veteran teachers, how they perceive mentoring, and their overall morale towards the profession considering the field continues to evolve in an effort to add value to research on teacher retention.

1. What do veteran teachers need to encourage them to remain in the profession?

Answer Choices: Select 2.

- Better pay scales
- More planning time
- Career advancement
- Active role in campus decision making
- Continuous and relevant professional development
- Support from the school administration

Question 1 was designed to answer research question four.

- Do teachers' perceptions of the supportiveness of campus administration influence their decisions to change schools or leave the profession?

2. Considering you are a veteran teacher and have been in the profession for quite some time, would you become a teacher today, bearing in mind the evolution of the field from 10 to 20 or more years ago through present day?

Answer Choices: Yes or No/Why or Why Not, for Questions 2–5.

3. Would you encourage your students or others to pursue a career in the teaching profession?

4. As a veteran teacher, would you be interested in mentoring a novice (beginning) teacher? Why or why not?

5. Do you currently have a formal leadership role in your school, such as department chair, instructional resource, teacher mentor, leadership team member, or other leadership role?

Questions two through five were designed to gain insight from veteran teachers on their overall morale and viewpoints toward mentoring beginning teachers considering they may be taking on additional roles at their campus. These questions were also designed to add value to research on teacher retention.

**Table 16***Veteran Teacher Survey Results****Question 1: 45 Participants***

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1. What do veteran teachers need to encourage them remain in the profession?

Select 2.

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percentage</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Better pay scales	53.3%	24
More planning time	17.8%	8
Career advancement opportunities	15.6%	7
Active role in campus decision making	26.7%	12
Continuous and relevant professional development	26.7%	12
Support from the school administration	55.6%	25
Other (please specify)	7.7%	3

Other Responses:

- Focus on teaching and not paperwork, meetings, and other time-consuming activities that take away from planning and instruction
  - Less stress from state testing
  - Acknowledgement and support from administration on the hard work that teachers are putting in
-

Question one was designed to gain perspective from veteran teachers on what factors they deemed as the most encouraging factors in remaining in the teaching profession. This question was designed to add value to research on teacher retention. The data indicate that 55.6% veteran teachers believe that support from school administration is the primary factor in encouraging them to remain in the profession. Better teacher salary pay scale was the secondary factor at 53.3%.

In response to the second question, “Considering you are a veteran teacher and have been in the profession for quite some time, would you become a teacher today, bearing in mind the evolution of the field from 10 to 20 or more years ago through present day?” Of the 45 respondents, 15 (33.3%) stated that they would not enter the teaching profession today, two (4.44%) stated that they were not sure, and 28 (62.2%) declared that they would reenter the profession. Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study, which have been separated into categories: No, Yes, and Unsure.

### **Veteran Teacher Survey Responses: Question 2**

#### **No: respondents’ rationales**

- No. I have been working as a teacher for 16 years and I will be making only \$5,000 more than a first-year teacher. This is only 10% more in pay for 16 years of experience. That is a very telling and disturbing statistic.
- No, I do not believe I would. Teachers today have a lot more pressure than 20 years ago and statewide testing has taken too much control over a teacher's intellectual freedom.

- No. I do not think I would be a teacher. There are better opportunities. Also, I would not have to deal with the disrespectful students and parents.
- No. I have a master's degree and do as much work, if not more, than my friends who have careers outside of teaching and they make twice as much money as me. Teaching today requires so much more than just delivering and facilitating lessons. It is very demanding of your time and energy if you truly are a conscientious teacher who wants to see all students succeed and learn. If I am going to care this much and work this hard, I should get paid for it. While it is true that we get time off during the summer, I put in at least 60 hours a week during the school year planning lessons, answering emails, attending meetings, making parent phone calls, and grading papers.
- No, I would not. Teaching is not about educating children, it is about testing and the latest new trend in education.
- No, too much politics and unfair accountability.
- The stress level on teachers to perform miracles on state testing and the statewide lack of support for discipline/safety issues lead me to reconsider the teaching profession as a choice if I were entering the field today.
- Probably not. While I still love my job, the apathy of students, inability to remove disruptive students, the STAAR/high stakes testing craziness, and lack of respect for the profession would keep me out.

**Yes: respondents' rationales**

- Yes, but I would not select a district that is constantly testing and tying test result scores to teacher effectiveness and accountability. I guess I would choose a private school.
- Yes, the basic reason for becoming a teacher is still the same. The conditions have changed to make it more difficult, but it was never easy to begin with.
- In a heartbeat. I love what I do. I do my best to remain focused on what matters...which is working with kids. They make me smile and I sometimes make them smile, too!
- Yes, I have always loved teaching and especially today one has to have a passion to want to teach.
- Yes, I think it is the best way to shape America's future.
- Yes, I would still be a teacher but college preparations need to expose the realities of time and commitment needed to be a successful teacher.
- I would still consider the teaching profession in that its intent is still noble. Every contributing member of society has been "educated" at some juncture and teaching/mentoring remains the most valuable profession in the world.

**Unsure: respondents' rationales**

- This is a tough decision. I love what I do, but it is hard for me to encourage young people to join the ranks knowing what they are going to face. They come in with fabulous ideas, and then within a year to 3 years, they are burned out. Sad really.
- Maybe, but I would think twice.

In response to the third question, “Would you encourage your students or others to pursue a career in the teaching profession?” of the 45 respondents, 66.7% (30) stated that they would encourage others to pursue a career in the teaching profession, 15.6% (7) stated that they would not, and 17.8% (8) were uncertain about encouraging others to enter the teaching profession. Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study, which have been separated into categories: No, Yes, and Unsure.

### **Veteran Teacher Survey Responses: Question 3**

#### **No: respondents’ rationales**

- No. The retirement factors have changed for the worse. Most new teachers would have to be in education for 40 years before they could begin taking their retirement. Many districts are considering doing away with the masters/PhD bonuses. I have a friend in the business world who literally doubled his salary by getting his masters. We get \$1,100 a year. Over a 30-year teaching career, that would barely pay for the cost of getting the degree.
- I would not encourage them to pursue a career in the teaching profession. There are so many headaches and bureaucracies in education today. This is true with many careers but at least those people are getting paid more to put up with it. Do not get me wrong, I love teaching immensely; it is just so frustrating to not get rewarded financially for such hard work.
- As of right now, no. It is hard to manage a household, and bills with a 3% raise. That is when we get it. The pay scale is set up for new teachers, not to keep teachers in the teaching field.

- No, I would not. The work is hard, the pay is low, and the rewards are few.
- I would not encourage that decision if it involved accumulating large student loan debt with no forgiveness incentives. Too much work for too little pay to shoulder a large debt.

**Yes: respondents' rationales**

- Generally speaking, teaching is a good career. If that is a goal for a young person, I would tell them to pursue their dream. However, I would tell them to research for opportunities for growth.
- I would wholeheartedly endorse teaching as a career. The benefits may not necessarily come in financial form, but knowing you have helped shape a life is priceless.
- Yes, but only if I thought they really cared about knowledge and the nurturing of young adults or children.
- Yes, but I would tell them that they need to have the right temperament. I have two sons who are teachers, and I am very proud of the work they do.
- I have. I also tell new teachers that if they feel they do not like their job, to seriously consider changing the age group they are working with. I teach 6th-, 7th-, and 8th-grade math, so I clearly see the difference between the age groups. What works with one absolutely will not work with the other.
- Yes, but I would make sure that they understood their reasons for going into the profession and that they knew the limitations on salary and the lack of respect that the profession gets in society as a whole. If those aspects are important to them, I would tell them that they should probably look elsewhere.

- I am an advocate for recruiting others to the teaching profession.

### **Unsure respondents' Rationales**

- Only if they really understood what they were getting into.
- It depends on the student. Teaching is not for everyone, considering the time constraints and little pay. Very few people know that teachers really work more than just from 3:00–8:00 grading and planning.
- Only if they are truly passionate about it. It is like a ministry. The reality is that one does not do this for the wonderful pay.
- Possibly, but with reservation and full disclosure of the negatives as well.
- Perhaps, but they would know of the different pitfalls they most likely would experience.
- Maybe, but I would caution them on a few things. Be prepared for change constantly, if you are in it for the money you'll never receive enough pay, and continue to learn constantly.

In response to question number four, “As a veteran teacher, would you be interested in mentoring a novice (beginning) teacher? Why or Why Not?” This question was designed to gauge how veteran teachers perceive their role as a mentor. Of the 45 respondents, 41 (91.1%) stated that they would definitely be interested in mentoring a beginning teacher, 4 (8.8%) stated that they would not be interested in taking on mentoring a new teacher. Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study, which have been separated into categories: Disinterested and Interested.

## **Veteran Teacher Survey Responses: Question 4**

### **Disinterested: respondents' rationales**

- No, I have too much other work to finish and there is not enough time in the day.
- No, because for some reason they actually think they “already know it all and I am viewed as old school.” The arrogance of “20-year-olds” with the dismissiveness of veteran teachers does not quite make it worthwhile to mentor them.
- No. That requires time and commitment that I am not willing to offer in addition to my overload of responsibilities now.

### **Interested: respondents' rationales**

- Yes. My (unofficial) mentor was the sole reason I survived year one. If I could have half of that impact it would be worth it!
- Yes. I feel new to the profession teachers are not prepared for today's demands in the classroom.
- I would; if there is any insight I can provide I would gladly share my experiences.
- I have been a mentor. I think we learned from each other. Yes, I would do it provided the novice teacher is willing to listen and learn from me.
- Yes, give them tips of the trade that are not really learned in college to encourage them they can make it through.
- I consider it an honor to be asked to mentor another teacher. It implies that the administration likes what I do and approves of how I do it.
- Yes, I would be interested. I have mentored beginning teachers before and really enjoyed it.

- Yes. I would like to share some wisdom and knowledge, which was not shown to me when I began in this profession. I was told to just do what works for me.
- Yes, looking back at what great mentoring did for me as a new teacher, I owe it to anyone new to the profession. A solid mentoring program impacts a school and students' progress.
- Yes, I think new teachers need that support. Teaching can be isolating otherwise.
- Yes. I still remember my first semester teaching and how I wished someone was there to mentor me and help me out.
- Yes, and I have mentored many beginning teachers. I believe it is important for novice teachers to have someone they can turn to for questions, answers, and support.
- Yes. I believe that supporting new teachers is the best way to keep them in the profession and to help them to succeed.
- I would be interested. I feel that new opinions and ideas help push me and my creativity. A novice teacher who has not been “jaded” would definitely stimulate my own new ideas and, through collaboration, I could model risk taking along with the novice teacher.
- Yes, if someone has chosen teaching as a profession, I would support, encourage, and guide them to make the most of their choice.

Question number five of the Veteran Teacher Survey was created to assess whether additional school responsibilities would affect veteran teachers' reasons to serve as mentors, time to take upon this role, and those who may be currently serving in this capacity. “Do you currently have a formal leadership role in your school, such as department chair, instructional resource, teacher mentor, leadership team member, or

other leadership role? If so, explain your responsibilities.” Of the 45 respondents, 55.6% (25) stated that they had additional job-related responsibilities, while 44.4% (20) stated that they did not have other duties.

**Veteran Teacher Survey Responses: Question 5**

- Yes, I am the 8th-grade math team leader. I attend district meetings and work with the teachers on campus to distribute the information on curriculum and practice.
- Yes, I am currently department chairperson. My role is to relay information from the principal and district leaders to my department and vice versa; however, there is no information coming from district leaders on best practice or other areas of importance to my department so the growth of my department falls on my shoulders while still trying to teach all of my students.
- Yes, teacher mentor and committee chair.
- Yes, department chair. Responsibilities include:
  1. Holding department meetings; 2. Managing the budget, supplies, and equipment; 3. Facilitating vertical conversations in curriculum and lesson planning; 4. In-depth STAAR analysis per grade level; and 5. Supporting teachers anyway I can.
- Yes, I am the foreign language department chair. It is a very small department (2). My duties include making sure we are on the same page; our grading policies; supplies for the classroom; discussing grades, failures, and curriculum.
- I am currently the team leader for my grade level. I do not really see this being a role like it once was. Most things go through the department chair these days and

she informs us all at once what is going on. On my campus, our team shares the responsibilities among the members of the team.

- Yes, I am the department chair. I attend meetings with the principal, keep my department informed on current school-related matters; I run a monthly department meeting; at times, I am a sounding board for department members; I order supplies for the department; and I take department concerns to the principal.
- I am a team leader. My responsibilities change each year. I make the agendas, take notes, write lesson plans, discuss issues and concerns, and contact others for needed information or problem solving.
- I am a mentor teacher as well as chairperson of several committees. The committees that I serve on include the Site Based Decision Making, Above and Beyond, and Health and Wellness. I am also the campus coordinator for the school-wide attendance initiative.

**Table 17***Veteran Teacher Survey Results: Frequency of Responses**Likert Scale Survey Questions (29): 45 Participants*

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
Upon entering the teaching profession 10 or more years ago, I was assigned a mentor.	13	3	1	9	19
I received little to no support from my mentor department chair, team leader, school principal, etc., upon entering the teaching profession.	13	10	6	7	9
The campus support that I received upon entering the teaching profession was a sufficient and reassuring experience.	8	13	4	7	13
I received little to no support from my mentor and or school administration upon entering the teaching profession.	15	6	3	12	9
The mentorship support that I received upon entering the profession contributed to my success as a teacher.	10	9	3	14	9

I have considered leaving the teaching profession.	10	6	5	12	12
The principal at my campus values my experience and expertise.	2	5	8	19	11
I have taken pleasure in mentoring several new teachers over the course of my career.	2	4	6	19	12
New teacher mentoring should be taken seriously by school principals, mentees, and mentors.	0	0	0	17	28
I would be honored to mentor a new teacher.	2	3	5	11	24
The school's principal and administration is supportive and encouraging.	1	7	7	17	13
As a veteran teacher, I feel respected and supported by the school principal.	3	8	5	15	14
Veteran teachers participate in making important school decisions.	6	11	12	11	5

My building principal(s) facilitate communication effectively.	2	9	8	17	8
The school principal is a visionary leader who can conceptualize a vision and goals for a school community and can take steps necessary to make that vision reality.	4	8	10	14	9
The principal is not afraid to take a risk in leading school communities toward being an efficient and effective learning community.	4	6	9	19	7
The principal displays perseverance/intrinsic motivation, whereas he or she persistently does whatever it takes to get the job done.	3	6	4	25	7
The school principal has people skills, ability to develop meaningful relationships with others.	2	3	12	17	11
The school principal attentively listens to others and synthesizes information.	3	5	11	19	7

The school principal possesses strong organizational skills.	1	6	12	18	8
The school principal is confident in his or her ability to lead.	0	2	7	24	12
The school principal is a critical thinker, considers all variables for strategic and conscientious decision making.	3	12	7	14	9
The school principal is an analytical thinker/problem solver.	2	11	8	16	8
The school principal has the . . . ability to transform information from various resources (including graduate school, reading, seminars, etc.) and experiences in order to create programs that will make a more effective school community.	3	12	10	15	5
Ability to make good decisions quickly.	2	6	8	17	10
Ability to articulate clearly.	1	5	5	19	15
Ability to prioritize and know what is important: time-management.	1	6	8	18	10

Ability to gain trust and respect from others.	3	7	6	20	9
Ability to transform a campus climate and culture through his or her leadership efforts.	7	5	6	15	12

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Table 17 displays the frequency of responses for the Veteran Teacher Survey in regards to their mentorship experience and magnitude of support that they received upon entering the profession from the campus administrators and department leaders. The survey was also designed to display how veteran teachers perceive the leadership attributes of their current campus principals. The survey reveals that 28 (62.2%) veteran teacher participants were assigned a mentor upon entering the profession 10 or more years ago. However, 21 (46.7%) of the participants believed that the campus support that they received upon entering the teaching profession was not a sufficient and reassuring experience.

### **Former Teacher Survey Results**

Two former teachers also participated in this research study whereas they also completed a Likert-scale survey that was designed to allow them to respond to inquiries based upon their experiences and perspectives by selecting major, moderate, minor, or not a factor in their decision to leave the teaching profession. Categories: Major Factor, Moderate Factor, Minor Factor, Not a Factor

**Table 18***Former Teacher Survey Results: Frequency of Responses**Likert Scale Survey Questions 23: 2 Participants*

	Major Factor	Moderate Factor	Minor Factor	Not a Factor
A more competitive salary in another profession, outside the field of education	0	1	0	1
Did not support district/campus reform measures	0	1	1	0
Lack of advancement in the teaching profession	0	0	0	2
Inadequate mentoring	0	0	2	0
Inadequate support	0	2	0	0
Lack of supportive working environment	0	1	1	0
Inadequate training to support current position	1	1	0	0
Recruited for another position	0	0	0	2
Reduction in force (RIF)	0	0	0	2
Culture and climate of the school	0	1	0	1
Lack of autonomy	0	0	1	1
Administrative leadership	0	0	1	1
End of contract/temporary assignment	0	0	0	2
Lack of support from supervisor	0	0	2	0
Relocation	0	0	0	2

Poor salary/budget cuts	0	0	0	2
Unethical treatment	0	0	0	2
Lack of shared leadership	0	0	0	2
Supervisor incompetence	0	0	1	1
Lack of influence/respect as professionals	0	0	2	0
Poor relationship with supervisor	0	0	0	2
Dissatisfaction with working conditions	1	0	1	0
Administrator's actions did not support teaching staff	0	0	2	0
Excessive state testing pressure	0	1	0	1

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Table 18 displays the frequency of responses from the Former Teacher Survey in regards to the participants' reasons for leaving the teaching profession. The results conclude that former teacher participants deem that they did not receive adequate training to support them in their role as a teacher as major and moderate factors in their reasons for leaving the teaching profession. The survey results also report that poor salary and/or budget cuts was not a factor in the participants' decision to leave the profession.

The former teacher participants also responded to one open-ended question after completing the survey. The question posed was "Describe your major reason(s) for leaving the teaching profession?" The participants' responses are documented in their entirety below.

**Respondent's rationale:**

- Education today is taking a turn for the worse in my personal opinion. The students are no longer the focus. The focus has become testing and how much money is associated. I do understand that students today have many other outside forces that are upon them, but a teacher can only do so much. The lack of parental support is also a factor. I do not understand how districts require so much from the teachers and yet do not require anything from the parents. Education starts at home. I also believe that many districts are catering to parents. Stop catering and start holding them accountable. Respect is no longer required. Teachers are often disrespected from administrators, fellow coworkers, students, and parents. It is very difficult to keep a smile on your face when you have been disrespected. The stress level of the average person in education is tremendously high. This was a driving factor of my decision to leave. I value my health and family too much to have health problems stemming from my line of work.

**Respondent's rationale:**

- My major reasons for leaving the teaching profession had to do with my personal discovery of a professional passion in counseling, lack of classroom support, and inadequate job training. First, I felt pulled in two directions; the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills that I was supposed to be teaching to my students and the basic skills that my students were struggling with, like discovering healthy outlets, self-confidence, self-worth, solving problems, independence, compassion, dealing with change, and the list goes on. The struggle I faced within teaching was working with children that faced such extreme difficulties in their personal

life like homelessness, abuse, and drugs, while feeling intense pressure from the school district to teach specific content within certain guidelines. I felt like essential life lessons and skills were being skipped over and in effect weren't being taught to the students. I finally realized that counseling or mentoring might be a better fit for me professionally based on what I enjoyed doing most: creating strong relationships, helping others talk through life's struggles, teaching the process of solving problems, and helping to find healthy outlets. Next, I had so many students that were unable to fulfill the most basic requirements in class even with a co-teacher or teacher's aide; there just was not enough support in the class to truly serve each student's needs. I tried to do the best I could with each student, but I never felt like I could do enough, which led me to have feelings of inadequacy. Lastly, as a new teacher, I had a new position within the school every year. My first year I was a co-teacher, my second year I was a Texas history teacher, and my third year I was a world cultures teacher. I never was able to truly learn and execute the curriculum content because each year I had to start all over and learn fresh. That was very stressful for me, and I felt like I was not fully prepared or partnered well with veteran teachers who could act as good mentors for me. I ended up having to take the lead, which was extremely stressful and exhausting. I absolutely adore working with youth, especially underprivileged youth. It is very meaningful and rewarding work, and it feeds my soul. I hope to one day work with them again through a medium like mentoring or counseling!

### **Beginning, Veteran, and Former Teacher Questionnaires**

In addition to the online surveys, beginning, veteran, and former teacher research study participants also completed a questionnaire on which they were to weigh in and provide feedback based upon their perceptions and perspectives regarding the beneficial components of their mentorship program experience; the principal's role in structuring, implementing, and evaluating mentoring programs; and the essential attributes that they look for in an effective school principal that attributes to attrition and retention. The questionnaire responses for each participant have been individually recorded and are reported verbatim in this section of the study.

#### **Beginning Teacher Questionnaire**

The Beginning Teacher questionnaire consisted of 16 questions that were designed to answer the research questions that guide this study:

1. From the teacher's perspective, what impact do campus mentoring programs have on teacher retention?
2. What specific aspects of mentoring programs do teachers find most beneficial to their professional development?
3. Do teachers' perceptions of the supportiveness of campus administration influence their decisions to change schools or leave the profession?

The questionnaire responses were recorded from the handouts by the principal investigator of the study, whereas the qualitative data collected through this instrument are reported in this section of the study by outlining and showcasing the common themes based upon the respondents' answers and replies to the questions.

#### **Beginning Teacher Questionnaire Individual Responses**

The first question of the questionnaire required the participants to respond to the question “As a beginning teacher (new to the profession) how important is/was having a mentor to acclimate you to the campus and profession?” by selecting extremely important, important, somewhat important, or not important. The data reveals that 83.3% of the beginning teacher participants believe that having a mentor to acclimate them to the campus and profession was extremely important.

Question number two asked the beginning teacher participants to respond to the question “How important is it for you to experience success in the profession during your first years (teaching efficiency, self-confidence, overall job fulfillment)?” by selecting extremely important, important, somewhat important, or not important. The data indicates that 83.3% of the participants believe that experiencing success in the profession during their first years was extremely important.

Question number three asked the beginning teachers to respond to the question “What influenced you to enter the teaching profession?” by selecting two of the following choices:

- Making a difference in the lives of /inspiring students
- Passion for education (calling)
- Conducive to family life (holidays/summers off)
- Impacting today’s youth for the future
- Job security
- Autonomy in the classroom
- Giving back to the community

The data denote that 83.3% of the beginning teachers deem that “making a difference in the lives of/inspiring students” was indicated as their primary influence in luring them into the teaching profession, followed by “impacting today’s youth for the future (41.7%).

Question number four asked beginning teachers the following question, “Considering you entered the profession within the last three years, what was more important to you upon entering, campus support systems to ensure your success or a higher starting salary?” The data reveals that 91.7% of beginning teachers would prefer campus support systems to ensure their success over a higher starting salary.

Questions five and six asked the participants whether they were assigned a mentor upon entering the profession and if their campus had a mentoring program. In regards to new teacher mentoring, 66.7% of the beginning teachers received a mentor during their first year in the profession and 58.3% indicated that their campus had a new teacher mentorship program.

Question number seven asked the beginning teacher participants, “If your campus had a mentoring program, how was the program structured?” Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study, as documented by the participants.

- Not very structured. It was very informal and the mentor teacher did random checkups on you often, but not nearly enough.
- My mentor was a veteran teacher who taught the same grade and subject that I did. I had to meet with my mentor twice a week and write reflections on what we had talked about during our meetings.

- There was no specific structure. I was assigned a mentor and told to go to the mentor for anything that I may need.
- In all honesty there was not any structure from my point of view. I was assigned a mentor and that mentor checked on me periodically to ensure all the proper mentorship paperwork was complete.
- New teachers were assigned a mentor, whom they could meet with to discuss ideas and issues.
- I met with my mentor at the beginning of the year but had no help during the school year. I had to rely on other teachers for support.
- No, it was not. The mentor teacher assigned to me teaches another grade level and does not have a classroom close in proximity to my classroom. I rarely see or speak to my mentor, so it has not been very beneficial to me.

Question number eight asked the beginning teacher participants, “If applicable, did your mentor teach in the same grade level and content area as you?” Of the participants, 57.1% of the participants’ mentors taught in the same grade level and content area as they did while the remaining 42.9% of participants did not and/or did not have a mentor.

Question number nine asked the beginning teacher participants, “If your mentor’s tutelage/mentorship program experience was beneficial to your success as a first-year teacher, elaborate on the most valuable elements.” Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study. The beneficial and non-beneficial comments have been outlined by the themes, beneficial and non-beneficial.

**Respondents with beneficial experiences:**

- My mentor teacher helped me create lesson plans and find suitable materials to support the lesson. Most importantly, we were able to discuss common problems we had and come up with solutions to solve them.
- Some valuable elements my mentor offered were valued advice due to numerous years of experience, content-area support, instruction, and the importance of planning on a daily basis.
- It was nice because we planned together so she would show me the ropes that way. Sort of a learn as you go, discuss as various situations arise.
- My mentor ensured that I was completing all paperwork and documenting appropriately. She also helped me to develop behavior interventions.
- Having a “mentor” my first year was so important for ensuring success of my first year teaching. My mentor guided me through all parts of teaching: parents, phone calls, lesson planning, classroom management, STAAR data analysis, everything that was important for my first year. I credit my mentor for helping make me into the teacher I am today. She is the reason I came back for year two.

**Respondents with non-beneficial experiences:**

- I do not feel that my mentorship was very beneficial. My mentor ended up just being that person that I went to clear up procedural questions.
- I do not believe it was valuable. I asked for suggestions, and help, and none was given. I asked to have my mentor sit in on a class to see how I could improve and that never happened.

Question number ten asked the beginning teacher participants, “If you did not participate in a mentorship program, describe the amount of support that you received

during your first three years as a teacher from your team leader, department chair, instructional coach, campus leadership team, etc.” Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study.

- I received the most support from my department leader and another first-year teacher on my team. We worked so well together.
- My mentor was not a teacher, but a diagnostician. She would come into my room to observe and give suggestions.
- I feel that I did not receive any support besides from my assistant principal and mentor. Other than that, not much else. Thankfully, my experience was wonderful with my assistant principal. He was always there for anything I ever needed. The two of them really were the ones I owe credit for a successful first year.
- Unfortunately, my school lacked in this area because most of their teachers were new. They were unable to provide adequate mentorship. I strongly believe that every new teacher needs a mentor because you do not want your new teachers to get overwhelmed and drained then decide to leave the profession. If we have adequate mentors we will be able to maintain adequate educators.

Question number eleven asked the participants, “As a mentee were you provided with release time to conduct observations in your mentor’s classroom? If so, how many observations were conducted throughout the school year on your behalf as well as your mentor’s behalf? Was this component of the mentoring program beneficial?” Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study.

- No, I wish I could have done this!!

- I was not. This is the one thing that I wish (and still wish) I had more of. I want to keep learning, and I think it would help to see other teachers teach. It really opens your eyes to methods/practices I would not have thought of.
- I was not provided time to observe my mentor's classroom. At the beginning of the school year, I was told that this observation would be something I would do, but it never happened.

Question number twelve asked the participants, "How often did you meet with your mentor? Daily, weekly, monthly?" Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study.

- Once a month, or anytime I needed something, which was rare.
- I met with my mentor twice a week.
- Daily, but primarily because we planned together.
- Random days throughout the year. Not many days, however.
- I met with my mentor at the beginning of the school year and received no help after that.
- We never met. The only time I saw my mentor was at our math department meetings.

Question number thirteen asked the participants, "From your perspective, list five attributes of an effective school principal." Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study.

- Approachable, understanding, open-minded, flexible, cooperative/team player
- Student centered, effective communicator, hard worker, goal centered, and a forward thinker

- Supports teachers and backs them when it is reasonable to do so, follows through on goals and expectations, respects the constraints of today's classroom and adjusts expectations accordingly, follows through with student discipline, and consistently works to support growth.
- Supportive, informative, flexible, caring, constructive
- Supportive, consistent, structured campus and guidelines, in charge, visible to staff and students, organized
- Good listener, supportive, active/available for help
- Supportive, knowledgeable, consistent, honest, understanding
- Great rapport with staff, great rapport with students, has clearly defined goals which are communicated consistently throughout school, places emphasis on teacher support (making priority), a genuine heart for the students and community in which he/she is servicing
- Excellent communication, listens to input teachers have/give, personable/easy to talk to, good discipline skills, organized
- Involved, knows the kids (like the teacher would), comes in and out of the classroom often, a leader-responsible/trustworthy/reliable, consistent with discipline and other procedural things involving students and teachers, balances love and discipline, organized with procedures and policies
- Good listener, supportive, active/available for help
- Have presence in classrooms (other than appraisal purposes, consistent, shows support to teachers, knows what is happening at school, be approachable

- Addressable, consistent, innovative/always looking for ways to improve, caring/passionate, great communicator

Question number fourteen asked the participants, “What role do you believe the school principal should play in structuring, implementing, and evaluating a campus mentoring program? What role do you believe campus leaders (principal, assistant principals) play in retaining quality teachers?” Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study.

- I believe that a good mentoring program starts at the top. If there is no buy-in as coordination from the administration, it is unlikely that the program will meet its full potential.
- I believe that the school principal should carefully choose which teachers are selected as mentors. Not only should the principal check in with the mentor and mentee throughout the year, but at the end, the principal should gather feedback on whether the program was effective. Campus leaders should be proactive in doing anything they can to keep quality teachers.
- Campus leaders play a role in retention by how they carry themselves in their duties and whether they are supportive of teachers whenever a conflict arises between teachers, students, and parents.
- I believe principals should definitely play a significant role in the overall structuring of mentoring programs. In my opinion, the mentoring programs implemented by administrators serve as a great indicator to a beginning educator on whether or not a system has been put in place to ensure their success as a practitioner long term.

- A major role, the campus principal is the leader of the school. If he/she is pushing for the importance of it, the rest of the faculty will follow suit. The principal needs to set the tone and be a strong supportive advocate. The faculty needs to “buy-in” and having someone in charge as a leading example will encourage the staff to “buy-in” and keep the retention rate up.
- The principal should make sure that new teachers are receiving the support they need from their mentor. If the mentor is not supporting their mentee, the principal should hold a meeting with both parties to get the program back on track and address any concerns. Campus leaders play a huge part in retaining quality teachers due to appropriate discipline procedures. Campus leaders should support teachers whenever there are concerns with students, other teachers, etc.
- I believe the school principal should organize and structure a campus mentoring program. The need to set specific guidelines as to what the program entails. They should meet with the mentor/mentee on occasion to “check-in” and see the progress. Evaluations should be done at the end of the year to see the effectiveness of the program so improvements can be made for the next year. Campus leaders should help create a positive working/learning environment so that quality teachers will want to stay.
- The head principal should be required to have a mentoring program (an effective, meaningful one) in place, as retaining quality teachers should be one of their top priorities.

Question number fifth-teen asked the participants, “Do you believe that campus mentoring programs have an impact on teacher retention? (Yes or No), explain . . .”

- Yes, new teachers need guidance and support to survive during a stressful time. If an effective support structure is not in place, teachers, especially new teachers, will grow frustrated, burn out, and look for a new, more supportive environment.
- Yes, mentorship programs take away some of the “sink or swim” feelings that comes with being a first-year teacher. I believe that the feelings of being completely overwhelmed are common to first-year teachers and could certainly affect retention.
- Yes, mentoring programs provide a team member partnership for teachers that are going through similar struggles in the first few years of the profession. It will also give them a colleague with a similar background that they can bounce or exchange some ideas with.
- Yes, I sincerely believe that campus mentoring programs are imperative when projecting whether or not campuses will retain quality teachers. However, I also must add that these programs, though beneficial, are just one slice of the pie that makes up the totality of what beginner educators need in order to be successful. Constant, encouraging feedback is needed from administrators often, in my opinion, as well as opportunities for these educators to have quality instruction modeled for them. In any profession where there is a novice employee, actions speak louder than words when learning the ropes.
- Yes, it creates a sense of community and in turn helps to facilitate improvements in the teachers. With improvements comes confidence and therein lies effective teachers. It helps teachers (new and veteran) know that they are not alone in their

struggles and that makes for people being proactive to improve and try new things, which hopefully leads to happy employees who do not want to leave.

- Yes, I think if you have a mentoring program, the new teachers will not feel like they are alone. I know my first year there were times I felt like I was alone and had no one to turn to help. It did not deter me from wanting to be a teacher but I would like to leave the school. With that being said, if I would have had a mentor I probably would be staying at the school. I think this a universal problem.

Question number sixteen asked beginning teachers, “Based upon your perceptions, why do you believe beginning teachers are leaving the profession shortly after entering?”

Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study.

- Not what they thought it would be. A lot of responsibilities that they did not sign up for. Not paid enough for the amount of time and effort it takes to be successful. Pressure of the STAAR is overwhelming.
- I believe that there is a disconnect between what teachers get into the profession to do and what they are able/expected to in today’s classroom. With large class sizes and frequent testing, it is hard to feel successful.
- I believe that it is a combination of lack of professional support, disillusionment with aspects of the job, and lack of pay. However between those reasons, I don’t think pay is the highest reason due to prior knowledge of teachers’ salaries. I believe the highest reason is the lack of mentorship programs that is intertwined with lack of administrative support of issues like grades and discipline.
- I believe there are various reasons the teacher rate for beginning teachers is extremely unsuccessful: lack of administrative support, lack of parental

involvement (varies by campus), overworked and underpaid, “administrative bullying” fear tactics being used to yield positive results from teachers, and politics.

- Being burnt out from a variety of things; lack of support/mentor programs, too much focus on passing test (STAAR, etc.), not clear guidelines from administration, not enough structure, people forgetting the end result of education is to create good and productive citizens (now, 5, 10, 15, etc., years from now). Too many focus on the “how” result instead of the big picture and how to set the students up for success in life as a whole, i.e., no zeroes allowed gives students the sense of no urgency to complete assignments, they do not realize the importance of deadlines and in the future in college, at a job, paying bills, if you are late there are major consequences. We, as educators, need to help them to get into the habit and see the importance. Too many chances and the kids realize they can get away with it. Basically, use common sense to set guidelines for a school and think “how to help create successful, good, and productive citizens.” How to do this? I believe with structure, fairness, and setting guidelines and standards, and flowing through. I love being a teacher, I want to help mold responsible and successful kids.
- I believe that teachers are not getting the support they need from campus leaders in some cases. For example, I know when I have written a student up for a major discipline problem it was not taken care of by the administrator. It was frustrating sometimes because students would come back to class, right after the referral, and say the assistant principal did not do anything.

- Student discipline (no support from administration), major lack of parental involvement: parents working against the teacher instead of working with them; lack of respect: gap between administrators and teachers; politics: not being able to hold students back, etc., No Child Left Behind = a joke! They are left behind academically by being passed on to grades they are not prepared for! Huge classes, no time, lack of resources.
- As a new teacher (who has/is considering leaving the profession), one thing that has been hard is the stress of testing, but no help with preparing kids. Kids also sometimes work 30% and I am doing the rest. The accountability of students is zero, and I usually feel as if I am fighting a battle that I will never win. If I do not leave the profession, I will seek to be in a non-tested subject area. Being in tested content area has made me resentful!
- Yes, I think many teachers come in with a lot of hope and passion, wanting to make a change in student lives but that vision soon fades once they get into an ineffective environment. I believe there will be more effective teachers if we have more effective leaders trying to maintain the teachers. No one wants to work in an environment where they feel like they are inadequate or struggling.
- There is so much responsibility for the teacher in education now with high-stakes testing and having so many Limited English Proficient /Special Education students in class together. It is very overwhelming. I think the biggest reason teachers are leaving is because they do not feel support from their administration and because of a general “negative” environment. Those have been my two frustrations all year. The administration has been inconsistent in dealing with

behavior and/or has been lenient. Students have less respect for teachers who write a referral and then “get away with” what they have done because a principal did not punish them. Also teachers here are extremely negative and jaded and gossip a lot. It is hard to stay positive and want to work/be around people like that. The biggest and most important thing to me is a positive environment. The administration and other teachers have a huge role in creating either a positive or negative environment. I have thought to myself many, many times this year how there is no way I will be doing this in five years. It makes me sad because I have wanted to be a teacher for as long as I can remember, but it seems way to difficult/exhausting/depressing to continue doing this for the rest of my life.

### **Veteran Teacher Questionnaire**

The questionnaire responses were recorded individually by the principal investigator of the study whereas the qualitative data collected through this instrument will be reported in this section of the study by outlining and showcasing the common themes.

The Veteran Teacher questionnaire consisted of 18 questions that were designed to answer the research questions that guide this study:

1. What are principals’ perceptions of their role in structuring, implementing, and evaluating a campus mentorship program?
2. From the teacher’s perspective, what impact do campus mentoring programs have on teacher retention?
3. What specific aspects of mentoring programs do teachers find most beneficial to their professional development?

4. Do teacher's perceptions of the supportiveness of campus administration influence their decisions to change schools or leave the profession?

### **Veteran Teacher Questionnaire Individual Responses**

Question number one asked the veteran teacher participants, "Upon entering the profession, were you assigned a mentor?" Of the responding participants, 52.4% indicated that they were assigned a mentor upon entering the profession while 47.6% of the veteran teachers specified that they did not.

Question number two asked the participants, "Did your campus have a new teacher mentorship program? Yes or No (circle one). If you answered yes, how was the mentorship program structured?" Of the responding participants, 61.9% of the veteran teacher participants indicated that their campus did not have a mentoring program. The remaining 38.1% of participants' descriptive responses have been recorded below. Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study.

- Yes, I was assigned a mentor teacher. She met with me regularly to discuss any questions, problems, or issues I may have had. She observed me in the classroom one time per month and met with me after each observation. She also arranged for me to observe other teachers in the building about one time per month.
- Yes, I was assigned a teacher in a similar subject area and same grade level who observed my teaching and gave me classroom management tips.
- Yes, I was assigned a mentor at my campus. In addition, my mentor at the campus and the assistant principal conducted weekly observations and debrief sessions. In addition to formally assigned mentors, I had a number of others available for

support. I had a very nurturing and supportive department head that checked on me daily. She would make brief walk-throughs and often sent e-mails offering praise when evident and suggestions for improvement when warranted. I was assigned a teacher mentor at the campus level to have someone to observe and get help with lesson plans and all the things teachers have to do that no one talks about in preparation programs. Both the principal and associate principal made an effort to come to my classroom and offer encouragement and advice. I found it to be an extremely supportive and nurturing environment. In addition to above, there were numerous professional development opportunities designed specifically for new teachers at the district level.

- Yes, the district assigned a “trained” mentor and you get two days off to observe and discuss. We traveled to another school to watch their music teacher.
- Yes, the program was designed with release time and resources allocated to meet the needs of the mentees. Specific professional development days were scheduled for the mentors to be trained to know how to support their mentee. Mentors were compensated—a stipend as an incentive to value the program. Mentors had specific dates to observe the mentee, looking for specific areas of the mentee’s growth and progress as a professional. Mentors and mentees met regularly with an agenda to ensure that specific areas of concerns were addressed. Mentor and mentees would dialogue via e-mail or phone prior to schedule meetings to keep the flow of contact current.

Question number three asked the participants, “If your mentor’s tutelage/mentorship program experience was beneficial to your success as a first-year teacher, elaborate on

the most valuable elements.” Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study.

- I definitely believe she was essential to my success as a first-year teacher and beyond. Her years of experience provided me with many insights—probably the most beneficial was that of issues with classroom management. It was also beneficial in that she was my department head and worked in a similar position as I did.
- Upon entering the profession, I was assigned a mentor. He taught me how to lesson plan and collaborate with teachers. He also taught me when to look for “teachable moments” in that some of the best lessons are the ones not planned, but fit the need of the students. He demonstrated the importance of good parent contact and being involved in extra events to help strengthen ties with students. Most important he taught me how to listen and watch as students’ emotions and body actions reflect how they feel more than their verbal words.
- Our campus did not have a mentor program, but I was able to work very closely with a veteran teacher my first year as an educator. Her experience working in an inner city school, her organization skills, and her positive attitude kept me afloat, even on the most difficult days of that first year. She knew how to interact positively with the population of kids that we had and it made a difference in their motivation to learn. I was able to mimic her discipline style and it was effective. The kids responded to me and trusted me and therefore were able to focus on learning. I was thrown into the fire that first year and I survived largely because of my adopted mentor. She was very organized and kept files of everything. Her

room was clean and open and she expected her students to keep it that way. Once again, I copied her style and kept my personal supplies and classroom neat. I really believe this makes a difference in the level of expectations you have for students. Our school was drug and gang infested. In fact, a brand new teacher like myself quit at Christmas. It was tough. It would be easy to give up, give in, and let the kids win. My mentor's positive attitude and professionalism shaped the teacher I was. When my kids were with me in the classroom, we focused on learning. It was a learning environment. I never forgot the lessons she taught me. I would never have made it through that first year without her support.

- Without doubt the most valuable element of my mentorship program was conversation and nonjudgmental feedback. All those involved in my mentorship were technically my "bosses," but they all treated me like a colleague. They challenged me with questions about my practice, rather than deliver a sermon or a set of static rules to follow. They encouraged me to be genuine in building relationships with the students, which were a very challenging group. Although there were many eyes on me, I never felt threatened or intimidated. I knew if I made a mistake or if a lesson flopped that the feedback would be genuine and constructive.
- The list could be endless but to name a few, the procedural and district expectation aspects of the new profession. How to prepare my classroom, parent communication, accessing resources, necessary professional development, classroom management, and how to work on the new team and develop as a professional.

Question number four asked the participants, “If you did not participate in a mentorship program describe the amount of support that you received during your first three years as a teacher from your team leader, department chair, instructional coach, campus leadership team, etc.” Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study.

- The only support I received was from a coworker who taught the same content and level of students I taught. She was my lifeline. Without her I would not have survived. I did not receive any support from my building principal or grade-level principal. My coworker happened to be department chair. My first three years were 1976–1979.
- There was no support from anyone in any leadership role. Had I not started with three other teachers who were thankfully in the same hallway with me, I never would have survived my first two years!
- I did not really receive much in the way of support. In the early 90s, staff development was not geared towards any sort of teacher input and it really was “sink or swim” mentality in the school I was teaching at. I think my desire to be a teacher and the relationships I had with students are what fueled me.
- I received very little to no support at all. I was completely on my own. If I needed something, I went and looked for someone. At the time, we didn’t even plan together as a team or a department.
- I started teaching in January (5th grade, self-contained classroom). I did not have a mentor assigned to me during the remainder of that year, nor the 2

years following. I learned quickly to make friends with other teachers in my grade level for support. My first 5 years of teaching were at a year-round school, which made it even harder to get the support I needed. Teachers worked 3 months then had a month off!

- I received the majority of support from my instructional coach and campus leadership my first year. I started in the middle of the year and the instructional coach was assigned to help me get started with planning curriculum for a class I was charged with creating. By my third year, I was the team leader for my content area, but still, as the team leader, received consistent support from the instructional coach and administrative team. I would describe the amount of support as being “sufficient”—enough to keep me invested.

Question number five asked the participants, “As a veteran teacher (10 years or more in the profession) have you ever mentored a beginning teacher? Yes or No (circle one). If you answered yes, how was the mentorship program structured and describe your role?” Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study.

### **Informal Experiences**

- Yes. At the time I acted as a mentor, I did so in a very informal way—I had no guidance as to my real role as a mentor and I was mentoring a teacher in a position that was somewhat different than mine. She was in a life skills classroom, and I had no experience in that area. I was able to help her with procedural questions (both department and campus) as well as with the preparation of Admission, Review, and Dismissal Meetings.

- Yes. It was very loose. It depended on us, the veteran teacher and the new teacher, to reach out to each other whenever needed. There were a few initial meetings and then the help was on an as-needed basis.
- Yes. Unfortunately, by the time I became a mentor, the program was not structured. It was expected of the veteran teacher to mentor based on your own experience. The time and resources was not in place to make the mentorship program a part of the school program, rather just as a good faith of the veteran teacher to be supportive or as a collaborative part of the team.
- Yes. I was the “mentor” for a new-to-the-district teacher (with 10 more years of experience than me); there was no guidance or clear expectations, but I told him where the copy room was.

### **Formal Experiences**

- Yes. I was a mentor two different times in another school district. The mentors were chosen by the principal, and we attended professional development /training to be a mentor. We met monthly with other mentors to describe our experience, offer advice to each other, and discuss any positive news about our mentees. My mentee was right next door to me, which was very valuable to her. She came in my room or we met other places at least twice a week, if not more. Our relationship was informal, so she felt at ease asking for advice and modeling of activities. As mentors, we were required to complete several walk-throughs or informal observations on paper that allowed for documentation of the program. I feel it was the best mentor program I have witnessed from the different schools I have taught at. And, I

think my mentee benefited from the program. It also allowed me an insight to my leadership style and my strengths/weaknesses.

- Yes. Mentors received training through the Texas Beginning Educator Support System Training Program at Region IV Education Service Center. I was assigned a “new” teacher. I was required to meet with my mentee on a regular basis and keep log of the meetings. I also observed the new teacher in her classroom and provided feedback. I checked on her regularly and answered any questions, listened to concerns, gave reassurance, etc. I believe there was also a small stipend for mentors.
- Yes. Very structured with observations on both the veteran and the beginning teacher. Positive feedback with constructive recommendations.

Question number six asked the participants, “Did you receive any formal district/campus training on your role as a mentor? Describe . . .” Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study.

- Yes. I believe there were two to three district-level meetings to train mentors. We were provided a “manual” and several resource books. The mentoring program was explained, expectations were set forth.
- Yes. The mentoring program was structured through the district. This program training was conducted during school hours as well as some Saturday meetings. We were provided with materials to read as well as hands-on activities, which included acting out situations which most likely occur for new teachers.

- Yes. Region IV Education Service Center, Texas Beginning Educator Support System (TxBess) training. In addition, the school district that I worked for provided training for campus “Lead Mentor,” and I attended the required meetings with all “Lead Mentors” at district office.

Question number seven asked the participants, “As a mentor were you provided with release time to conduct observations and provide feedback to your mentee? If so, how many observations were conducted throughout the school year on your behalf as well as the mentee’s?” Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study.

- No, I made observations during a class period when I had a Coteacher. I believe we were required to do three observations during that year. We met after each observation to debrief. We met once a week to talk about the mentee’s concerns and answer basic “how to, how do you” type questions.
- No, I may have gone during my conference time, though. We met after school to discuss the observation and provide feedback and advice.
- Yes. Time was provided to conduct observations. There were forms provided through the training program that we used which focused on certain elements of the teaching lesson. I believe there were two observations per semester. Feedback was provided during our common planning time. Both parties signed the form and the mentee received a copy as well as the district liaison.
- Yes, I observed several teachers during my planning period. During my early years as a mentor, we had two 90-minute planning periods. This made it easy

for me to visit a classroom and observe a beginning teacher. When assigned a mentee, I observed two to three times per year.

Question number eight asked the participants, “Did your mentee teach in the same grade level and content area as you? Yes or No (circle one).” Of the respondents, 57.1% of the participants noted that their mentee did not teach in the same grade level and content area while 42.9% listed that their mentor did in fact teach in the same grade level and content area.

Question number nine asked the participants, “How often did/do you meet with your mentee? Daily, weekly, monthly?” Forty-seven and six tenths percent (47.6%) of the participants indicated that they met with their mentees on a weekly basis, and others stated that they met with their mentor on an as-needed basis.

Question number ten asked the participants, “Did you receive a stipend for mentoring a beginning teacher? Yes or No (circle one). If so, did/would that entice you to take on this role?” Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study.

- The stipend was a nice benefit of the mentoring program; however, I do not think it was the sole reason I agreed to mentor.
- The money was definitely a plus, but I also did it as a favor to the administrator who asked me.
- I do not think money is as much of an incentive as time would be. Providing mentor teachers with time to observe their mentee and meet within the school hours would be more enticing.

- Yes, I received a stipend for two years only. During the stipend period, the observations were required as well as the paper trail of hours met.
- Yes. I definitely believe that a stipend is needed for mentors. I spent time outside of school hours meeting with the mentee, writing notes, filling out paperwork. I chose to buy small “gifts” periodically for my mentees, provided breakfast, and snacks at meetings.
- Never was I offered a stipend! I felt it was an honor to help a new teacher to the profession.

Question number eleven required the participants to respond to the following question, “As a veteran teacher (10 years or more in the profession), would you be interested in mentoring a new teacher?” by selecting: I would be honored, interested, somewhat interested, or not interested. Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study.

- I would be honored. Anyone in the first year of a job is on a steep learning curve. Helping to lighten the load would be an honor and could help build rapport with other members of faculty.
- I would be honored. If I were not retired, I would mentor. I believe that new teachers need guidance and reassurance. Mentor/mentee relationships should be less intimidating for a new teacher. Often, as a new teacher we are less likely to ask for help out of fear of others thinking we do not know what we are doing. The mentor can plan for these unasked questions.
- I would be honored. I think there is a deep need for support of beginning teachers and I feel new teachers leaving the field is becoming more of a trend.

- I would be honored. If I can pass on my love and passion of teaching to another that would be a great feat. We need more teachers who love to teach. We need to encourage them, boost their morale, and help them all the way.
- I would be honored. I feel like it is necessary for any new teacher to have the same experience as a new teacher. To develop into the profession and become equipped with the necessary tools that college does not provide us to be prepared to work with students.
- Somewhat interested. The time is too demanding. I know they need help to survive and thrive, but the job is demanding enough without extra time to mentor.
- Not interested. Time constraints—have other schoolwork to complete and only so many hours in a day/night.
- Not interested. Too much time involved to do it right and we are not given any extra time or stipend.
- Not interested. I circled not interested because if I were to stay the same there is no reason. There needs to be structure.
- Somewhat interested. Tends to weigh the teacher down especially if they (new teacher) are not committed!

Question number twelve asked the participants, “From your perspective, list the attributes that veteran teachers must possess in order to be an effective mentor.” Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study.

- Love teaching, like sharing experience and materials, have a good relationship with students collectively and individually, have a good relationship with parents and the community, be able to relate to “first-year teachers.”
- Patience, professionalism, objective, good listener, knowledge of the content, district and school policies—both written and unwritten.
- Organized, understanding, insightful, dedicated to helping, open for new ideas
- Patience, sense of humor, organized and prepared, flexible, ready for a challenge, good interpersonal skills, should love kids and teaching, willing to learn
- Commitment, patience, understanding, positivity/hopefulness, warmth, grit/endurance, reflective
- Compassionate, flexible in their thinking about pedagogy, not stuck in a rut of years of routine, a willingness to step out of boxes—curricular and classroom management, the willingness and desire to call into question their own practice, the ability to not only listen to the mentee’s concerns but hear them as well.

Question number fourteen asked the participants, “Do you believe that new teacher mentorship is crucial to new teacher success and professional development? Please explain . . .” Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study.

- I do believe it is a very important part. New teachers need positive, experienced role models to help them through the first difficult years and beyond. Teachers with experience have a wealth of knowledge—real classroom experience, not just words in a book—to pass on.

- Yes, the mentor gives advice and ideas that reflect real-world situations. Often, new teachers have a “perfect world” concept of teaching that does not reflect the classroom. A mentor can give “real world” answers to garnish results that are useful.
- If a teacher is turned off her or his first year, she or he will not want to proceed to the second year or might want to transfer campuses and might never find a place where she or he can settle in and actually build a career.
- Yes, our initiatives in education in the last 5–10 years have been primarily focused on decreasing the achievement gap, rigor in instruction, and differentiated instruction. However, teachers new to the profession have little or no training on these initiatives and when compounded with classroom management, time management, and the demands of figuring out the educational system . . . it is no wonder teachers are reaching burn out at an earlier age or throwing in the towel all together. New-to-the-profession teachers have been left to figure out how to deal with these stresses on their own. There really is not a support system in place for them. Veteran teachers may assist in small ways, but without mentoring programs purposefully put in place by school districts, we are ignoring part of the problem with education. You see, I believe that not every teacher that steps into the classroom has innate abilities to be a “teacher.” Some of the behavior is learned, but a large part of it is intuition. Programs that enlist employees from the private sector through two-year accreditation programs are simply, for the most part, not beneficial to the realm of education. I have not read recent studies, but I can guess that teachers who enter education through nontraditional four-year

education programs do not last in the profession as long as would be expected or projected. Teachers need support.

- I believe that mentorship is critical to the career. Teaching is a craft and generally improves in quality over time. New teachers can become more impatient when their reality does not match their vision. Mentor teachers can help new teachers embrace the growth process by sharing experiences and by helping problem-solve specific situations in a nonthreatening manner.
- I wholeheartedly believe that new teacher mentorship is crucial to new teacher success. The job of teaching has become so complex with ESL, inclusion, differentiation, state testing/results and classroom behaviors/discipline. It is not a stand and deliver job as many believe it to be. No matter the education the new teacher received, they are not truly prepared for the real classroom. Their student teaching experience relied on the cooperating teacher, which led to much of their success. Therefore, they need some continued support throughout their first year or two of teaching. Much time and money is invested in hiring a new teacher and with proper support they will bloom into a strong teacher. This will only strengthen the team they work with, the faculty they belong to, and the community they reach. Training a new teacher takes time and can be stressful for any team that must repeat the procedure over and over each year. Veteran teachers will burn out as well as the new teacher.
- Without new teacher mentorship and professional development, new teachers face trial by fire. Teaching is perhaps the only profession in which this is often the case. Not only is the classroom reality far separate from what is expected when it

is you and your students, but the job for the proficient is just plain difficult. Faced with these realities, a new teacher feels helpless and ends up burned out prematurely. The reason that I have stayed is that I have been fortunate to have had good mentors. Left to own wit and resources, I doubt seriously I would have lasted.

Question number fifth teen asked the participants, “If you decided to leave the teaching profession, what would your reason(s) be?” Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study.

- I left after my first 5 years due to what I saw as poor administrative leadership, lack of support from the administration, feeling that who I was and what I did was not valued. When I retire in 2 to 3 years, it will not be because I can afford to retire but will be because of the lack of fair compensation and the higher demand put on teachers to perform miracles in a deeply flawed education system.
- Student apathy and behavior, more work being required of teachers (computer use seems to have increased paperwork), pressure from administrators.
- If I were to leave the profession today, it would be because of the pay and the amount of demands placed on the position by the state. I would also leave if I ever felt as though my work was not valued or if I felt a lack of support.
- More work and less time to complete tasks. Not enough pay for veteran teachers. Pay scale starts off okay, but increases at a rate that is far below inflation/other professions. Test pressure—working at an at-risk school is more demanding of teachers.

- Lack of support from administration with regards to behavior problems going unattended and not enough classroom time to teach the students could lead me to leaving the profession.
- I would leave because of the lack of support from administrators. I also believe we have lowered our standards in the classroom for students and that we are not preparing students for real life.

Question number sixteen asked the participants, “Based upon your perceptions and experience list five attributes of an effective school principal.” Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study.

- Effective in different interpersonal contexts; effective in articulating a vision and goals and building team around that vision; holds personal and professional confidences; is responsive to teachers’ need for support with discipline, parents, and coworkers; developmentally understands students and seeks their best regardless of parental pressure.
- Has a vision and communicates the vision to the faculty, the vision is reasonable and doable and for the benefit of students, can see multiple solutions to a problem/issue, is calm under pressure, makes decisions that are best for students and not individual teachers.
- Professionalism, ability to make good decisions, can see the big picture—not a micromanager, leads by example, values collaboration
- Communication, knowledge of board policies and district guidelines, high standards for academia, consistency in enforcing discipline policies, positive outlook—not a “gotcha” mentality

- Personable—understanding the emotional/personal needs of staff and being cordial/respectful, remembering what it is like to be a teacher, clearly defined expectations, consistently fair application of policies, sincere willingness to listen to contrary view, willingness and ability to change a policy in light of evidence that policy is ineffective.
- An effective school principal is an instructional leader, he/she is the visionary leader, he is an advocate for students and teachers, he/she has the ability to communicate the vision of the school and he/she is approachable with the skills to problem solve
- Transparent, consistent, high integrity, constant learner, innovative thinker

Question number seventeen asked the participants, “What role do you believe the school principal should play in structuring, implementing, and evaluating a campus mentoring program? What role do you believe campus leaders (principal, assistant principals) play in retaining quality teachers?” Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study.

- I believe the school principal should create a vision for the program (or play a part in the creation of the vision). The principal should also make sure conditions exist so the program can take place effectively (designating meeting times or scheduling common “off” periods for teachers and mentors). I believe that campus leaders showing their concern and support of new teachers make a huge impact on new teacher retention. I remember when I first started teaching, it was mid-January. The principal would stop by periodically and ask me how things

were going. He also took care of any major concerns I had so I knew I could trust that I had his support.

- I think that the principal should ensure the assignment of quality mentors through evaluation of a program. I think those mentors should have a part in working with administrators for the purpose of the structure and implementation. It is always those mentor teachers who still have the closest connection to the classroom climate that the mentee is involved in. Hands-on involvement in the program by administration would help keep them more attached and in tune with the classroom and what the needs of the new (even the veteran!) teachers may be. Communication and support are of utmost importance in keeping teachers.
- Principals should have the vision to see the need for mentoring programs. In our high stakes testing environment; do not you believe that teachers play an integral part and therefore need a support system? Principals should also have the discipline to see the mentoring program through—not just an initiative at the beginning of a new year. School leaders (principals and assistant principals) should have a program set in place for new teachers which includes staff development for all mentors. They should also mandate documentation of the program and its participants by informal and formal means. It should be part of the culture of the school that we support and encourage each other. No one is an island. School leaders are the role models for the school community, therefore they should play an active part in the success of new teachers. All teachers want and need the support of school administrators.

- He/she needs to have an active role in all of the above. I believe the principal is the “captain of the ship” and should guide new teachers in the correct direction (philosophy); school administrators play an important role in retaining quality teachers. They should provide time (away from students) for mentor/mentee to meet. This can be done by providing a half-day substitute or possibly coverage for a period. I also think administrators should stop by beginning teachers’ rooms more often just to say hello and let them know they are available for questions, support, whatever. This should be done in a nonthreatening way though, no clipboard in hand. New teachers need reassurance.

Question number eighteen asked the participants, “How do you think a successful campus mentoring program impacts the campus culture and climate?” Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study.

- Successful mentors and mentees would surely improve relationships among teachers and staff and improve morale. It would encourage collaboration that could benefit all teachers.
- The most successful schools that I have been a part of were collaborative communities based on trust. Open communication between the administrators and the school staff were part of the school climate. Teachers meeting with other teachers on a weekly basis to discuss academics and enough trust to speak openly about campus issues. Teachers respecting other teachers. Teachers with a voice and administrators with a backbone. Accountability. Studying data continuously. Teachers new to the profession were taken in under our wings and supported.

They knew they had a safety net. Teachers modeling mutual respect, therefore enabling new teachers to trust the system.

- Campus leaders are responsible for the climate of a campus. I believe that should be a part of their accountability measure. If I determined that the climate that existed on a particular campus had degenerated such that staff were expressing unhappiness in their work or outright hostility to the work environment and the leadership, I would hold the leadership directly accountable. You may have a cadre of negative teachers, but the responsibility to minimize and isolate that negativity lies with the administration.
- New teachers who are well informed and confident will be less likely to complain to others. A mentor can share campus goals and encourage new teachers to come to them when there are problems. If the mentors are all on the same page as administrators, problems that arise can be handled quickly instead of allowing “talk” to begin and negativity fester.
- Campus culture and climate deals with all teachers not just new teachers. Fostering camaraderie among staff and allowing small groups to build relationships is key. When dissension sets in, negativity breeds like fire. One needs to listen and come up with solutions not just complain.
- Well-adjusted teachers contribute to the culture of the school in a positive way. Teachers will take ownership of the function of the school; confident teachers establish strong classroom environment and mentored teachers deliver relevant and rigorous lessons that impact students’ success.

Question number nineteen asked the participants, “From your perspective why do you believe beginning teachers leaving the profession shortly after entering?” Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study.

- I think that the job is overwhelming in the beginning, even more so than other professions. Then, the paperwork and inflexibility is frustrating for those who really want to do well by the kids but are tied to so many mandates from the state and federal level. This too is frustrating. I know a quality mentor/mentoring program would not be able to change those situations, but a quality veteran teacher and/or administrator may be able to help the beginners see through the smoke, to find their way and realize the importance of the job and the contribution they are making.
- Teachers leave because of the disillusion of what they have gotten into. They want to try strategies they learn but often they are not supported by administration. Fellow teachers are not accepting of new ideas. Then teachers feel they must contradict their morals and values in order to keep their jobs.
- Teaching is not what they thought it was going to be. Work is not only between regular school hours. They feel like they are not appreciated or earning enough money.
- I believe beginning teachers are idealistic. They come into the profession expecting one thing, then experience another. To an extreme, the loss of idealism is like death. Unless strong relationships are built that help a new teacher feel supported, encouraged, and hopeful, new teachers get frustrated, doubt their

abilities, and are tempted by other opportunities that have more predictable outcomes, instant feedback, and (typically) higher earning potential.

- Lack of support and disillusionment. They dream of teaching, sharing fun activities, getting students involved. Reality is that one student can stand in the way of that dream. If handled quickly by administration, the dream continues. If left up to the teacher alone, the dream dies.
- Teachers leave because the work is hard and they are overwhelmed with the load. Not enough true support from administration, primarily with discipline. They need time to develop the tools needed to teach, but the workload to get there is bleak so they leave. Some teachers just realize it was not the job they expected and are not willing to learn the art of teaching. It truly is an art!
- It is very difficult to be an excellent teacher. Many think it is going to be easy, and when they realize they need many “hats” they are easily overwhelmed. Some realize they do not like children or teens. The paperwork can be overwhelming, also. When they see that they are not having a positive impact with a difficult student, it becomes very disheartening and maybe they even feel like a failure. It is sad, really. Some feel they get no support from the parents, and some administrators side with the parents and students just so they do not end up with a lawsuit on their hands. This makes the teacher feel like they have no credibility as a professional.
- The same reasons as experienced teachers: unrealistic expectations. “Be miracle workers and no longer have your own life and you will get little financial reward and satisfaction doing so.” This job has become impossible.

- No one being there to help. They need to have it just like students, modeled for them. They need time to develop. If not, they lose faith, and hence leave the profession. They need all the support possible.
- Yes, I think many teachers come in with a lot of hope and passion, wanting to make a change in student lives but that vision soon fades once they get into an ineffective environment. I believe there will be more effective teachers if we have more effective leaders trying to maintain the teachers. No one wants to work in an environment where they feel like they are inadequate or struggling.

### **Former Teacher Questionnaire**

The questionnaire responses were recorded individually by the principal investigator of the study whereas the qualitative data collected through this instrument is reported in this section of the study by outlining and showcasing the common themes.

The Former Teacher questionnaire consisted of 12 questions that were designed to answer the research questions that guide this study:

1. What are principals' perceptions of their role in structuring, implementing, and evaluating a campus mentorship program?
2. From the teacher's perspective, what impact do campus mentoring programs have on teacher retention?
3. What specific aspects of mentoring programs do teachers find most beneficial to their professional development?
4. Do teachers' perceptions of the supportiveness of campus administration influence their decisions to change schools or leave the profession?

### **Former Teacher Questionnaire Individual Responses**

Question number one asked the former teacher participants, “Upon entering the profession, were you assigned a mentor?” Of the two former teacher participants, they both 100% indicated that they were assigned a mentor upon entering the profession.

Question number two asked the participants, “Did your campus have a new teacher mentorship program? If you answered yes, how was the mentorship program structured?” Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study.

- I was assigned a mentor that was around my age and that I could easily relate to but not someone who had my same job description. We would meet weekly and discuss challenges and any questions that I might have. She would visit my classes and evaluate me. We would then discuss her findings; areas of personal strength and self-improvement.
- I was assigned a mentor who taught a grade level above the grade level I taught. We met at least twice weekly, sometimes more. She observed me monthly and I observed her and several other teachers.

Question number three asked the participants, “If your mentor’s tutelage/mentorship program experience was beneficial to your success as a first-year teacher, elaborate on the most valuable elements?” Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study.

- The most valuable element of the mentoring program was that I felt like my mentor really wanted the best for me, and was not there to “catch” me messing up or to point out my weaknesses. My mentor was the boost of confidence that I needed in my first year of teaching. I easily related to my mentor and highly

respected and trusted her. She excelled in her profession and was able to help me learn and grow.

- I valued my mentor's experience and willingness to mentor/help when needed. She was an awesome mentor. She provided me with a wealth of knowledge and I was able to pass it along to a new teacher a year later. I also had an awesome team that was very supportive.

Question number four asked the participants, "What prompted you to exit the teaching profession shortly after entering?" Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study.

- My major reasons for leaving the teaching profession had to do with inadequate job training and lack of classroom support.
- Personal reasons, lack of parental support, disrespectful students, result of the No Child Left Behind Act (students not prepared for grade level), politics (The focus is no longer on the students, it is all about money).

Question number five asked the participants, "Rank the five campus-based factors (listed below) that lead to your dissatisfaction with the teaching profession from 1 to 8, with 1 being the most problematic and 8 being the least problematic." Below outlines the factors ranked accordingly as provided by the former teacher participants of the study.

- 3   Lack of administrative support
- 7   Low pay
- 8   Lack of career advancement
- 1   Student discipline problems
- 5   Lack of resources

- \_2\_ Lack of respect (from students/parents)
- \_4\_ Too many tedious responsibilities
- \_6\_ Standardized testing pressure
- \_7\_ Lack of administrative support
- \_3\_ Low pay
- \_6\_ Lack of career advancement
- \_2\_ Student discipline problems
- \_5\_ Lack of resources
- \_1\_ Lack of respect
- \_4\_ Too many tedious responsibilities
- \_8\_ Standardized testing pressure

Question number six asked the participants, “Based upon your perceptions and experience, list five attributes of an effective school principal.” Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study.

- Builds relationships with the students and staff
  - Collaborates with the staff, parents, and students
  - Consistent (ex. enforcing school guidelines)
  - Encouraging and uplifting to staff (teaching can be a thankless job, so I believe acknowledging work well done is essential)
  - Visionary— thinking outside the box
- Trustworthy
  - Approachable (understanding, caring, nonbias)
  - Prioritization skills

- Knowledgeable on school ethics, campus morale, policies, procedures, etc.
- Respectful

Question number seven asked the participants, “What role do you believe the school principal should play in structuring, implementing, and evaluating a campus mentoring program? What role do you believe campus leaders (principal, assistant principals) play in retaining quality teachers?” Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study.

- I believe that every school should have a teacher mentoring program to cover three different areas:
  1. teachers new to the profession
  2. teachers new to the school
  3. teachers new to a subject matter

I believe the principals should collaborate with teachers to design a mentoring structure and take time each year to evaluate and edit the program based on teacher needs. I believe the principal should keep mentors accountable for meeting with their mentees. I also believe that it is important for the principal to meet privately with mentees to discuss concerns, challenges, or issues they are facing. I believe campus leaders have an essential role in retaining quality teachers. They set the entire personality for the school.
- I believe the school principal should be at the forefront of the mentoring program. The principal needs to know what their mentoring program looks like and how it functions. The mentoring program should not be the responsibility of the principal only; the assistant principal(s), deans, team

leaders, counselor also should have some responsibility in the program. Each year, schools add teachers and many of them are straight out of college, therefore mentors are definitely needed. The campus leaders play a major role in retaining quality teachers. They set the tone for the school environment. If teachers feel they are not welcomed and supported, chances are they will not return the following year.

Question number eight asked the participants, “Do you believe that campus mentoring programs have an impact on teacher retention?” Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study.

- Yes, I believe campus mentoring programs have an impact on teacher retention. I believe people stay in jobs that they enjoy. I believe that people enjoy their jobs when they feel successful and accomplished. I believe people feel successful and accomplished when they feel well prepared. I feel like a successful mentoring program would help prepare teachers and set them up for successful classrooms.
- Yes; for a new teacher, having a mentor can make the difference between them staying or leaving.

Question number nine asked the participants, “Do you believe that new teacher mentorship is crucial to new teacher success and development? Please Explain . . .”

Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study.

- Yes, I do. The mentoring program allows teachers on the brink of change (new job, new school, or new subject matter) to gain realistic expectations and to learn essential skills that can be utilized in the classroom. Teachers coming into the

profession have done lots of classwork, reading and training in education put lack experience in the classroom. I believe the most vital training comes within the classroom and that training paired with a successful mentorship program is crucial to new teacher success.

- Yes. New teachers need all the support they can receive. Teaching is a challenging profession and mentors are definitely very beneficial. Mentors provide the tools and knowledge needed to be successful in the classroom. New teachers are equipped with the book knowledge but mentors provide answers to the real-world classroom situations.

Question number ten asked the participants, “From your perspective why do you believe beginning teachers leave the profession shortly after entering?” Below outlines the common descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study.

- I believe beginning teachers leave the profession so shortly after entering because they come in with unrealistic expectations of the teaching profession.
- Lack of support, too challenging, and low pay.

Question 11 asked the participants, “What do you believe are the biggest challenges that beginning teachers’ face upon entering the profession? Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study.

- I believe the challenges that beginning teachers face are:
  - balancing work with personal life,
  - establishing classroom guidelines and structure, [and]
  - learning the content and creating lessons.

- Lack of preparation for real-world classroom issues, lack of classroom management

Question number twelve asked the participants, “What advice do you have for school leaders in the efforts to retain high-quality teachers?” Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study.

- - Build relationships with teachers
  - Actively listen to teacher concerns
  - Acknowledge teacher’s efforts
- - Know your staff
  - Listen to staff
  - Know your campus
  - Incorporate mentoring program (if there is not one in place)

### **Principal Interview Results**

The final portion of this study required the principal investigator to interview present, former, and retired school administrators to gain insight on the benefits of mentoring beginning teachers and how they perceive their role in implementing mentoring programs and support programs to nurture beginning teacher professional development. The researcher interviewed 20 school administrators consisting of seven current school principals, nine executive school leaders who were once principals, and four retired principals. During the interview process, the researcher directly transcribed the participants’ responses to each interview question. These responses were then analyzed and themed which are showcased below. The principal interviews consisted of

seven questions that were designed to answer research question one, “What are principals’ perceptions of their role in structuring, implementing, and evaluating a campus mentorship program?”

**Theme I: Beginning teacher mentorship is vital.**

When the principals and executive school leaders were asked, “Do you believe that it is important for beginning teachers to have a mentor? Explain.” All of the participants stated that it is imperative that beginning teachers have a mentor. Below outlines the descriptive responses provided by the participants of the study during the principal interviews

- Without a mentor or adequate support systems for beginning teachers, teaching can be lonely and beginning teachers will feel like they are on an island and/or isolated.
- Beginning teachers need a go-to person who is not a supervisor that will listen to them and help them reflect upon and process through first-year woes.
- It is vitally important for beginning teachers to have a mentor. In fact, I think it is necessary for the future success of a new teacher’s career and for a campus. If new teachers come in and quit after their first, second, or third year of teaching, a gap is created that will ultimately and negatively impact the instructional health of a campus. In my professional experience, new teachers tend to be professionally fragile their first go at being a teacher. Teaching is a tough job and it is not for the faint of heart. Teaching is the only profession I am aware of where you are asked to come in new but treated as a veteran after about the first few weeks on the job. It is the nature of the beast in our profession. Starting out they need all the

assistance, help, and support that is available. They need this support not necessarily just to do a good job of teaching, they need it in order to not quit the first week, day, or month of school being in session. They need encouragement in order to survive the first six or nine weeks and throughout the year.

- Beginning teachers need mentors because a good mentor serves as a professional learning coach and as a professional mirror for the rookie. The mentor holds up the mirror of self-reflection so that the rookie can see what they are doing well and the areas they need to work on. This is done in an atmosphere of trust, mutual respect, confidentiality, and support.
- Beginning teachers need mentors to help them know that in spite of the difficulty they face, it is doable. A good mentor shows them this by their actions. There is nothing more powerful than the adage that “if I can do it, so can you.”

Question number two asked the educational administrators. “What are the barriers that principals face in developing and sustaining an effective campus mentoring program?”

- There are often time constraints due to other school concerns, responsibilities placed on the mentor who may have additional duties, and follow through and/or evaluation of the program by campus administrators.
- Many times a new teacher does not have time to plan effectively with the mentor. In many instances, the mentor is busy as well. Time is a precious commodity that escapes the grasp of a beginning teacher and a mentor.
- Because so many things are coming at the beginning teacher at one time and every professional person and entity they encounter comes at them with a

level of “911” urgency and importance. As a rookie, the teacher has not yet figured out how to decipher or discriminate between the important category/person and the “it can wait” category/person. Therefore, initially everything and everybody they encounter professionally are important to them.

- The principal may face the reality that someone may possess the skill set to be a mentor but may not want to commit the time, energy, and effort required into being a great mentor for someone. In some districts mentors are not paid a stipend—it is a voluntary position. In cases like this, beginning teachers may get a mentor or they may not. In my professional experience, I have dealt with superstar teachers who did not work well as a mentor. These cases happen as well. Perhaps not often, but they do occur occasionally. This means that you may have a great teacher at teaching students but that person could be lousy at working with other adults in a mentoring capacity. Every great teacher may not automatically translate into a great mentor.

Question number three asked the educational administrators, “As a building principal, what type of campus programs have you implemented to support and retain beginning teachers? Be specific.”

- At our campus we have monthly meetings with the beginning teachers where we discuss certain topics and we also do a book study over the course of the school year.
- “I appraise all new teachers, and I believe that as the principal, it is imperative that I support and nurture their development, as overall, I am the person that

pursued to hire them with the approval of my leadership team. We also provide peer observations for struggling teachers.

- As a building principal, I developed a new teacher academy. My new teacher academy served as a corporate training lab for teachers that had 0–3 years of teaching experience. I created this academy for several reasons. As already mentioned, due to my lack of a quality experience as a rookie teacher and I wanted to ensure that new teachers did not experience what I experienced as a brand new teacher. I also wanted to make sure they had a safe, nurturing, and professional setting where they could openly share and professionally exhale anything they wanted to discuss, learn, inquire about, or find out about relative to our district, school, instructional strategies, community, students, data, or anything else they wanted or needed to know.
- I would organize a new teacher orientation before the start of the school year where the mentors and mentees were able establish a rapport and bond with one another prior to starting the school year.

**Theme II: The principal’s direct involvement in commanding the campus mentoring program adds definite value.**

When school principals and executive school leaders were asked, “Based upon the program that you initiated, describe your role in the organization, implementation, and evaluation process. Do you believe that the program was effective? Why or why not?”, 71.4% of the principals and executive school leaders believed that they were the ones who were to spearhead and brand the mentoring program by providing the mentees with face to face and communicating the expectations thereof. However, a few of the principals deemed that the supervision campus mentoring programs could be delegated to

an assistant or associate principal. The principals that were directly involved in the implementation of the mentoring program had highly effective programs while those who delegated the program to an assistant administrative or associate principal had somewhat effective programs. In regards to evaluating the effectiveness of campus mentoring programs, only one principal stated that he had some form of feedback instrument to enhance the program at his campus. Overall, all of the current school leaders indicated and openly stated that there was definitely room for improvement in the structure, implementation, and evaluation of their current campus mentoring programs.

- You have to inspect what you expect. As the building principal you must setup the framework and participate in monitoring the program to ensure its effectiveness.
- I feel that it is effective. I spearheaded the program, sent e-mails, facilitated the meetings, and provided as much face-to-face time as possible. I strived and felt that it was important for me to mold and nurture the beginning teacher that I hired.
- I implement a New Teacher Academy where I served as the source of information for the academy. I brought in district personnel and resources that could assist me in training my teachers and in bringing them up to speed on district initiatives, expectations, and requirements. During the first semester I provided my new teachers with information I knew they needed and that would be helpful to them. Again, as new teachers, they really did not have a clear grasp on what they truly needed in order to be successful and to make it past their first year of teaching. I viewed my academy as an investment in them and, ultimately, my

students. During the second semester I solicited their advice and brought in some tailored sessions that were specifically requested by them and akin to what they felt they needed as new teachers. These sessions proved invaluable to them and to my campus. The New Teacher Academy would meet once a month and it was required. Since funds were being expended and since the response to initiating the academy was so overwhelming, I made it a requirement. Again, it was an investment. We would meet once a month like a faculty meeting, but it was set up like a training lab. Teachers had an opportunity to bring “real-world” problems, issues, and concerns to the academy where they would receive instant feedback and support from me, veteran teachers, mentors, and district personnel. The topics were set up each month based on things I knew all new teachers needed to know.

Other principals stated that they delegated the responsibility to the associate and/or assistant principal in which many of them stated that their mentoring programs were somewhat effective due to the lack of follow through and having a simple yet formal mentor program evaluation system. Of the seven current school principals who were interviewed, only one of them stated that a meeting was held at the end of the school year in which they had a roundtable discussion on ways to improve the program and had the beginning teachers complete a survey. Others stated that their mentoring program had room for improvement.

Question number five asked the educational administrators, “When selecting a mentor (veteran) for the mentee (novice) teacher, how did you go about the selection process?”

- In selecting a quality mentor, I first look at the professional track record of the potential teacher. I consider their attendance, relationship with their students, student performance, their relationship with their own colleagues, professional reputation, and how they view their global role on the campus. In some cases you may have a potential good mentor, but what is also important is something called “professional fit.” The mentor has to be a good fit for the mentee. The mentee is coming in the door fragile, limited, and impressionable. Therefore, it was always vital to me to have someone that was certainly pro my campus and pro me in terms of professional support. A mentor is often a person of great influence. You certainly do not want to provide a mentee with someone who is going to be or make a negative impression or be a negative influence on a young, new, and impressionable teacher.
- I shy away from selecting toxic teachers who could potentially taint the beginning teachers’ perceptions of and enthusiasm towards the profession.
- I looked for solid and positive-minded veteran teachers that would be willing to give up their time and willing to help others.
- Personality matches are also a critical component of pairing a mentor with a mentee.

Question number six asked the participants, “What do you believe are the critical attributes that one must possess in order to be an effective/transformational school leader?” The research participants stated that in order to be an effective/transformational school leader the individual must be someone who/has/is:

- Loves working with adolescents

- The courage to have difficult & honest conversations
- The instructional leadership background to effectively evaluate teachers
- The ability to take risks
- Data driven
- Written & Oral communication skills to articulate their vision
- Empathetic/compassionate (understanding: remember what it is like to be a teacher)
- A student-centered focus
- Leads with a sense of urgency and purpose
- A desire to serve others
- Dedicated to developing the capacity of others
- A collaborative approach to decision making
- An optimistic and positive attitude
- Listens to others
- Builds relationships
- Recognizes and constantly celebrates good teaching and staff members for all of their hard work
- Flexible
- Motivates and empowers others
- A servant leader
- Focuses on what is important
- Serves as the model and has a tremendous work ethic

- Is honest

**Theme III: Beginning teachers' perceptions of the profession versus realities.**

The final principal interview question asked the participants, “Based on your experience and perceptions, why do you believe beginning teachers are leaving the teaching profession shortly after entering?”

- Many college programs do not prepare a rookie for the reality of what they will face in a real classroom.
- Reality of the profession. It is tough.
- Teaching is very hard work and many beginning teachers are unprepared.
- Their expectations of the job may not have matched the reality of the actual position.
- There is a lack of support provided to beginning teachers from colleagues and administrators, and this combined with the strenuous demands of the job are overwhelming and leads to them leaving the profession.
- All the duties of a teacher can be overwhelming.
- Beginning teachers have to establish a sense of belonging, success, and purpose upon entering the profession.
- It is difficult to raise a family on a teacher's salary.
- Lack of administrative support.
- The pay in other careers that are well respected and less stressful entices teachers to leave the profession also.
- Duties and responsibilities do not match pay.
- Lack of mentor support—true mentoring and true coaching.

- Schools are assessment driven as opposed to student learning driven—students' test scores are tied to teacher performance.
- Lack of public respect for the profession.

### **Descriptions of results in terms of population sample**

In order to acquire authentic data for the research study, the principal investigator conducted the research study at two middle schools located in a southeast Texas school district. In preceding years, both campuses have had substantial teacher turnover rates, which is why the researcher aimed to explore the reasons thereof by conducting research at these two particular campuses.

The beginning teacher target population of participants includes all beginning teachers who were in their first through third year of the teaching profession. First through third year teachers were sought to participate in the study as research states that one-fourth of them will leave the profession after two years of service, and a staggering one-third will leave after three years (Rebore, 2008).

Current veteran and retired teachers, those with 10 to 20 or more years of experience, were also a part of the target population of this study. Veteran and retired teachers invited to participate in this study, considering their experience and resiliency of enduring those first trying years as a beginning teacher, served as a wealth of knowledge and added value to the research study. In addition, these participants are more likely to have served as mentors and all have varying experiences and perspectives on mentoring programs and supportiveness of school principals.

Former teachers, those who left the teaching profession, were also asked to participate in the study because they were able to provide insight on their mentorship

experience and perspectives on the magnitude of support received upon entering the profession and gain insight on the factors that drove them to leave the profession altogether.

Current, retired, and former school principal participants were invited to partake in the research project to gain insight from their perspectives in regards to having an adequate support system for beginning teachers, which includes their role in structuring, implementing, and evaluating a campus mentoring program.

Overall, the criteria for the participants to take part in the study were unbiased in terms of those who could participate in the research project. However, the researcher ensured that the participants met the criteria in terms of years of experience and stage of career to substantiate the research protocol as specified in Chapter III.

### **Conclusion**

The next chapter, Chapter 5, presents a detailed summary discussion of the results, implications for school leaders, and recommendations for further research.

## **Chapter V**

### **Conclusions**

#### **Introduction**

Mentoring programs, which are designed to increase teacher effectiveness, continues to surface as one of the most vital components in nurturing the development of and retaining beginning teachers. Research proposed that mentoring programs may offer the beginning teacher professional development opportunities combined with the personal support of an experienced teacher who can work with them individually to address classroom challenges, strengthen their teaching skills, and provide advice (Whisnant et al., 2005). Beginners enter the teaching profession filled with enthusiasm, and mentors can provide support that fuels their drive by helping them quickly develop the skills necessary to heighten their efficiency and experience job fulfillment early on. School principals play an imperative role in this process as instituting, monitoring, and assessing the impact of mentoring programs exemplifies a proactive and strategic approach to supporting beginners through the expected first year challenges. To be effective, mentoring programs need focus and structure (Holloway, 2001). Therefore, the overall benefits of mentoring programs rests on how they are regarded by campus principals, which warrants their direct involvement in spearheading and stewarding the program. Current research provides substantial evidence that students instructed by high quality teachers drastically outperform those assigned to ineffective teachers.

This study investigated the extent of the impact that formal new teacher mentorship programs and school leadership support methods have on retaining high-quality teachers. This was accomplished by analyzing district teacher retention data

and comprehensively exploring teachers' perspectives and perceptions of their mentorship experience. This study also investigated how teachers view the supportiveness of campus leadership at varying career stages of the profession. In addition, school administrators were interviewed to gain insight on how they view mentoring for beginning teachers and their role in establishing and sustaining a productive campus mentoring program. The principal investigator's research was aimed toward meticulously examining the formality, quality, and benefits of mentoring programs from the teachers' perspective and how principals perceive their role in structuring, implementing, and evaluating mentoring programs to increase their overall effectiveness. This chapter includes a thorough discussion of the results, implications for school leaders, and implications for further research. The four research questions explored in this study were:

1. What are principals' perceptions of their role in structuring, implementing, and evaluating a campus mentorship program?
2. From the teacher's perspective, what impact do campus mentoring programs have on teacher retention?
3. What specific aspects of mentoring programs do teachers find most beneficial to their professional development?
4. Do teachers' perceptions of the supportiveness of campus administration influence their decisions to change schools or leave the profession?

## **Discussion of the Results**

*What are principals' perceptions of their role in structuring, implementing, and evaluating a campus mentorship program?*

The ideals of the principals' perceptions of their involvement were evident by the participants' responses during the interview process. Useem (2001) noted that school principals who implemented a strong mentoring program that reflected the principal's personal involvement in meeting with new teachers, having his or her office door open for conversations, assigning new teachers with classroom rosters that were not heavily weighted with challenging students, and providing mentors early in the school year had great success with retaining beginning teachers. With 71.4% of the principals interviewed in the research study stating that they were directly involved in spearheading the mentoring program solidifies the relative importance of their involvement in the structuring and implementation of a campus mentoring program. The principals discussed the importance of providing beginning teachers with face-to-face time and felt that they were personally responsible for nurturing the development of beginning teachers considering they pursued hiring them. According to Marzano et al (2005), effective principals continuously monitor the impact of school programs on student learning and use this information to inform future practice. A common theme that was recurrent during the interview process was the importance of the building principal's role in setting up the framework and participation in monitoring the mentoring program to ensure its success.

Another central theme that derived during the principal interviews was the "time" factor, whereas 100% of the participants stated that this component often negates their ability to adequately maintain and evaluate the program. One participant stated, "There is

often time constraints due to other school concerns and responsibilities placed on the mentor who may have additional duties and follow through and/or evaluation of the program by campus administrators.” In addition to principals’ time restraints, teachers face a time challenge as well, considering the vast majority of mentor teachers are simply the best teachers on campus and usually have additional responsibilities such as department chair, team leader, school organization sponsor, athletics coach, and/or serve on various campus committees. When this occurs, the mentorship experience for the mentee is not as beneficial as it is intended to be.

In regards to evaluating campus mentoring programs, only one of seven current school principals who took part in the study indicated they had a formal evaluation method in which they held a meeting at the end of the school year and had a roundtable discussion with the mentors and mentees on ways to improve the program and had the beginning teachers complete a survey. In all, 100% of the principals stated their current program had definite room for improvement.

Beginning, veteran, and former teachers who participated in the research study believed that school principals should be at the forefront of the mentoring program, understand its importance, and actively monitor the operations thereof. One went on to state, “Mentoring programs implemented by principals and assistant principals serve as a great indicator to a beginning educator on whether or not a system has been put in place to ensure their success as a practitioner long term.” A common theme in how teachers perceive the principal’s role in structuring, implementing, and evaluating a campus mentoring program is that the school principal should set the tone, advocate for, and provide guidance and expectations for the program. In addition, they deemed that

principals should also meet with beginning teachers regularly and individually to address concerns and ensure that their needs are being met by their mentor. They perceived that being proactively involved increases the mentor's accountability, demonstrates support, and shows just how important he or she believes mentoring programs impact student learning. Considering principals direct involvement in spearheading a campus mentoring is identified as a value added component it is all the more significant that they are actively immersed in the program to ensure its success. Providing governance, structure, and personally advocating for the program sets a noteworthy leadership support practice precedent.

*From the teacher's perspective, what impact do campus mentoring programs have on teacher retention?*

The study (New Teacher Center, 2012) concluded that new teacher support is a critical component of a comprehensive solution to achieving excellence in teaching quality. High-quality support programs for new teachers, often referred to as induction and mentoring programs, not only increase the retention of beginning teachers but also their impact on student learning. After carefully reviewing the teachers' responses from beginning and former teacher questionnaires, the common theme was that "mentoring programs provide support and eliminate the feelings of loneliness," in which the participants believed that having a mentor provided an immediate support system and eliminated the isolation issue that new teachers often face. One of the participants stated, "New teachers need guidance and support to survive during a stressful time. If an effective support structure is not in place, teachers, especially new teachers, will grow frustrated, burn out, and look for a new, more supportive environment." As Myers (2009)

reports in his study, if implemented properly, mentoring programs can help to both retain new teachers and provide satisfaction for them in their new profession. Another participant stated, “Mentorship programs take away some of the ‘sink or swim’ feelings that come with being a first-year teacher. I believe that the feelings of being completely overwhelmed are common to first-year teachers and could certainly affect retention.”

Former teachers also believed that mentoring programs plays an essential role in teachers’ decisions to leave the profession. One of the veteran teachers stated, “I believed people stay in jobs that they enjoy. I believe that people enjoy their jobs when they feel successful and accomplished. I believe people feel successful and accomplished when they feel well prepared. I feel like a successful mentoring program would help prepare teachers and set them up for successful classrooms.” The results of this study evidently showcase the importance of campus mentoring programs as beginning teachers need training, guidance, and prolific support networks in order to thrive and meet the challenging demands that the profession immediately places on them upon walking in the classroom on their first day on the job. If beginning teachers have a number of highly skilled, knowledgeable, and helpful individuals at their disposal they are more likely to experience job fulfillment at the most pivotal stage in their career, and be equipped and empowered to endure and triumph through the struggles that first few years in the classroom warrants. Campus mentoring programs and supportive school leadership practices that are designed to increase beginning teachers’ instructional effectiveness and eliminate feelings of isolation, disillusionment, and frustration are more likely to have better teacher retention rates.

*What specific aspects of mentoring programs do teachers find most beneficial to their professional development?*

Whisnant et al's (2005) research suggests that mentoring induction programs may offer the beginning teacher professional development opportunities combined with the personal support of an experienced teacher who can work with them individually to address classroom challenges, strengthen their teaching skills, and provide advice. The participants of the study all had varying mentorship experiences that were broken down into beneficial and non-beneficial experiences. Of the beginning teacher participants, (40%) had non-beneficial experiences because their campus program lacked structure, considering the mentor was just a person to go to ask questions. There were also 25% of participants who had no mentor at all as a first-year teacher. The remaining 35% of participants had beneficial mentorship experiences that they deemed were instrumental to their success as a first-year teacher. One participant stated, "Having a 'mentor' my first year was so important for ensuring success of my first year teaching. My mentor guided me through all parts of teaching: parents, phone calls, lesson planning, classroom management, STAAR data analysis, everything that was important for my first year. I credit my mentor for helping make me into the teacher I am today. She is the reason I came back for year two."

The National Center for Education Evaluation study (2010) concludes that support that is intensive, structured, and sequentially delivered is sometimes referred to as "comprehensive" induction. It is often delivered through experienced, trained, full-time mentors and may also include a combination of school and district orientation sessions, special in-service training (professional development), classroom observations, and

constructive feedback through formative assessment. When reviewing the veteran teacher questionnaire responses, the recurring theme that emerged was “Support, Guidance, and Encouragement.” One of the participants stated, “Without new teacher mentorship and professional development, new teachers face trial by fire. Teaching is perhaps the only profession in which this is often the case. Not only is the classroom reality far separate from what is expected when it is you and your students, but the job for the proficient is just plain difficult. Faced with these realities, a new teacher feels helpless and ends up burned out prematurely. The reason that I have stayed is that I have been fortunate to have had good mentors. Left to my own wit and resources, I doubt seriously I would have lasted.” According to a study conducted by Danielson (1999), mentoring helps beginning teachers face their new challenges; through reflective activities and professional conversations, they improve their teaching practices as they assume full responsibility for a class. A veteran teacher participant response states, “Mentors give advice and ideas that reflect real-world situations. Often, new teachers have a ‘perfect world’ concept of teaching that does not reflect the classroom. A mentor can give ‘real-world’ answers to garnish results that are useful.” A study conducted by Carver (2003) states that all teachers benefit from pleasant and collegial work environments, professional standards, and the development of a shared language around a common mission. A former teacher study participant states, “The most valuable element of the mentoring program was that I felt like my mentor really wanted the best for me and was not there to ‘catch’ me messing up or to point out my weaknesses. My mentor was the boost of confidence that I needed in my first year of teaching. I easily related to my mentor and highly respected and trusted her. She excelled in her profession and was able to help me learn and grow.” As

highlighted in the results of this study mentors can provide mentees with the confidence sustenance, and support that adds tremendous value to their practice. Mentor teachers are experienced with the curriculum, well versed in classroom management, and can provide beginning teachers with practical feedback that supports and bolsters their professional development.

*Do teachers' perceptions of the supportiveness of campus administration influence their decisions to change schools or leave the profession?*

A study conducted by Cushman (1992) concludes that when people talk about what effective school principals do, they reach for metaphors from geometry, physics, and architecture. The principal must “up-end the pyramid” some say, supporting the school structure from below, not directing it from above. The principal serves as the “fulcrum of the change process,” keeping a delicate balance between the often conflicting pressures coming from teachers, community, district, and state. The principal introduces a “blueprint for change” then adapts it continually in response to those who will have to live with it. The data collected through the beginning, veteran, and former teacher questionnaires outlines that “support from campus administration” is a critical factor in influencing teachers to change schools or leave the teaching profession overall. One of the beginning teacher participants stated, “I believe that it is a combination of lack of professional support, disillusionment with aspects of the job, and lack of pay. However, between those reasons, I do not think pay is the highest reason due to prior knowledge of teachers' salaries. I believe the highest reason is the lack of mentorship programs that is intertwined with lack of administrative support of issues like grades and discipline.” The beginning teacher survey results also concluded that 91.7% of beginning teacher study

participants would prefer “campus support systems to ensure their success” over a higher starting salary. A 2003 survey of 1,288 first-, second-, and third-year teachers conducted by Puget Sound Education Service District, found that “support from the administrator” was one of the top three items, along with “positive school climate” and “support of colleagues,” on a list of benefits that would influence teachers to stay in their current school building/district (Puget Educational Service District, 2003). One of the veteran teachers states, “Teachers leave because of the disillusion of what they have gotten into. They want to try strategies they learn but often they are not supported by administration. Fellow teachers are not accepting of new ideas. Then teachers feel they must contradict their morals and values in order to keep their jobs.” As Brouillette (1999) indicated in his study, good principals provide support as teachers need to feel supported. Teachers need to believe that when they have an issue in their classroom, they will get the help they need. According to a survey of the Detroit Federation of Teachers, one-third of the over 300 teachers who resigned in 1997–1998 did so due to lack of administrative support. In this study, one of the former teacher participants states, “My major reasons for leaving the teaching profession had to do with inadequate job training and lack of classroom support.”

The findings support what other studies have found, which have shown a link and implications that beginning teacher mentoring programs and supportive leadership practices have on teacher retention. Teachers are leaving the profession in drastic proportions, citing numerous factors surrounding the inadequacy of support at the campus level as the basis of their decision. Therefore, proactive and strategic initiatives must be implemented to reduce teacher attrition rates and ensure that all classrooms are provided

with a devoted and highly qualified teacher. Not only do good support programs retain teachers but they also attract teachers. Harvard's Next Generation of Teachers reports that teachers entering the field are attracted to districts that offer specific professional development programs that increase their professional knowledge and skills, rapidly integrate them into the culture of the school, and support their professional growth as successful educators (Johnson et al., 2001). According to a survey of the Detroit Federation of Teachers, one-third of the over 300 teachers who resigned in 1997–1998 did so due to lack of administrative support (Brouillette, 1999). This situation has not changed that much in the past decade. Nonetheless, the overall feeling from the principal should be one of belief and support (Kelly, 2013). The findings of this study clearly implicate the need for school leaders to assertively implement clearly defined mentoring programs and devote time to foster and support the professional development of beginning teachers in order to increase retention rates, since this study concludes that 51.72% of beginning teachers believe that both support in regards to student discipline and practical preparation as well as for inevitable new teacher challenges (an unruly class, an angry parent, a tough evaluation, or curriculum concerns) is needed from mentors and school administrators to retain quality teachers.

### **Implications for School Leaders**

The implications for educational leaders and practitioners in regards to retaining high-quality teachers originates not only with strategically implementing, actively monitoring, and assessing campus mentoring programs but also dynamic school principals who blatantly support those who are directly involved and have the greatest impact on student achievement, teachers. Beginning teachers, who come into the

profession young, bright, and enthusiastic indicate that they are not being supported by campus principals and/or administrators as it relates to their professional development, student discipline issues, and parental concerns. Such factors coupled with the overwhelming and challenging demands of the job which includes working extended hours in and outside of school, a meager compensation package, an abundance of paperwork, students with language barriers, excessive high-stakes testing pressure, and students with substantial academic deficits ultimately taints beginning teachers' perceptions of the profession. As a result they quickly and easily began to feel disillusioned and unfulfilled, prompting their rapid departure from the classroom.

It can be implied that principals should be cognizant of the importance of their role as the campus instructional leader, and conscientious of their leadership support practices. Moreover, their role and involvement in implementing a clearly defined campus mentoring program amongst other policies, procedures, and support structures sets an encouraging precedent for a school community in terms of establishing and sustaining a positive campus climate and culture. Considering beginning teachers are expected to essentially do the same job on their first day as a 20-year veteran and are isolated from their colleagues for the majority of the work day, it is imperative that mentoring programs and tactical support systems are in place for beginning teachers. The New Teacher Center (2007) concludes that with today's diverse student population and the recently heightened learning standards, it has become critical that new teachers become equipped with the knowledge and experience necessary to be both successful and happy in their profession. One successful way of supporting new teachers in being successful is through mentoring, or induction, programs. Mentoring programs, if

implemented properly, can help to both retain new teachers and provide satisfaction for them in their new profession. Myers (2009) imparts that indeed many state education departments have begun to place a greater emphasis on induction programs, some even tying participation in mentoring programs into certification requirements. Holloway (2001) conveys the conclusion that in order to be effective, mentoring programs need focus and structure. A study conducted by Rowley (1999) concluded that good mentors are committed to the role of mentoring, are accepting of the beginning teacher, can articulate the elements of effective instruction, have good interpersonal skills in a variety of contexts, model continuous learning, and communicate hope and optimism. A study completed by Carnes and Pulliam (2004) determined that principals who have been more successful in retaining teachers have characteristics of successful entrepreneurs. These successful principals understand the value of people. They value teachers as individuals and sincerely want them to succeed and grow. The most successful strategies for these principals are those that give direct assistance to teachers. The question that principals should ask themselves is: What can I do as the chief instructional leader on my campus to support and nurture the professional development of all teachers, especially beginners, upon entering the profession? This could be problematic in terms of the principal's day-to-day responsibilities in which time management could be a factor and delegating tasks may be necessary. However, as a principal, providing beginning teachers with direct assistance, face-to-face coaching sessions, encouragement, and listening to their concerns builds a sense of trust and bolsters their confidence. At the same time, this sincerely demonstrates the principal's commitment to fostering beginning teachers' development and success. Comprehensively, it was quite obvious through the teacher questionnaires

and principal interviews of this study that the structure, implementation, and evaluation of campus mentorship programs have dire needs for improvement.

Another implication of this study resonates with campus principals and assistant principals' methods in supporting teachers through addressing student discipline issues and parental concerns. It was apparent through the teacher questionnaires and survey responses that the lack of administrative support was indicated as the most common factor that causes teachers to leave the profession. The Hechinger Report (2011) reports that a public opinion research organization based in New York City found in 2007 that given the choice between a more supportive principal or a significantly higher salary, over 70% of first-year teachers would prefer a more supportive principal. In a survey conducted by Hirsch (2006) in Alabama, teachers, when asked to identify the most important factor in teacher retention, "supportive school leadership" (39%) clearly trumped "salary and benefits" (22%). School leaders should be mindful that when discipline issues arise in the classroom or on campus and consistent and fair consequences are not given, it sends a demoralizing message to teachers, which undermines their ability to structure the learning environment. Simultaneously, this conveys a message to students that their behavior is okay and such conduct could potentially become the campus norm, which eventually affects the climate and culture of a school community. In addition, when incidents like this occur on a campus, it is inevitable that this is the topic of discussion amongst teachers and could affect teacher morale. Good principals provide support as teachers need to feel supported. Teachers need to believe that when they have an issue in their classroom, they will get the help they need. Therefore, it is imperative that school principals and assistant principals are

consistently visible around the campus connecting with teachers and students. These interactions allow school leaders to model through their actions the ideals of true leadership, build trustworthy relationships with staff and students, and demonstrate support through personable exchanges. School principals who are most likely to be effective are those who provide teachers with opportunities to collaborate, participate in the shared decision-making practices, and be afforded opportunities to engage in personal reflective dialogue with school leaders. Teachers support what they help create and therefore are empowered and committed to systematic change because it enables them to play an active role in the process. Above all, school leaders must utilize servant leadership methods to support teachers through the trying yet rewarding woes of being an educator. Servant leadership is a philosophy and set of practices that enrich the lives of individuals, builds better organizations, and ultimately creates a more just and caring world (Greenleaf, 2014). In addition to instructional and transformational leadership practices, perhaps servant leadership methods will emerge and join the ranks as one of the three prototypes for school leadership. Would principals that utilize this leadership approach retaining high-quality teachers and increase student achievement?

Teaching is by far one of the most challenging yet rewarding professions, and all teachers, especially beginners, warrant principals to implement strategic campus support systems that are designed to increase their efficacy and allow them to make an immediate impact, which is the primary goal. Principals serve as the nucleus of teacher development and it is their leadership philosophies that ultimately ignite or extinguish beginning teachers' torch to remain in or exit the teaching profession. In order for a campus mentoring program to be effective, the principal has to articulate his/her vision for the

program, outline expectations, closely monitor, and assess the program to ensure its effectiveness. The data reveals that 91.7% of beginning teachers would prefer campus support systems to ensure their success over a higher starting salary which emphasizes the importance of campus mentoring programs and supportive school leadership practices. However, as indicated by the principals interviewed in this study school a better job has to be done at implementing, monitoring, and assessing campus mentoring programs as the vast majority of them are mediocre in terms of structure and effectiveness. Above all, the results of this study undoubtedly implicate the need for school leaders to transparently and assertively support teachers as this study concludes that both beginning and veteran teachers believe that support from the school administration is the most influential factor in retaining high quality teachers.

### **Implications for Further Research**

The findings of this research provide implications for further research on administrative support in regards to school administrators' servant leadership practices. Perhaps, future research could look closely at how school principals view their role as servant leaders in relation to being instructional and transformational leaders. This could be conducted by surveying and interviewing teachers to gain insight and evaluate how teachers perceive their campus principal as a servant leader. According to Greenleaf (2014), "A servant-leader focuses primarily on the growth and well-being of people and the communities to which they belong. While traditional leadership generally involves the accumulation and exercise of power by one at the 'top of the pyramid,' servant leadership is different. The servant-leader shares power, puts the needs of others first, and

helps people develop and perform as highly as possible.” Perhaps, the research questions could be:

- Are servant school leaders more likely to retain high-quality teachers?
- Do servant leadership principles associate more with 21<sup>st</sup> century teachers and positively influence teacher morale?
- Do servant school leaders’ leadership philosophies positively impact teacher performance and amplify student achievement?
- What impact do servant school leaders have on the campus climate and culture?

Considering this study concludes that support from the campus administration is the most influential factor in retaining high quality beginning and veteran teachers it is imperative to continue examining their role as servant leaders. As the principal’s role continues to evolve, further investigation of their practice and leadership beliefs as servant leaders may provide insight to school leaders and researchers on 21<sup>st</sup> century educational topics such as how this leadership style impacts teacher development, teacher morale, campus climate and culture, student achievement, teacher retention, and nurtures a professional learning community. Identifying and specifying the critical attributes of servant leaders that teachers believe are vital to these areas may lead school districts and campuses to elevated heights in the areas of teacher morale and job fulfillment, which attribute to student success.

## **Conclusion**

The frequency of beginning teacher turnover reinforces the need to address the challenges faced by beginning teachers. In recent years, beginning teacher mentoring programs have increased in an effort to provide beginning teachers with the support structures necessary to cultivate their professional development which increases their ability to immediately impact student achievement. Mentoring programs are designed to ease beginning teachers' transition into the profession by pairing them with an experienced educator who can teach, guide, and offer advice to their practice as they quickly immerse themselves into the teaching profession. A growing body of evidence also suggests that beginning teacher mentoring programs can positively affect teacher quality, students' academic outcomes, and school district costs. However, simply requiring that new teachers be assigned a mentor without regard to mentor or program quality will not accelerate new teacher development, reduce teacher attrition, or significantly impact student learning (New Teacher Center, 2012). To improve teacher turnover rates, educational leaders can take proactive measures such as implementing a comprehensive campus mentoring program, which has been indicated by researchers as one of the most essential solutions to increase teacher retention. Successful mentoring benefits all stakeholders. For school administrators, mentoring aids recruitment and retention; for higher education institutions, it helps to ensure a smooth transition from campus to classroom; for teacher associations, it represents a new way to serve members and guarantee instructional quality; for teachers, it can represent the difference between success and failure; and for parents and students, it means better teaching (The National Foundation for the Improvement for Education, 1999).

It can be implied that beginning teachers are leaving the profession due to the lack of campus leadership support, which includes insufficient comprehensive mentoring programs, student discipline issues, and parental concerns in addition to the strenuous job demands. New teachers' perceptions of administrative support are crucial to their decision to remain in the field (Bobbitt, 1993). Research conducted by Johnson, Berg, and Donaldson (2005) concludes that teacher retention happens at the school level since new teachers make their decisions to stay in teaching based on the level of support and acceptance they receive at the building level. Such conclusions place a profound emphasis on school principals who are the chief leaders on a campus. Therefore, their active involvement and role in establishing, monitoring, and assessing the effectiveness of campus mentoring programs is indispensable. Principals' sincere interest and commitment toward ensuring that beginning teachers receive the adequate support necessary to facilitate a successful transition to the profession speaks volumes for beginning teachers. In addition to mentoring, the supportiveness of campus principals also plays an immense role in teacher retention efforts, since this study concluded that the lack of administrative support was a concurrent theme that teachers perceived was the reason other teachers are leaving the profession.

Considering beginning teachers are expected to meet the same expectations as veteran teachers immediately upon entering the profession is very indicative of the why mentoring programs, multidimensional support systems, and supportive school leaders are not only needed, but required. When beginning teachers enter the profession, they have the enthusiasm and a conscientious desire to make a difference in the lives of and inspire students with aims of having a lasting impact on their future success. In spite of

this, far too quickly and often does this passion dwindle among beginning teachers.

Teaching is a very tough job and in order for 21st-century school leaders to be effective and retain high-quality teachers, they must possess and exhibit instructional, transformational, and servant leadership qualities. Principals must remember and reflect upon their experiences as a teacher and keep those understandings in perspective.

Above all, the field of education is ever evolving, and principals must wear many hats and exemplify dynamic educational leadership qualities in order to be affective and make an impact. Those who aim to transform schools must uphold the ideologies of teaching and learning through advocating for teachers by establishing, sustaining, and nurturing the progression of a professional learning community. Successful school principals are ones who embody and solicit input from stakeholders, which consequently energizes their commitment to fulfilling the goals of a shared school vision. The school principal and campus administrative team serve as the catalysts for the realization of campus objectives by developing the support structures so that all teachers can do their jobs as efficiently and effectively as possible. In terms of student success and achievement, teachers are closest to the action of impact and without ample support the general diffusion and enrichment of knowledge is a very challenging undertaking. Principals must embrace and put into their practice leadership principles that aim to identify and build the capacity of their fellow administrative team members, teachers, and all others stakeholders of the school community. Supportive school leadership practices empower teachers to conscientiously serve students which as a result, heightens student achievement, cultivates a positive school climate and culture, and aids in retaining high-quality teachers.

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**APPENDIX A**

APPROVAL FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON HUMAN SUBJECT  
RESEARCH COMMITTEE

# UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

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## DIVISION OF RESEARCH

March 27, 2014

Bryan Taulton  
c/o Dr. Michael Emerson  
Dean, Education

Dear Bryan Taulton,

The University of Houston Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (1) reviewed your research proposal entitled "RETAINING HIGH QUALITY TEACHERS THROUGH MENTORSHIP AND SUPPORT: THE PRINCIPALS ROLE" on February 21, 2014, according to federal regulations and institutional policies and procedures.

At that time, your project was granted approval contingent upon your agreement to modify your protocol as stipulated by the Committee. The changes you have made adequately fulfill the requested contingencies, and your project is now **APPROVED**.

- **Approval Date: March 27, 2014**
- **Expiration Date: March 26, 2015**

As required by federal regulations governing research in human subjects, research procedures (including recruitment, informed consent, intervention, data collection or data analysis) may not be conducted after the expiration date.

To ensure that no lapse in approval or ongoing research occurs, please ensure that your protocol is resubmitted in RAMP for renewal by the **deadline for the February 2015 CPHS meeting**. Deadlines for submission are located on the CPHS website.

During the course of the research, the following must also be submitted to the CPHS:

- Any proposed changes to the approved protocol, prior to initiation; AND
- Any unanticipated events (including adverse events, injuries, or outcomes) involving possible risk to subjects or others, within 10 working days.

If you have any questions, please contact Alicia Vargas at (713) 743-9215.

Sincerely yours,



Dr. Daniel O'Connor, Chair  
Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (1)

PLEASE NOTE: All subjects must receive a copy of the informed consent document, if one is approved for use. All research data, including signed consent documents, must be retained according to the University of Houston Data Retention Policy ([found on the CPHS website](#)) as well as requirements of the FDA and external sponsor(s), if applicable. Faculty sponsors are responsible for retaining data for student projects on the UH campus for the required period of record retention.

Protocol Number: 14257-01

Full Review  X

Expedited Review

**APPENDIX B**

BEGINNING, VETERAN, AND FORMER TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES

### Beginning Teacher Questionnaire

**Check One:** Male \_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_

Number of years in the teaching profession: \_\_\_\_\_

1. As a beginning teacher (**new to the profession**) how important is/was having a mentor to acclimate you to the campus and profession? **Circle One**

Extremely important      Important      Somewhat important      Not important

2. As a beginning teacher how important is it for you to experience success in the profession during your first years (teaching efficiency, self-confidence, overall job fulfillment)?

Extremely important      Important      Somewhat important      Not important

3. What influenced you to enter the teaching profession? **Check 2 :**

\_\_\_\_ Making a difference in the lives of /inspiring students  
 \_\_\_\_ Passion for education (Calling)  
 \_\_\_\_ Conducive to family life (Exp. Holidays/Summers off)  
 \_\_\_\_ Impacting today's youth for the future  
 \_\_\_\_ Job security  
 \_\_\_\_ Autonomy in the classroom  
 \_\_\_\_ Giving back to the community  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

4. Considering you entered the profession within the last 3 years what was more important to you upon entering?

**Circle One:** Campus support systems to ensure your success      or      A higher starting salary.

Other \_\_\_\_\_

5. Upon entering the profession, were you assigned a mentor? **Yes or No (circle one)**

6. Did your campus have a new teacher mentorship program? **Yes or No (circle one).**

7. If you answered (**Yes**), how was the mentorship program structured?

8. Did your mentor teach in the same grade level and content area as you? **Yes or No (circle one)**
9. If your mentor's tutelage/mentorship program experience was beneficial to your success as a first year teacher, elaborate on the most valuable elements.
10. If you did not participate in a mentorship program describe the amount of support that you received during your first three years as a teacher from your team leader, department chair, instructional coach, campus leadership team, etc.
11. As a mentee were you provided with release time to conduct observations in your mentor's classroom? If so, how many observations were conducted throughout the school year on your behalf as well as your mentor's behalf? Was this component of the mentoring program beneficial?
12. How often did you meet with your mentor? Daily, Weekly, Monthly?
13. From your perspective list **5** attributes of an effective school principal.
14. What role do you believe the school principal should play in structuring, implementing, and evaluating a campus mentoring program? What role do you believe campus leaders (principal, assistant principals) play in retaining quality teachers?
15. Do you believe that campus mentoring programs have an impact on teacher retention? (**Yes or No**), explain...
16. Based upon your perceptions, why do you believe beginning teachers are leaving the profession, shortly after entering?

### Veteran Teacher Questionnaire

Check One: Male \_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_

Number of years in the teaching profession: \_\_\_\_

1. Upon entering the profession, were you assigned a mentor? **Yes or No (circle one)**
2. Did your campus have a new teacher mentorship program? **Yes or No (circle one)**. If you answered (YES), how was the mentorship program structured?
3. If your mentor's tutelage/mentorship program experience was beneficial to your success as a first year teacher, elaborate on the most valuable elements.
4. If you did not participate in a mentorship program describe the amount of support that you received during your first three years as a teacher from your team leader, department chair, instructional coach, campus leadership team, etc.
5. As a veteran teacher (**10 yrs. or more in the profession**) have you ever mentored a beginning teacher? **Yes or No (circle one)**. If you answered (YES), how was the mentorship program structured and describe your role?
6. Did you receive any formal district/campus training on your role as a mentor? Describe...
7. As a mentor were you provided with release time to conduct observations and provide feedback to your mentee? If so, how many observations were conducted throughout the school year on your behalf as well as the mentee's?
8. Did your mentee teach in the same grade level and content area as you? **Yes or No (circle one)**
9. How often did/do you meet with your mentee? Daily, Weekly, Monthly?
10. Did you receive a stipend for mentoring a beginning teacher? **Yes or No (circle one)**  
If so, did/would that entice you to take upon this role?
11. As a veteran teacher (**10 yrs. or more in the profession**) would you be interested in mentoring a new teacher. **Circle One**

I would be honored  
interested

Interested

Somewhat interested

Not

Why or Why Not?

12. From your perspective list the attributes that veteran teachers must possess in order to be an effective mentor?
13. **Rank the six researched based qualities (listed below) of a good mentor from 1 to 6, with 1 being the most important and 6 being the least.**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **The good mentor is committed to the role of mentoring.**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **The good mentor communicates hope and optimism.**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **The good mentor is a model of a continuous learner.**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **The good mentor is effective in different interpersonal contexts**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **The good mentor is skilled at providing instructional support**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **The good mentor is accepting of the beginning teacher**
14. Do you believe that new teacher mentorship is crucial to new teacher success and professional development? **Please explain...**
15. If you decided to leave the teaching profession, what would your reason/s be?
16. Based upon your perceptions and experience list **5** attributes of an effective school principal.
17. What role do you believe the school principal should play in structuring, implementing, and evaluating a campus mentoring program? What role do you believe campus leaders (principal, assistant principals) play in retaining quality teachers?
18. How do you think a successful campus mentoring program impacts the campus culture and climate?
19. From your perspective why do you believe beginning teachers leaving the profession shortly after entering?

### Former Teacher Questionnaire

Check One: Male \_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_

How many years did you spend in the teaching profession? \_\_\_\_\_

1. Upon entering the profession, were you assigned a mentor? **Yes or No (circle one)**
2. Did your campus have a new teacher mentorship program? **Yes or No (circle one)**. If you answered (YES), how was the mentorship program structured?
3. If your mentor's tutelage/mentorship program experience was beneficial to your success as a first year teacher, elaborate on the most valuable elements.
4. If you did not participate in a mentorship program describe the amount of support that you received during your first year as a teacher from your team leader, department chair, instructional coach, campus leadership team, etc.
5. For how many years did you anticipate staying when you began your career as an educator?
 

0 - 3 ____	7 - 10 ____	16 - retirement ____
4 - 6 ____	11 - 15 ____	
6. What prompted you to exit the teaching profession, shortly after entering?
7. Rank the five campus based factors (listed below) that lead to your dissatisfaction with the teaching profession from 1 to 8, with 1 being the most problematic and 8 being the least problematic.

\_\_\_\_ Lack of administrative support

\_\_\_\_ Low pay

\_\_\_\_ Lack of career advancement

\_\_\_\_ Student discipline problems

- \_\_\_ Lack of resources
- \_\_\_ Lack of respect
- \_\_\_ Too many tedious responsibilities
- \_\_\_ Standardized testing pressure

Other:

8. Based upon your perceptions and experience list **5** attributes of an effective school principal.
9. What role do you believe the school principal should play in structuring, implementing, and evaluating a campus mentoring program? What role do you believe campus leaders (principal, assistant principals) play in retaining quality teachers?
10. Do you believe that campus mentoring programs have an impact on teacher retention?
11. Do you believe that new teacher mentorship is crucial to new teacher success and development? Please Explain...
12. From your perspective why do you believe beginning teachers leaving the profession shortly after entering?
13. What do you believe are the biggest challenges that beginning teachers' face upon entering the profession?
14. What advice do you have for school leaders in the efforts to retain high quality teachers?

**APPENDIX C**

**BEGINNING, VETERAN, AND FORMER TEACHER SURVEYS**

## Beginning Teacher Survey

### 4. Directions:

**This inventory will ask you to consider several aspects of your experience as a beginning teacher. Your individual responses will not be given to your school or school system, so please answer each question honestly. Your participation in this survey is priceless as it will aid educational leaders in their efforts to better understand beginning teachers' perceptions of new teacher support systems including their mentorship experience and transformational leadership qualities of campus leaders. Most importantly, your contribution to this study will provide school leaders with indispensable data to address the teacher retention crisis that is plaguing and incapacitating school communities around the country. Thanks for your participation!**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
I was assigned a mentor at my campus upon entering the teaching profession.	<input type="radio"/>				
The campus leadership team ensured that I had an adequate support system to ensure my success as a first year teacher.	<input type="radio"/>				
The school principal met with all new teachers and their mentors to discuss/establish the structure, purpose, and expectations for the mentorship program for the course of the school year.	<input type="radio"/>				
My mentor has provided assistance with classroom management, lesson planning, and instructional methods.	<input type="radio"/>				
I have opportunities to visit and observe my mentor/exemplary veteran teachers.	<input type="radio"/>				
I received little to no support from my mentor and or school administration upon entering the teaching profession.	<input type="radio"/>				
My overall mentorship experience has contributed to my success as a teacher.	<input type="radio"/>				
My mentor teacher is empathetic.	<input type="radio"/>				

Beginning Teacher Survey					
Working with my mentor has been a positive experience.	<input type="radio"/>				
I feel like I have autonomy in making decisions about my class.	<input type="radio"/>				
The administration has oriented me to the school and staff.	<input type="radio"/>				
The administration at my school encourages me to be an effective teacher.	<input type="radio"/>				
The administration at my school provides appropriate feedback for my discipline decisions.	<input type="radio"/>				
My mentor teacher encourages me to reflect about my teaching.	<input type="radio"/>				
I have on-going face-to-face communication with my administration.	<input type="radio"/>				
The principal takes a personal interest in the professional development of teachers.	<input type="radio"/>				
I trust the principal at his or her word because he or she always follows through.	<input type="radio"/>				
It's OK at this school to discuss feelings, worries, and frustrations with the principal.	<input type="radio"/>				
The school principal clearly and effectively communicates his/her vision to the staff and his or her expectations for meeting instructional goals.	<input type="radio"/>				
The discipline in my classroom is supportive of a conducive learning environment for my students.	<input type="radio"/>				
I have the curriculum materials and resources I need to teach effectively.	<input type="radio"/>				
The school administration's behavior toward the staff is supportive and encouraging.	<input type="radio"/>				
	<input type="radio"/>				

## Beginning Teacher Survey

My principal enforces school rules for student conduct and backs me up when I need it.	<input type="radio"/>				
In this school, staff members are recognized for a job well done.	<input type="radio"/>				
State testing or district curriculum content standards have had a positive influence on my satisfaction with teaching.	<input type="radio"/>				
I am satisfied with my teaching salary.	<input type="radio"/>				
The stress and disappointments involved in teaching at this school are not really worth it.	<input type="radio"/>				
If I could get a higher paying job I'd leave teaching as soon as possible.	<input type="radio"/>				
I think about transferring to another school.	<input type="radio"/>				
I don't seem to have as much enthusiasm now as I did when I began teaching.	<input type="radio"/>				
I am thinking about leaving the teaching profession because overall I am dissatisfied.	<input type="radio"/>				

## Veteran Teacher Survey

### 1. What do veteran teachers need to encourage them remain in the profession? Select 2

- Better pay scales
- More planning time
- Career advancement opportunities
- Active role in campus decision making
- Continuous and relevant professional development
- Support from the school administration.
- Other (please specify)

**\*2. Considering you are a veteran teacher and have been in the profession for quite some time; would you become a teacher today? Thus, bearing in mind the evolution of the field from 10 to 20 or more years ago through present day.**

**\*3. Would you encourage your students or others to pursue a career in the teaching profession?**

**\*4. As a veteran teacher, would you be interested in mentoring a novice (beginning) teacher? Why or Why Not?**

**\*5. Do you currently have a formal leadership role in your school, such as department chair, instructional resource, teacher mentor, leadership team member, or other leadership role? Yes or No. If so, explain your responsibilities.**

## Veteran Teacher Survey

### 6. Directions:

**This inventory will ask you to consider several aspects of your experience as a veteran teacher. Your individual responses will not be given to your school or school system, so please answer each question honestly. Your participation in this survey is priceless as it will aid educational leaders in their efforts to better understand veteran teachers' perceptions of school leadership support systems including new teacher mentorship/veteran teacher tutelage (mentor/mentee) experience and transformational leadership qualities of school principals and or administrators. Most importantly, your contribution to this study will provide school leaders with indispensable data to address the teacher retention crisis that is plaguing and incapacitating school communities around the country.**

**Use the following scale to answer each of the questions.**

**1: Strongly disagree**

**2: Disagree**

**3: Neutral**

**4: Agree**

**5: Strongly Agree.**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Upon entering the teaching profession 10 or more years ago, I was assigned a mentor.	<input type="radio"/>				
I received little to no support from my mentor dept. chair, team leader, school principal etc. upon entering the teaching profession.	<input type="radio"/>				
The campus support that I received upon entering the teaching profession was a sufficient and reassuring experience.	<input type="radio"/>				
I received little to no support from my mentor and or school administration upon entering the teaching profession.	<input type="radio"/>				
The mentorship support that I received upon entering the profession contributed to my success as a teacher.	<input type="radio"/>				

### Veteran Teacher Survey

I have considered leaving the teaching profession.	<input type="radio"/>				
The principal at my campus values my experience and expertise.	<input type="radio"/>				
I have taken pleasure in mentoring several new teachers over the course of my career.	<input type="radio"/>				
New teacher mentoring should be taken seriously by school principals, mentees, and mentors.	<input type="radio"/>				
I would be honored to mentor a new teacher.	<input type="radio"/>				
The school's principal and administration is supportive and encouraging.	<input type="radio"/>				
As a veteran teacher, I feel respected and supported by the school principal.	<input type="radio"/>				
Veteran teachers participate in making important school decisions.	<input type="radio"/>				
My building principal/s facilitate communication effectively.	<input type="radio"/>				
The school principal is visionary leader who can conceptualize a vision and goals for a school community and can take steps necessary to make that vision reality.	<input type="radio"/>				
The principal is not afraid to take-risk in leading school communities towards being an efficient and effective learning community.	<input type="radio"/>				
The principal displays perseverance/intrinsic motivation – whereas he or she persistently does whatever it takes to get the job done.	<input type="radio"/>				
The school principal has people skills – ability to develop meaningful relationships with others.	<input type="radio"/>				

### Veteran Teacher Survey

The school principal attentively listens to others and synthesizes information.	<input type="radio"/>				
The school principal possesses strong organizational skills.	<input type="radio"/>				
The school principal is confident his or her ability to lead.	<input type="radio"/>				
The school principal is a critical thinker – considers all variables for strategic and conscientious decision making.	<input type="radio"/>				
The school principal is an analytical thinker/problem-solver.	<input type="radio"/>				
The school principal has the...Ability to transform information from various resources (including graduate school, reading, seminars, etc.) and experiences in order to create programs that will make a more effective school community.	<input type="radio"/>				
Ability to make good decisions quickly.	<input type="radio"/>				
Ability to articulate clearly.	<input type="radio"/>				
Ability to prioritize and know what is important: time-management.	<input type="radio"/>				
Ability to gain trust and respect from others.	<input type="radio"/>				
Ability to transform a campus climate and culture through his or her leadership efforts.	<input type="radio"/>				

## Former Teacher Survey

**1. Using the categories below, please indicate whether each item was a major, moderate, minor, or not a factor in your decision to leave the teaching profession.**

**Use the following scale to answer each of the questions.**

**1: Major Factor**

**2: Moderate Factor**

**3: Minor Factor**

**4: Not a Factor**

	Major Factor	Moderate Factor	Minor Factor	Not a Factor
A more competitive salary in another profession, OUTSIDE the field of education.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did not support district/campus reform measures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of advancement in the teaching profession	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inadequate mentoring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inadequate support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of supportive working environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inadequate training to support current position	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recruited for another position	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reduction in force (RIF)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Culture and climate of the school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of autonomy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Administrative leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
End of contract/temporary assignment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of support from supervisor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relocation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Poor Salary/Budget Cuts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unethical treatment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of shared leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervisor incompetence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Former Teacher Survey				
Lack of influence/respect as professionals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Poor relationship with supervisor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dissatisfaction with working conditions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Administrator's actions did not support teaching staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Excessive state testing pressure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>			
<b>*2. Describe your major reason/s for leaving the teaching profession.</b>				
<input type="text"/>				

**APPENDIX D**

**PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

### **Principal Interview Questions**

1. Do you believe that it is important for beginning teachers to have a mentor?  
Explain
2. What are the barriers that principals face in developing and sustaining an effective campus mentoring program?
3. As a building principal, what type of campus programs have you implemented to support and retain beginning teachers? Be specific.
4. Based upon the program that you initiated, describe your role in the organization, implementation, and evaluation process. Do you believe that the program was effective? Why or why not?
5. When selecting a mentor (veteran) for the mentee (novice) teacher, how did you go about selection process?
6. What do you believe are the critical attributes that one must possess in order to be an effective/transformational school leader?
7. Based on your experience and perceptions, why do you believe beginning teachers are leaving the teaching profession, shortly after entering?

**APPENDIX E**

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH FORMS**

## UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

#### **PROJECT TITLE: RETAINING HIGH QUALITY TEACHERS THROUGH MENTORSHIP AND SUPPORT: THE PRINCIPAL'S ROLE**

You are being invited to participate in a research project conducted by Bryan T. Taulton, a graduate student from the Executive Ed.D. in Professional Leadership Program at the University of Houston, College of Education.

#### **NON-PARTICIPATION STATEMENT**

Your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may also refuse to answer any question.

#### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

This component of the study aims to gain constructive insight in regards to teachers' perceptions and perspectives of their mentorship experiences and campus leadership support by completing a brief questionnaire and an on-line survey. The overall purpose of this study is to investigate the extent of the impact that formal new teacher mentorship programs and the supportiveness of school leadership has on retaining high-quality teachers.

#### **PROCEDURES**

A total of 98 subjects will be asked to participate in this project. Beginning teachers that are in their 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the teaching profession, veteran teachers (including retirees) who have 10 or more years of teaching experience, and former teachers (those who have exited the profession) will be asked to participate in this study by completing one brief questionnaire and an on-line survey. The beginning teacher questionnaire has a total of 17 questions that are primarily open ended. The veteran teacher questionnaire has a total of 19 questions that are open ended. The former teacher questionnaire has a total of 14 questions that are also open ended. The beginning, veteran, and former teacher on-line surveys use a likert scale question model in addition to a few short response items. The questionnaires will take roughly 30 minutes to complete and the on-line surveys will take 20 minutes. The questionnaires will include questions related to the participants' years of experience, impact of their mentorship experience as a beginning teacher (mentee), veteran teacher (mentor), and perspectives on campus leadership support. The surveys will include questions related to the participants' mentorship experience, supportiveness

of school leadership, and job fulfillment. Data collected from each of these sources will be analyzed and reported in this study.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Your participation in this project will be kept confidential and your responses will remain anonymous. Please do not write your name on any of the research materials to be returned to the principal investigator. Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of your participation in this project. Confidentiality will be maintained within legal limits.

### **RISKS/DISCOMFORTS**

There are no foreseeable risks associated with completing the questionnaire and on-line survey. All data from the questionnaires and on-line surveys will remain confidential and will not require participants to reveal their name at any time. Teachers wishing to not participate in this study will not be penalized in any way.

### **BENEFITS**

While you will not directly benefit from participation, your participation may help investigators, practitioners, and others in the field better understand the impact that formal beginning teacher mentorship programs and the supportiveness of school leadership has on retaining high-quality teachers.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

Participation in this project is voluntary and the only alternative to this project is non-participation.

### **PUBLICATION STATEMENT**

The results of this study may be published in professional and/or scientific journals. It may also be used for educational purposes or for professional presentations. However, no individual subject will be identified.

If you have any questions, you may contact Bryan Taulton at 713.423.4284. You may also contact Dr. Michael W. Emerson, faculty sponsor, at 713.743.7597.

Principal Investigator's Name: Bryan T. Taulton

Signature of Principal Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNATURES**

*I have read (or have had read to me) the contents of this consent form and have been encouraged to ask questions. I have received answers to my questions to my satisfaction. I give my consent to participate in this study, and have been provided with a copy of this form for my records and in case I have questions as the research progresses.*

Study Subject (print name): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Study Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

#### **PROJECT TITLE: RETAINING HIGH QUALITY TEACHERS THROUGH MENTORSHIP AND SUPPORT: THE PRINCIPAL'S ROLE**

You are being invited to participate in a research project conducted by Bryan T. Taulton, a graduate student from the Executive Ed.D. in Professional Leadership Program at the University of Houston, College of Education.

#### **NON-PARTICIPATION STATEMENT**

Your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may also refuse to answer any question.

#### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

This portion of the study aims to gain constructive insight in regards to current, retired, and former principals' current and or previous campus initiatives pertaining to beginning teacher mentorship. The overall purpose of this study is to investigate the extent of the impact that formal beginning teacher mentorship programs and the supportiveness of school leadership has on retaining high-quality teachers.

#### **PROCEDURES**

A total of 27 subjects will be asked to participate in this project. Subjects include 11 current, 4 retired, and 12 former principals.

The teachers who choose to participate in this research will be interviewed which should take no longer than one-hour to complete. Each participant will be asked a scripted set of questions and their responses will be transcribed by the principal investigator.

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of your participation in this project. Confidentiality will be maintained within legal limits.

#### **RISKS/DISCOMFORTS**

All data from the interview questions will remain confidential. The study will not include individual identifiers or names, assuring confidentiality. Subjects not wishing to participate in this study will not be penalized in any way.

## **BENEFITS**

While you will not directly benefit from participation, your participation may help investigators, practitioners, and others in the field better understand the impact that formal beginning teacher mentorship programs and the supportiveness of school leadership has on retaining high-quality teachers.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

Participation in this project is voluntary and the only alternative to this project is non-participation.

## **PUBLICATION STATEMENT**

The results of this study will not be published in professional and/or scientific journals. The written results may be used for educational purposes or for professional presentations. However, no individual subject will be identified.

## **SUBJECT RIGHTS**

1. I understand that informed consent is required of all persons participating in this project.
2. I have been told that I may refuse to participate or to stop my participation in this project at any time before or during the project. I may also refuse to answer any question.
3. Any risks and/or discomforts have been explained to me, as have any potential benefits.
4. I understand the protections in place to safeguard any personally identifiable information related to my participation.
5. I understand that, if I have any questions, I may contact Bryan Taulton at 713.423.4284. Any questions regarding my rights as a research subject may be addressed to the University of Houston Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects 713.743.9204. All research projects that are carried out by Investigators at the University of Houston are governed by requirements of the University and the federal government.

## **SIGNATURES**

*I have read (or have had read to me) the contents of this consent form and have been encouraged to ask questions. I have received answers to my questions to my satisfaction. I give my consent to participate in this study, and have been provided with a copy of this form for my records and in case I have questions as the research progresses.*

Study Subject (print name): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Study Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

