

Perspectives of Mentors and Mentees on the Teacher Mentor Program and Teacher  
Retention in a Small Urban School Division in Virginia

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**ABSTRACT**

Many school divisions throughout the U.S. are having a difficult time retaining teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Ingersoll, R. M., 2004). “High levels of attrition, estimated to be nearly 8% of the workforce annually, are responsible for the largest share of teacher demand” (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016, p. 2). According to Ingersoll & Strong (2011), Ingersoll and Perda (2011), and Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2016), reasons as to why teachers decide to leave the profession or change teaching locations include: job satisfaction, school demographics, student discipline, lack of administrative support, lack of teacher autonomy, and new teacher mentor programs. The purpose of this quantitative study was to identify mentor and mentee teachers’ perceptions about the current mentoring program and their recommendations for future revisions that will increase teacher retention. An urban, central Virginia school division was selected for this study. Participants selected for this study have served as a mentor teacher for new teachers hired into the selected division or have recently been hired into the division. The division has approximately 260 full-time teaching professionals. From the beginning of the 2013-14 school year to the conclusion of the 2015-16 school year, 125 teachers were replaced. The attrition rate of the selected division is approximately double the attrition rate in the Commonwealth of Virginia (Pitts, 2017). Mentoring programs appear to be among the prominent approaches to teacher retention (McCann & Johannessen, 2010). The researcher sought to determine perceptions of mentor teachers regarding their suggestions for improvement in the current mentor program as a determining factor in whether teachers decide to remain in their current positions. This study yielded eight findings and six implications.

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**GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT**

School divisions throughout the United States have struggled to retain teachers from year to year. Several reasons for this phenomenon were identified in the review of literature. Teacher mentor programs was the specific area the researcher selected to guide this study. This quantitative study focused on the perceptions of teacher mentors and teacher mentees and how their mentor program addressed teacher retention. Data were collected using survey methodologies. Participants for the study were selected from one small urban school division in Virginia. Through this study, the researcher identified eight findings and six implications. One limitation for this study was the small sample size. A suggestion for future research would be to expand the population of participants to include many more school divisions.

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late father, Joseph D. Russ, Sr. On December 17, 2016 I lost one of my best friends. Although deeply saddened by this loss, I immediately realized how blessed I was for the 47 years I could call you *Dad*.

As an educator, seeing students from broken families was not uncommon. By the grace of God, I grew up with two wonderful parents who taught me and my two brothers, Joey and Jason, to put others before self. You both devoted your entire life to provide for the three of us. Attending Virginia Tech football games, NASCAR races, and watching you whip my two brothers are among my favorite memories of you.

As a child, at approximately 10 years of age, I vividly remember an elderly friend of yours tell you to your face, “Joe, what impresses me more about you than anything else, I have never heard you use the words *I* or *Me*, you always talk about *We*.” He could not have described you better.

Dad, I miss you more than I thought was possible. But more importantly, I am so thankful for the time we had together. Until we meet again, Go Hokies!

To my four beautiful children, Haley, Kensley, Brody, and Sofia. You are all special in your own way. I love you all dearly!

Most importantly, thank you to my beautiful wife, Brenda. Thank you for your patience. Thank you for caring for our “miracle princess” during my absences while completing this task. Thank you for sharing late-night dinners when necessary. Thank you for your encouragement and motivation. Your motivation is an inspiration to me and Sofia.

¡Su apoyo es apreciado mas de lo que nadie jamas sabra! ¡Te amare por siempre!

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## CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

### **The Problem and Historical Background**

A child's education is determined successful or not by the quality of the teacher more than by any other factor in the educational experience (O'Rourke, Catrett, & Houchins, 2008; Shaw & Newton, 2011; Strunk & Zeehandler, 2011). According to Ingersoll (2001), the foremost reason a school has inadequate performance can be attributed to its inability to staff the school with effective, qualified teachers. School divisions throughout the United States have discovered it more difficult to staff their buildings with quality teachers as each school year begins (Ingersoll, 2001). Because of the difficulty staffing school buildings, teacher retention is more critical than ever (Pitts, 2017).

Empirical research acknowledges that teacher retention is a problem, but not yet considered a teacher shortage. However, recent studies consider the inability to staff all classrooms with effective, qualified teachers as a *teacher shortage*. In fact, as far back as 2001, Ingersoll referred to the high degree of teacher attrition as a *teacher shortage* (Ingersoll, 2001). Sutchter et al. (2016) stated "preventing and solving teacher shortages so that all children receive high-quality instruction in every community every year is essential for the success of individuals as well as for society as a whole" (p. 7). Sutchter et al. (2016) predicted that if current trends continue, by 2020 the teacher shortage in the United States could mean that an estimated 300,000 new teachers would be needed to adequately staff all classrooms.

Differences in working conditions, locations of teacher preparation colleges, salaries, and the cost to live are all factors that ensure teacher shortages vary from locality to locality throughout the United States (Sutchter et al., 2016). These factors affect the teacher shortage differences in the United States; within Virginia there are also variations in the ability to recruit and retain teachers (Pitts, 2017).

As school divisions in the United States attempt to lower student-teacher ratios to resemble ratios that existed prior to the recession of 2008, the demand for more teachers has increased. According to Sutchter et al. (2016), lowering the current ratio of 16:1 to the pre-recession ratio of 15.3:1, would require adding an additional 145,000 teacher positions in the United States. The demand for additional teachers is also increased by the fact that hundreds of

thousands of teachers who are leaving the profession each year are pre-retirement age (Sutcher et al., 2016). According to the Learning Policy Institute, the attrition rate in United States has been around 14.2 % during the last decade (Sutcher et al., 2016). The attrition rate includes teachers who moved to a different school and teachers who left the profession. For example, of the 3,377,900 public school teachers who were teaching during the 2011–12 school year, 85.8 % remained at the same school, 6.5 % moved to a different school, and 7.7 % left the profession during the following year.

The teacher attrition rate in Virginia has been almost identical to that of the United States recently (Pitts, 2017). Of the approximate 96,000 teachers within the state during the 2014-15 school year, 85.4 % remained at the same school, 6.6 % moved to a different school, and 8 % left the profession during the following year (Sutcher et al., 2016). As reported by Pitts (2017), when the 2016-17 school year began in Virginia, a total of 1080 vacant teaching positions remained unfilled. Table 1 below lists the unfilled positions by region.

Table 1  
*2016-17 Unfilled Positions by Region*

<b>Region</b>	<b># of Unfilled Positions</b>
Region 1 – Central Virginia	177
Region 2 – Tidewater	237
Region 3 – Northern Neck	84
Region 4 – Northern Virginia	383
Region 5 – Valley	29
Region 6 – Western Virginia	83
Region 7 – Southwest	47
Region 8 – Southside	40

For this study, the researcher selected a small urban school division located within Region 3 of Virginia. Although Region 3 began the school year with 84 vacant positions that were not filled, the selected division for this study began the school year with all positions filled. However, over the past three years, teacher turnover within the selected division has exceeded both the national and state average (Pitts, 2017). As listed in Table 2 below, after the 2013-14 school year, 32 of 243 teaching positions were vacated. After the 2014-15 school year, 44 of 253 teaching positions were vacated. Likewise, after the 2015-16 school year, 49 of 261 teaching positions were vacated.

Table 2

*Teacher Turnover Rates by Year*

<b>School Year</b>	<b>Total Number of Teachers</b>	<b>Number of Teachers to Replace</b>	<b>Percent of Attrition</b>
2013-14	243	32	13.2%
2014-15	253	44	17.4%
2015-16	261	49	18.8%

For this study, the percent of attrition listed in Table 2 represents total attrition. The percent includes teachers that relocated to a different school and teachers that left the profession. From 2013-14 through 2015-16, all teachers that left the profession did so because of retirement. However, each time a teacher leaves the profession for any reason, a new teacher must be hired into the division. Each time a new teacher is hired into the division, that teacher must be assigned a mentor teacher (Virginia Department of Education, 2004), therefore adding to the overall cost of teacher attrition.

**Statement of the Problem**

As stated by Sutchter et al., (2016), “based on the evidence available, the emerging teacher shortage is driven by four main factors: 1) A decline in teacher preparation enrollments; 2) District efforts to return to pre-recession pupil-teacher ratios; 3) Increasing student enrollment; and 4) High teacher attrition” (p. 1). Teachers in the United States with fewer than five years of teaching experience have exited the profession at the rate of approximately 50 % in recent years (Heineke, Mazza, & Tichnor-Wagner, 2014; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). The school division chosen for this study has exceeded the attrition rate of both the national average and the state average over the previous three years (Pitts, 2017). Furthermore, because the cost of attrition has financial implications (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007), as well as student achievement implications (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2008), the researcher will use the results of this study to identify strategies to address the issue of high attrition rates. In a time of teacher demand because of elevated attrition rates and low teacher supply, school divisions should focus on retaining effective teachers to ensure academic success for students (Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Pitts, 2017).

## **Purpose and Significance of the Study**

The purpose of this quantitative study was to identify mentor and mentee teachers' perceptions about the current mentoring program and their recommendations for revisions that will increase teacher retention. Through this study, the researcher sought to determine the value of the current mentor program of the selected division and develop strategies and recommendations to improve the program, and to improve teacher retention and lower teacher attrition.

The review of literature for this study identified six primary factors that influence teacher decisions to leave their current teaching assignment or leave the teaching profession altogether (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Boyd, Grossman et al., 2008; Ingersoll & Perda, 2011). Although these factors were identified at a national level, they also influence the reasons teachers leave their teaching assignment at the local level (Sutcher et al., 2016). The factors identified were the following: Job Satisfaction, School Demographics, Student Discipline, Administrative Support, Autonomy, and Mentor Programs.

According to Kang and Berliner (2012), mentoring programs appear to be among the prominent approaches to teacher retention. One result of high teacher attrition is to continue to hire new teachers each year. "However, it is equally important to focus on how to keep the teachers we have in the classroom. In fact, reducing attrition by half could virtually eliminate [teacher] shortages" (Sutcher et al., 2016, p. 4). According to Smith and Ingersoll (2004), a strong mentor program has a positive influence on teacher retention. Additionally, "because teachers improve effectiveness with experience, with most improvement occurring after the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of teaching, attrition is detrimental to student achievement" (Heineke et al., 2014, p. 751).

## **Research Questions**

The key question that drove this study was: What changes do mentors in the existing teacher mentor program recommend to improve attrition rates of recent years? Sub-questions were developed from this key question. The research questions for this study were as follows:

1. What specific practices or interventions are mentors in the selected schools utilizing to retain teachers?

2. What specific practices or interventions do mentors and mentees in the selected schools recommend to be added to or deleted from the existing program to improve the retention rates of teachers and lessen the attrition rate of recent years?
3. What challenges do mentors and mentees face related to the structure and participation in the mentorship program?

### **Conceptual Framework**

The review of literature for this study yielded six key factors that contribute to low teacher retention and high teacher attrition. Those factors were (a) job satisfaction, (b) student demographics, (c) student discipline, (d) administrative support, (e) teacher autonomy, and (f) teacher mentor programs. Of the six factors, *teacher mentor programs* were selected as the focus for this study. The conceptual framework (see *Figure 1*) for the review of literature and the study is depicted below.

Conceptual Framework

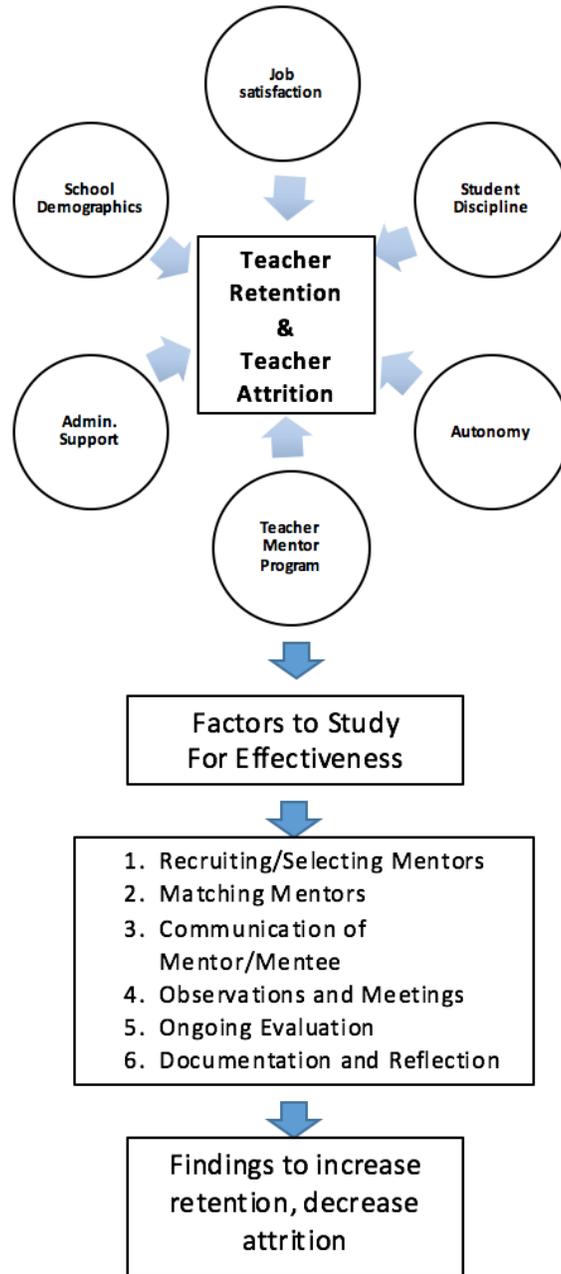


Figure 1. Retention and teacher attrition.

## **Limitations**

This quantitative study had limitations that could have affected the accuracy of the study. This study was limited to four schools within one small urban school division in Virginia. The possibility of participants not responding truthfully could also have limited the accuracy of the survey. Finally, bias might not have been completely removed during a scientific investigation. An anonymous survey instead of interviews was implemented to limit any potential impact of bias due to the researcher's position within the selected division.

## **Delimitations**

The sample size of teacher mentors and teacher mentees selected was a delimitation of the study, since only four schools were used in this investigation. Additionally, data included in this study represented only one school division in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

## **Definition of Key Terms**

The definitions of terms below are used throughout this study and are explained for the benefit of the reader.

**Teacher mentee.** A teacher new to the selected school division who has been assigned a mentor teacher (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

**Teacher mentor.** A teacher selected to promote the professional and/or personal development of any teacher new to the selected school division (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

**Teacher attrition.** The percentage of teachers who did not return to the same teaching assignment, or an assignment within the same building, as was held during the previous year (Schaefer, 2013).

**Teacher retention.** The percentage of teachers who return to the same teaching assignment, or an assignment within the same building, as was held during the previous year (Hughes, 2012).

## **Organization of the Study**

This paper was organized by chapter. Chapter One contains the problem and historical background, statement of the problem, purpose and significance of the study, research questions, conceptual framework, limitations and delimitations, and definition of key terms. Chapter Two includes a review of pertinent literature and explains the search process, community of scholars,

attrition and retention data, reasons teachers decide to leave or stay in their current assignments, costs of attrition, and suggested techniques to improve attrition and retention rates. Chapter Three explains the methodology that was used for this study, the data collection and gathering procedures, the description of the school district selected for this study, the description of the sample population, instrument design and validation, and data analysis techniques. Chapter Four reports the results of the study and includes an introduction, description of sample data, data reporting, and summary. Chapter Five describes the findings of the study and includes an introduction, summary of findings, discussion of findings, implications for practice, suggestions for future research, and reflections of the researcher.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) required public schools in the United States to place a “highly qualified teacher” in all federal core content areas by the 2005-2006 school year. Federal core content areas included the following: English/reading/language arts, mathematics, science, history, geography, economics, civics, government, foreign language, and the arts (music and art). Beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, NCLB (2001) was replaced with *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) of 2015 (Staples, 2016). Effective August 1, 2016, the term “highly qualified teacher” was eliminated. However, eliminating the term “highly qualified teacher” did not reduce the requirements to become certified as a teacher in the United States. ESSA (2015) stipulates that all teachers must be properly licensed and endorsed according to state requirements.

Effective teachers matter more than any other factor relating to student achievement (Allen, Pianta, Gregory, Mikami, & Lun, 2011; Strunk & Zeehandelaar, 2011). In fact, Borman and Dowling (2008) suggested that “the difference between being taught by a highly capable and less than capable teacher can translate into a full grade level of achievement in a single school year” (p. 368). Further research found that it could take up to three years for a beginning teacher to reach his or her fullest potential (O’Rourke et al., 2008). Although placing a “highly qualified” teacher in every classroom is important, retaining that “highly qualified” teacher for several years is equally important (Shaw & Newton, 2011).

This review of literature centers on the attrition and retention of effective teachers. The first section will explain the research strategy used to obtain the literature for this review. The second section will identify the significant leaders in the field of research pertaining to attrition and retention of effective teachers. The third section will provide data pertaining to attrition and retention of teachers. The fourth section will synthesize the reviewed literature and will focus on why teachers leave and why teachers stay. Within this section, the predominant reasons identified through research will be highlighted. Those domains include the following: job satisfaction, school demographics, student discipline, administrative support, autonomy of teachers, and mentor/coaching programs. The fifth section will describe the cost of attrition, both financial and academic. The last section will discuss suggested techniques to improve attrition

and retention rates based on historical research studies, as well as possible research topics relevant to the review of literature.

### **Search Process**

Research was conducted using the Virginia Tech *University Library* website. Electronic database searches of ERIC, JSTOR, Ebscohost, and Google Scholar were utilized. The following keywords were entered and searched in each of the above-mentioned databases: *teacher retention, teacher attrition, retention, attrition, why do teachers leave, and why do teachers stay*. In a refined search, only journals and peer reviewed articles were chosen. These searches yielded abundant resources and only those cited are included in the reference section of this literature review. Additional articles were selected from the references cited in the original articles.

### **Community of Scholars**

For decades, a number of researchers have submitted numerous studies and findings pertaining to attrition and retention of teachers. It is evident within the articles chosen for this literature review that a select few (Richard Ingersoll, Donald Boyd, Cassandra Guarino, and Linda Darling-Hammond) have established themselves as the authorities in this field of study. Richard Ingersoll appears as a contributor to the research of practically every scholarly study or article included in this review of literature.

A 2001 study by Richard Ingersoll, *Teacher Turnover and Teacher Shortages: An Organizational Analysis*, concluded that teacher turnover had more to do with organizational characteristics than simply with teacher retirement. Prior to this study and Ingersoll's focus on organizational characteristics, most research anticipated a "teacher shortage," but suggested its cause would be increases in the number of teacher retirements and student enrollment (Ingersoll, 2001).

In the 1980's, a series of highly publicized reports began to focus national attention on the coming possibility of severe teacher shortages in elementary and secondary schools. These studies predicted a dramatic increase in the demand for new teachers primarily resulting from two converging demographic trends - increasing student enrollments and increasing teacher attrition due to a "graying" teaching force. (Ingersoll, 2001, p. 500)

Ingersoll's study closely examined the organizational characteristics of schools to determine the role they played in teacher attrition. Data from the study revealed that student discipline, administrative support, and faculty input into decision-making were all decisive factors associated with teacher turnover (Ingersoll, 2001). Moreover, these factors, not teacher retirement, were the most likely reasons for rates of high turnover (Ingersoll, 2001). "School staffing problems are primarily due to excess demand resulting from a 'revolving door' - where large numbers of qualified teachers depart their jobs for reasons other than retirement" (Ingersoll, 2001, p. 499). Data used for this study were from the *Schools and Staffing Survey* (SASS) and its supplement, the *Teacher Followup Survey* (TFS) produced by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

Ingersoll produced many studies regarding teacher turnover before and after his *Organizational Analysis* in 2001. His latest exploratory research project, *Seven Trends: The Transformation of the Teaching Force*, was released in 2014. The purpose of this study was to examine the changes, if any, in the teaching profession over the last several years (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014). To perform this study, as in 2001, data from the SASS and TFS were used. In summary, Ingersoll et al. (2014) found the teaching force to be as follows: 1) Larger; 2) Grayer; 3) Greener; 4) More Female; 5) More Diverse, by race-ethnicity; 6) Consistent in Academic Ability; and 7) Less Stable. The teaching force increased at a rate of 46.4 percent between 1987 and 2012 (Ingersoll et al., 2014). In 1987, the average age of teachers was 41. By 2007, the average age of teachers had increased to 55 (Ingersoll et al., 2014). In 1987, teachers had an average of 15 years of experience. By 2012, the average years of experience for the teaching force was 5 years (Ingersoll et al., 2014). From 1980 to 2012, the percentage of female teachers that made up the teaching force increased from 67 to 76 respectively (Ingersoll et al., 2014). "The percent of all teachers who belonged to minority groups increased from 12.4 percent in 1987-88 to 17.3 percent in 2011-12" (Ingersoll et al., 2014, p. 17). Between the years of 1990 to the mid 2000's, the Educational Testing Service (ETS) provided data that showed no decline in the SAT scores of teachers (Ingersoll et al., 2014). According to Ingersoll et al. (2014), "the teaching force has slowly become less stable in recent years. From 1988 to 2008, annual attrition from the teaching force as a whole rose by 41 percent, from 6.4 percent to 9 percent" (p. 23).

## **Attrition and Retention Data**

Schools face an enormous challenge of staffing classrooms with qualified and effective teachers (Hughes, 2012). It was projected in 1994 that the United States would have to hire approximately two million teachers to fill teaching positions vacated by retiring Baby Boomers (Shaw & Newton, 2011). According to Shaw and Newton (2011), the prediction of hiring two million teachers had been surpassed 10 years later, and by 2004 the United States had hired approximately 2.25 million teachers. During the decade between 1994 - 2004, the United States lost approximately 2.7 million teachers. Of the teachers who began their career in 2007-2008, approximately 10 percent were not teaching in 2008-2009, and another 12 percent were not teaching in 2009-2010 (Shaw & Newton, 2011).

According to Guarino et al. (2006), “It is the goal of the elementary and secondary public school system in the United States to provide a high-quality education to every student” (p. 173). Historically, this has been a challenge for school divisions because of a combination of increases in student population and teacher retirement (Watlington, Shockley, Guglielmino, & Felsher, 2010). However, only 16% of the total yearly attrition rate for teachers can be attributed to retirement (Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, Loeb, & Wycoff, 2011). The remaining 84% is caused by teachers leaving the profession or transferring between schools. It is estimated that, of the 3.5 million teachers across the United States, approximately half a million teachers exit their schools each year (Boyd, et al., 2011). Teachers who transfer between schools account for approximately 60% of the total yearly attrition rate, while teachers who leave the profession account for approximately 40% (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008). According to Ingersoll and Perda (2011), compared to other occupations and professions, such as pharmacists, lawyers, and nurses, teacher turnover is relatively high. Hughes (2012) concluded that “turnover is greater among teachers than other professions” (p. 245).

Approximately 25% of new teachers will leave the profession within the first three years (Boyd et al., 2008). According to O’Rourke et al. (2008), more than one-third of all teachers hired in the United States abandon the profession within the first five years on the job. However, more recent research suggests a much higher percentage of teachers are exiting the profession early in their career. Within the first five years on the job, approximately 50% of teachers will leave the profession (Donaldson & Johnson, 2010; Heineke et al., 2014; Ingersoll & Strong,

2011; Watlington et al., 2010). According to Hughes (2012), the loss of experienced and inexperienced teachers each year results in a 13% - 15% turnover rate.

In a study conducted by Clandinin, Long, Schaefer, Downey, Steeves, Pinnegar, Robblee, and Wnuk (2015), it was confirmed that early career teacher attrition is not only a concern in the United States, it is also a concern in Britain, Australia, and in Alberta, a Canadian province. Clandinin, et al. (2015) found that “40% of beginning teachers leave teaching within five years and 25% of graduates from Alberta post-secondary institutions did not assume teaching positions in Alberta” (p. 1).

Age and work experience are strong predictors of teacher turnover (Boyd, et al., 2011; Guarino, et al., 2006; Hughes, 2012; Strunk & Robinson, 2006). As suggested by Hughes (2012), “Younger teachers leave the profession either from dissatisfaction with teaching or for family reasons such as childcare. Older teachers leave teaching for retirement” (p. 245). In a review of empirical literature by Guarino, et al. (2006), one finding that emerged with a strong degree of consistency was that “the highest turnover and attrition rates seen for teachers occurred in their first years of teaching and after many years of teaching when they were near retirement” (p. 200). Furthermore, Boyd, et al. (2011) concluded, “Teacher background characteristics and work experience consistently predict turnover. For example, turnover is higher among young and old teachers compared to middle-aged ones and among less experienced teachers compared to more experienced ones” (p. 305). This research produces a U-shaped pattern of attrition as it relates to age and/or experience.

There is a preponderance of research that suggests another determining factor to predict teacher turnover: the qualifications of the teacher, based on college entrance test scores and certification exams (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008; Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2006; Boyd et al, 2011; Goldring, Taie, & Riddles, 2014; Guarino et al., 2006). “Teachers with higher measured ability have a higher probability of leaving” (Guarino et al., 2006, p. 186). According to Hughes (2012), “Teachers with college entrance exam scores in the top quartile were twice as likely to leave teaching within the first 5 years as those in the bottom quartile” (p. 246). Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, and Wyckoff, (2005) suggested that both stronger qualifications based on individual achievement test scores and the competitiveness of the undergraduate institution from which the teacher graduated predict teacher turnover.

## **Why Do Teachers Leave? And Why Do Teachers Stay?**

One of the central challenges facing education today is the retention of qualified and effective teachers (Sutcher et al., 2016). It is normal for some teachers to leave their position each year; some teachers leave by choice, while others may be dismissed (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Certain departures are beneficial. As suggested by Simon and Johnson (2013), “modest rates of turnover might positively affect schools if the departing teachers were ineffective instructors or uncooperative colleagues” (p. 6). Additionally, Marinell and Coca (2013) found that “some amount of teacher turnover is generally thought to be constructive (as it brings new ideas, energy, and skills to schools)” (p. 6). However, “too much turnover may have a host of instructional, financial, and organizational costs” (Marinell & Coca, 2013, p. 6). To minimize the negative impact or cost of too much teacher turnover, school officials must determine what factors drive teachers to leave their position or their profession. Conversely, determining the factors that encourage teachers to remain in their current position will also be beneficial to school leaders (Costigan, 2005).

In a study conducted by Wynn, Carboni, and Patall (2007), a survey of 217 first- and second-year teachers who considered leaving the teaching profession revealed eight prominent factors for their decision. All eight were related to school climate. Among the most cited reasons were salary (82%), disruptive students (58%), administrative support (43%), lack of parental involvement (42%), working conditions (38%), lack of professional prestige (31%), personal reasons (30%), and lack of collegiality (19%) (Wynn, et al., 2007). According to Ingersoll and Smith (2003), poor salaries (78.5%), student discipline problems (34.9%), and poor administrative support (26.1%) are among the salient reasons for teacher dissatisfaction that might lead them to seek employment elsewhere. The Research Alliance for New York City Schools performed a longitudinal study using ten years of administrative data to study middle school teacher turnover (Simon & Johnson, 2013). In this comprehensive study, Marinell and Coca (2013) reported that 66% of the teachers that entered the profession between 2002 and 2009 left their school within five years. The same study yielded a similar pattern for elementary teachers (59%) and high school teachers (65%). To attempt to discover the reasons for the high percentage of turnover, Marinell and Coca (2013) surveyed more than 4000 middle school teachers about their length of intended stay, whether they had considered leaving, and if they had considered leaving, why? The authors reported these findings:

Teachers who are less experienced, including those entering teaching through alternative routes and those transitioning to a subject, are more likely to leave or consider leaving their middle school.

The results of our study also suggest that the working conditions at schools influence turnover. Teachers reported that student behavior, school leadership, professional control, and teacher collegiality are all important to their employment decisions (Marinell & Coca, 2013, p. x).

There is a direct correlation among job satisfaction, school demographics, school discipline, administrative support, autonomy, mentor/coaching programs, and teacher retention (Heineke et al., 2014; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Loeb, S., Darling-Hammond & Luczak, 2005). The next few sections focus on each of these domains.

### **Job Satisfaction**

“The root of teacher shortage largely resides in the working conditions within schools and districts” (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003, p. 31). Guarino et al. (2006) found that the most frequently reported causes of job dissatisfaction were lack of administrative support and student discipline problems. Hughes (2012) mentions that working conditions in schools, such as teaching assignments, collegial interactions, administration, and discipline are variables in job satisfaction. These factors related to teacher retention are predominant in beginning teachers (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Aspects of working conditions include salary, school facility, role responsibilities, availability of resources, student discipline, and organizational climate and morale (Perrachione, Rosser & Peterson, 2008). A study conducted by Perrachione et al. (2008) provides a framework for attrition and retention. Teachers leave the profession due to low salaries, lack of parent support, role overload, student behavior, and large class sizes (Perrachione et al., 2008). The same study by Perrachione et al. (2008) revealed that teachers were more likely to remain in teaching because of their personal teaching efficacy, working with students, job satisfaction, schedule/time off, and retirement.

## **School Demographics**

School demographics play an active role in teacher retention and teacher attrition. The problem of teacher retention is more predominant in urban and rural schools where there are a large number of poor, minority students (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Heineke et al., 2014). Teacher migration, moving from school to school, inflates teacher attrition rates each year and is more prevalent among teachers moving from schools with low income students to schools with an increased number of high income students (Donaldson & Johnson, 2010). Non-minority teachers are more likely to leave schools with large proportions of minority students (Boyd et al., 2005; Imazeki, 2004; Strunk & Robinson, 2006). Teachers are more likely to choose to leave schools with substantial large enrollment of poor, low-performing, and non-White students when the opportunity presents itself (Boyd, et al., 2005; Hanushek, et al., 2004). Using national survey data, Ingersoll (2001) found that high-poverty public schools have relatively higher rates of teacher turnover. Comparably, Borman and Dowling (2006) found higher rates of student poverty coincide with higher rates of teacher attrition. Student racial composition in predominantly minority schools is up to 3 times more likely to cause teacher attrition than in a predominately White school (Borman & Dowling, 2006). “Not only that teachers are more likely to leave poor schools, they are also more likely to leave schools with high levels of minority students” (Strunk & Robinson, 2006, p. 73). Strunk and Robinson (2006) stated that a mismatch between teacher-student race/ethnicity is predicted to increase the likelihood of teacher attrition. Boyd et al. (2005) found that White teachers are twice as likely to transfer schools or leave the profession when the student body is not largely White. In contrast, minority teachers stay longer, on average, compared to White teachers in the same district when the student population is predominantly minority (Imazeki, 2004). Tension and job dissatisfaction result from racial heterogeneity (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

Schaefer (2013) found that schools with primarily lower-performing, poor, and minority students have a more challenging time recruiting and retaining teachers. Therefore, schools with the highest proportions of low-performing, low-income, and minority students have the lowest proportions of highly qualified and high-quality teachers (Strunk & Zeehandelaar, 2011). Ingersoll (2001) found that 15.2% of teachers at high-poverty schools leave annually. Consequently, schools with greater success and high levels of student motivation have greater teacher retention (Swars, Meyers, Mays, & Lack, 2009). In fact, Watlington, et al. (2010)

concluded “the system sways teachers to select higher performing schools over low-performing ones as work sites” (p.25).

### **Student Discipline**

According to research, high-poverty schools tend to have greater occurrences of student discipline (Allensworth, Ponisciak, & Mazzeo, 2009; Ingersoll, 2004). Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2016) performed a qualitative study to explore how potential stressors predicted motivation for teachers to leave the teaching profession. The study included input from a total of 523 teachers and former teachers. Literature included in this study found that teachers from the US, as well as from Norway, agreed that of seven identified stressors, disruptive student behavior ranked first (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016). In schools where student discipline had a negative impact on a teacher's' ability to teach, teacher turnover increased (Allensworth et al., 2009; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005; Marinell & Coca, 2013).

The order and discipline in a school affect how teachers view their students when deciding to stay or leave their school (Kraft, Papay, Charner-Laird, Johnson, Ng, & Reinhorn, 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016). Kraft et al. (2012) interviewed 95 teachers and administrators from six high-poverty, urban schools to understand how the students in those divisions influenced teacher experiences. Teachers in the six divisions expressed frustration and a desire to leave their respective school when they felt the school did not provide an orderly environment (Kraft et al., 2012). Moreover, “teachers were much more likely to describe having positive relationships with students if they worked in schools with effective discipline programs and school cultures that fostered order and respect” (Kraft et al., 2012, p. 26). Schools that did not provide effective discipline programs and respectful school cultures had a much higher rate of teacher attrition (Kraft et al., 2012).

### **Administrative Support**

Administrative support directly impacts teacher retention (Boyd, et. al, 2011; Donaldson & Johnson, 2010; Henry, Bastian, & Fortner, 2011; Hughes, 2012; Mihans, 2008). Beginning teachers report that one of the main factors behind their decisions to depart is a lack of adequate support from the school administration (Achinstein, Ogawa, Sexton, & Freitas, 2010). According to Shaw and Newton (2011), “the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF), report that one-third of all teachers leave the profession because they feel they have

no administrative support” (p. 102). Allensworth et al. (2009) found working conditions and administrative support as key factors in teachers’ decisions to leave or stay in their schools. Similarly, Whipp and Geronime (2015) claimed that dissatisfaction with school administration had the greatest influence on teachers’ decisions to stay or leave their schools. Heineke et al. (2014) echoed the claim that teachers stayed when placed with strong leaders and supportive coworkers, unlike those in schools with poor leadership, poor facilities, and limited resources. “Teachers stay in schools where the conditions are well-suited for them to have the potential to be effective” (Allensworth, et al., 2009, p. 2). Data collected from the Clayton and Schoonmaker (2007) study validated that teachers who received administrative support in their development as teachers stayed in the profession.

Boyd et al. (2011) concluded in their study, *The Influence of Administrators on Teacher Retention Decisions*, that working conditions, especially administrative support, is vital in teacher retention. They administered a survey in the spring of 2005 to all first-year teachers in New York City. The survey consisted of approximately 300 questions and the estimated time to complete the survey was 25 minutes (Boyd et al, 2011). Of all teachers who received the survey, 4360 teachers (just over 70%) completed it (Boyd et al, 2011). The approximate 300 questions were “divided into the following areas: preparation experiences, characteristics of the schools in which they are teaching, teaching practices, and goals” (Boyd et al., 2011, p. 312). Descriptive data from the survey were divided into the following categories to measure teacher satisfaction regarding the working conditions of their current school assignment: *teacher influence (autonomy), administration, staff relations, students, facilities, and safety* (Boyd et al, 2011).

In the spring of 2006, a follow-up survey was administered to the original group of teachers from the spring 2005 survey who had left after their first year. The response rate to the follow-up survey was 61% ( $n = 368$ ) (Boyd et al, 2011). According to Boyd et al., (2011) the follow-up survey asked teachers to respond to the following prompts:

- 1) Indicate how important each of 12 factors was in their decision to leave their teaching position (using a 5-point scale ranging from *not important* to *extremely important*).
- 2) Choose the one factor from the list provided that was their most important consideration.

- 3) Indicate how important their dissatisfaction with each of the 12 aspects of their job was in their decision to leave the school where they taught in the previous year (using a 5-point scale ranging from *not important* to *extremely important*).
- 4) Choose the one aspect from the list of 12 factors provided that they considered the most important in their decision to leave (p. 325, 326).

Of the 12 factors provided, *dissatisfaction with job* was the main factor teachers cited for leaving their previous job. Of the categories within *dissatisfaction with job*, “well over 40% identified dissatisfaction with the administration as the most important” (Boyd et al., 2011, p. 327). As Boyd, et al., (2011) concluded, “The importance of administration and school leadership is not surprising. Substantial research provides evidence that school leaders matter for teachers and students” (p. 328).

### **Autonomy**

Many teachers see accountability measures and high-stakes testing as the reason they have less professional autonomy in the classroom today (Mihans, 2008). The degree of autonomy a teacher has impacts a teacher’s career plans to stay or leave (Cochran-Smith, Cannaday, McEachern, Piazza, Power, & Ryan, 2010; Costigan, 2005; Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Mihans, 2008; Whipp & Geronime, 2015). Boyd et al. (2011) found a congruent relationship between school leadership and teacher autonomy on teacher retention decisions. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) found that a lack of faculty input into decision-making influences teachers to leave. “Teachers expect to work in environments in which they can make their own choices and have flexible opportunities for growth” (Mihans, 2008, p. 764). If autonomy is absent, teachers tend to move to other teaching positions or to jobs outside of teaching that offer autonomy when possible (Guarino, et al., 2006). When teachers felt they had an active, meaningful role in their schools, they were more likely to stay (Goode, Quartz, Barraza-Lyons, & Thomas, 2004). In a study to learn more about the minority teacher shortage, Ingersoll & May (2011) found that

On average, more minority teachers leave the profession each year than join it. When asked why they depart, the most common explanations involved feeling dissatisfied about the level of collective decision-making and influence granted to teachers and, similarly, the small degree of autonomy they could exercise within their classroom. (p. 43)

When teachers are given autonomy, they remain in the profession longer (Cochran-Smith et al., 2010; Guarino et al., 2006; Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll and Smith, 2011).

### **New Teacher Mentor Program/Coaching**

Many school districts across the nation have resorted to mentoring and induction programs as a strategy to overcome teacher attrition (Kang & Berliner, 2012). Comprehensive induction programs that focus on helping beginning teachers cope with the intellectual and emotional complexity of classroom instruction positively impact teachers' job satisfaction and student achievement (Johnson et al., 2005; Strong, 2006). Smith and Ingersoll (2004) examined the relationship between induction programs and teacher retention in the 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Survey and the 2000-2001 Teacher Follow-up Survey. This study is one of the few quantitative studies conducted to examine this relationship. In their analysis, Smith and Ingersoll (2004) concluded that induction programs, especially those that used mentors from the same subject field, in fact, have a positive influence on teacher retention.

The goal of mentoring and induction programs should be to “improve the performance and retention of beginning teachers and to ultimately improve the growth and learning of students” (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011, p.203). While mentoring and induction programs are used interchangeably, they are complements, not substitutes. Consequently, in recent decades, teacher mentoring programs have become an essential component of teacher induction programs (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009; Strong 2009). Recent research often concerns itself with the kinds of mentoring and induction programs that exist and how these programs impact teacher retention. Although differences exist in regards to structure, quality, and overall effectiveness of induction and mentoring programs across the nation, such programs appear to be among the prominent approaches to teacher retention (Kang & Berliner, 2012).

McCann and Johannessen (2010) provided a guide for designing mentoring programs which focuses on six components; (1) recruiting and selecting mentors, (2) matching mentors with mentees, (3) effective and open communication, (4) observation and meetings, (5) ongoing evaluation, and (6) documentation and reflection. McCann and Johannessen (2010) emphasized the importance of actively seeking veteran teachers to serve as mentors who fit the “mentor profile.” An effective mentor must embody the following characteristics: exemplary teaching skills, empathetic, supportive, trustworthy, strong communication skills, and a similar teaching assignment (McCann & Johannessen, 2010). The matching of mentors and mentees is the most

critical aspect of the mentoring program (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; McCann & Johannessen, 2010). Ingersoll and Strong (2011) suggest that a formal process for matching mentors and mentees should be in place. To ensure the mentoring relationship is profound and ultimately impacts student achievement and teacher performance, McCann and Johannessen (2010) emphasize ongoing, open communication. Mentees can gain valuable feedback and training from open discussions about instruction, observations, and trainings during scheduled meetings. Frequent meetings between mentor and mentee allow for reflective conversations and building rapport (McCann & Johannessen, 2010).

In a study conducted by Ingersoll and Strong (2011) to examine the relationship between mentoring and teacher retention, the researchers found the strongest factors in mentoring programs were to have mentors from the same field, to have a common planning time, and to have regularly scheduled meetings to collaborate and discuss instruction.

In Table 3 below, Study 1 refers to Smith and Ingersoll (2004). Study 2 refers to McCann and Johannessen (2010). Study 3 refers to Ingersoll and Strong (2011). Table 3 summarizes components that all three studies suggest as effective components of successful mentor programs and illustrates the common components in all three studies.

Table 3

*Effective Mentor Program Components According to Research*

<b>Component</b>	<b>Study 1</b>	<b>Study 2</b>	<b>Study 3</b>
Mentor from Same Field	X	X	X
Recruiting/Selecting Mentor	X	X	
Effective Communication	X		X
Observation/Reflection	X		X
Common Planning Time	X	X	X

Note: *Study 1 - Smith and Ingersoll (2004); Study 2 - McCann and Johannessen (2010); Study 3 - Ingersoll and Strong (2011)*

**Cost of Attrition**

**Financial cost.** The costs related to attrition of teachers is detrimental to school divisions, especially divisions serving low income, minority, and special needs students

(Watlington et al., 2010). The result of teacher attrition impacts schools and school divisions financially and academically (Barnes et al., 2007). The total cost of recruiting, hiring, and retaining quality teachers across the United States exceeds \$2.2 billion per year (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Hughes, 2012). A report published by the Alliance for Excellent Education (2008) agreed with the cost estimate and explained the prediction process: According to the Department of Labor, attrition costs an employer 30% of a departing employee's salary. The average teacher's salary at the time of the referenced report was \$41,820. Therefore, the total cost to replace each teacher would cost school divisions approximately \$12,546. At the time of this report, 173,439 teachers left the profession in the previous year, resulting in a total cost of approximately \$2.2 billion (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008). In a study by Perrachione et al. (2008), the total cost of attrition across the United States was reported to be as much as \$7 billion annually when the cost of professional development and training for replacement teachers was included.

**Student achievement.** The greatest influence on a student's achievement is the classroom teacher (Darling-Hammond, 2010). The revolving door of frequent newcomers and leavers negatively impacts student achievement (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). "The single most important factor in determining a student's performance is the quality of his or her teachers" (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008, p. 1). Given the relationship between teacher quality and student achievement, students in low-performing, high-minority, and high-poverty schools are severely implicated. "If less experienced teachers, on average, are less proficient or effective, the association among student achievement, income, and proportion minority indicate that these students are more likely to have lower quality teachers" (Strunk & Robinson, 2006, p. 74). The study by Barnes et al. (2007) confirms that the educational achievement in at-risk schools is adversely impacted by the chronic teacher turnover in high-minority, low-performing schools. Furthermore, Hanushek et al. (2004) demonstrated the cost of teacher turnover goes beyond financial costs, as it adversely impacts student achievement by producing setbacks in students' performance. Studies have confirmed that student achievement declines when students are taught by a series of new teachers (Hanushek, et al., 2004). An 8-year New York City elementary schools study by Ronfeldt, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2013) demonstrated that teacher turnover negatively affected student achievement in both English language arts and math. Therefore, in

order to close the student achievement gap, the teacher job-satisfaction gap must be reduced (Perrachione, et al., 2008).

### **Suggested Techniques to Improve Attrition and Retention Rates**

To improve teacher attrition, the causes must be addressed. Teachers are likely to stay where they have access to adequate resources, where they have support from administrators and colleagues, and where they have access to mentors and professional networks (Ingersoll, 2004; Loeb et al., 2005; Simon & Johnson, 2013). Allensworth et al. (2009) suggested that working conditions and administrative support are among the most influential factors in teacher retention. Heineike et al. (2014) supported the notion that teachers stay when placed in environments with strong leaders and supportive coworkers. Guarino et al. (2006) found that “schools that provide teachers with more autonomy and administrative support appeared to have lower levels of teacher attrition and migration” (p. 371). “Teachers want to work in schools where they have greater autonomy, higher levels of administrative support, and clearly communicated expectations” (Liu, 2007, p. 13). Wynn et al. (2007) declared that leaders have a great deal of power and influence when it comes to beginning teachers and the level of support provided to newcomers to the school. Literature suggests that teacher retention would be enhanced by helping administrators understand their level of influence and guiding them in creating positive working relations to empower teachers (Hughes, 2012). Teachers’ job satisfaction is related to the leader’s attempt to encourage, support, and develop their skills (Shaw & Newton, 2011).

Teacher retention is greater when collective supports are in place. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) found in their study that having a mentor from the same field, common planning time, and regular collaboration time were the top three factors that positively impacted teacher retention. Mihans (2008) claimed that principals can retain teachers by creating school structures that promote the frequent exchange of ideas and resources, and by allowing teachers to join in leadership roles. Pardo (2006) noted that collaboration and learning communities are vital in retaining teachers. Teachers often make the decision to stay or leave based on their experiences in schools and are primarily influenced by collaboration, principal support, professional development, leadership roles, and mentoring opportunities (Cochran-Smith et al., 2010).

While administrative support, autonomy, and increased job satisfaction are influential factors in retaining teachers, mentoring and induction programs have proven to be equally important (Bieler, 2009; Cochoran-Smith et al., 2010; Guarino et al., 2006; Hughes 2012;

Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Ladd (2011) found that school leadership, professional development, and mentoring were predictors in teachers' intentions to leave or stay. In a study by Hammerness (2008), findings demonstrated that teachers were more likely to stay when they had empowering mentors. Watlington et al. (2010) claimed, "retaining teachers means supporting effective programs that invest in teacher support and inductions" (p. 33). Similarly, Guarino et al. (2006) agreed, "the support and implementation of mentoring and induction programs help lower teacher turnover" (p. 201). Meaningful mentoring, specifically for beginning teachers, is needed during their early years in the classroom (Guarino et al., 2006). The goal of mentoring and induction programs should be to improve performance and retention of beginning teachers and to provide personal guidance (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). By doing so, the effectiveness of beginning teachers can be enhanced, thus improving teacher retention and student achievement (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

According to Sutchter et al. (2016), "expert mentoring in the first years of teaching enhances the retention effect of strong initial preparation" (p. 63). An effective mentoring experience for beginning teachers builds a teacher's competence, which supports teacher retention (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Kang & Berliner, 2012; Mihans, 2008; Sutchter et al., 2016; Watlington et al., 2010). "When more formal organizational mechanisms are put in place to provide novice teachers with mentoring opportunities, these efforts are associated with decreased attrition rates" (Borman & Dowling, 2008, p. 397). Unfortunately, according to Borman and Dowling (2008), mentoring is not a common practice in many schools. In fact, "beginning teachers in the United States are typically given the most difficult assignments, receive little or no support, and are generally isolated behind classroom doors with little feedback or help" (Borman & Dowling, 2008, p. 397). However, "if a teacher receives basic mentoring, plus collaboration, a strong teacher network, and extra resources (a reduced number of preparation periods and a teacher's aide), first-year turnover (leaving the school or the profession) is cut by more than half, from 41% to 18%" (Sutchter et al., 2016, p. 64).

Because high attrition rates pose a financial burden on school divisions, to maintain a mentoring program and the required resources suggested by Sutchter, et al, (2016), additional spending is required as well. According to Watlington et al. (2010) "investing in an effective new-teacher mentor program produces positive and exponential returns – the costs of teacher turnover are reduced and the benefit to students and society is increased" (p. 33). Because of

budget constraints placed on school divisions after the recession of 2008, funding for effective mentoring programs has been reduced (Watlington et al., 2010). This reduction requires school divisions to determine whether it is cost effective, given the high cost of teacher attrition, to reinstate funds necessary to maintain an effective mentor program for new teachers.

### **Summary**

This chapter provided a review of literature that revealed the following reasons that contribute to the high attrition rates of schools: job satisfaction, school demographics, student discipline, administrative support, autonomy, and new teacher mentor programs. Additionally, the financial cost and the negative impact on student achievement because of teacher attrition was discussed. Sutchter et al., (2016) indicate the U.S. is facing a crisis with a severe teacher shortage. Data from the Virginia Department of Education indicate a substantial decline in the number of teachers enrolled in teacher preparation programs during the past five years (Pitts, 2017). According to Watlington et al., (2010), school divisions that struggle each year to fill teaching vacancies must focus on effective teacher induction programs to improve teacher retention. The intent of this study was to determine ways to improve the teacher mentor program of selected school division to improve teacher retention. The methodology and research design are described in chapter three.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this quantitative study, utilizing survey methodology, was to identify mentor and mentee teachers' perceptions about the current mentoring program and their recommendations for future revisions that will increase teacher retention. One intended outcome of this study was to determine perceptions of mentor and mentee teachers regarding their confidence in the current mentor program as a determining factor in teachers' decisions to remain in their current positions. Another intended outcome of this study was to determine whether the mentor program within a small urban school division in Virginia could be revised to increase teacher retention and reduce teacher attrition. The researcher sought to capture the beliefs of teachers based on their mentor and mentee assignments during the past three years with the use of survey instruments.

Two survey instruments were developed as a method to gather beliefs of the participants of the study. The survey instruments were designed to analyze mentor and mentee teachers' perceptions about their current teacher mentor program and to focus on retaining current teachers for future years. Furthermore, the survey instruments were designed to obtain specific current practices and interventions, as well as possible future practices and interventions to improve teacher retention and reduce teacher attrition.

#### **Research Design and Justification**

The research design for this study was a nonexperimental quantitative design. According to Johnson (2001), because there are so many independent variables in the field of education that cannot be manipulated, yet need further study, "nonexperimental quantitative research is an important area of research for educators" (p. 3). Quantitative research allowed the researcher to utilize surveys and measure perceptions as they were (Neill, 2007). There was no attempt by the researcher to change behaviors or conditions in this study by manipulating variables. Therefore, data collected in this quantitative study were reported and analyzed in a descriptive manner.

#### **Research Questions**

The research questions were as follows.

1. What specific practices or interventions are mentors in the selected schools utilizing to retain teachers?
2. What specific practices or interventions do mentors and mentees in the selected schools recommend to be added to, or deleted from, the existing program to improve the retention rates of teachers and lessen the attrition rate of recent years?
3. What challenges do mentors and mentees face related to the structure and participation in the mentorship program?

### **Site/Sample Selection**

The division selected for this study was an urban school division in central Virginia. The school system is approximately equidistant between Richmond, Virginia and Washington, D.C. along the Interstate 95 corridor. The overall population of the community which encompasses the selected school division was approximately 24,200 residents. Demographics of the community were as follows: African-American 22%, American Indian 4%, Asian 2%, White 64%, and Hispanic 10%. The total student population of the school district was 3362. Student demographics for the selected division were as follows: African-American 37%, Asian 6%, American Indian 1%, White 32%, and Hispanic 23%. District-wide, approximately 52% of the students were eligible for free and reduced lunch.

Participants for this study were chosen from all schools within the selected division. Each participant either served as a mentor teacher for a new teacher hired into the selected division during the 2013-14, 2014-15, and/or 2015-16 school year or was a teacher hired into the selected division during the 2013-14, 2014-15, and/or 2015-16 school year. Some of the participants in the study have been a mentor teacher for more than one year. Furthermore, there are mentor teachers that served during the three years that have resigned or retired from the selected division.

The teacher mentor program in the selected school division was developed independently within each building. There was no prescribed teacher mentor program directed by central office administration. Each school determined their own process of how they assign teacher mentors with teacher mentees. Building level administration assigned teacher mentors based on grade level and subjects taught when possible. Additionally, teacher mentors and their assigned teacher mentee would have classrooms in the same proximity if possible. The number of meetings and the length of meetings was not scheduled by building level administration. The master schedule

for each building was created without consideration of meeting times for teacher mentors and teacher mentees. Prior to 2008, teacher mentors received a stipend in the amount of \$250 for serving as a mentor. Beginning in the 2008-09 school year, there was no additional compensation provided to teacher mentors (M. Catlett, personal communication, January 4, 2018).

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The total number of teachers and the number of teachers that had to be replaced for school years 2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16 was collected from the Human Resources department of the selected school division for this study (C. Dodd, personal communication, January 4, 2018). The data collected from each school within the selected division included the following: name of teacher that resigned, name of teacher that was selected to replace each teacher that resigned, number of new positions that were added at each school, name of new teacher that was added at each school. Upon obtaining the names of teachers that were hired into the division for the 2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16 school years, the researcher contacted individual schools and collected the names of the mentor teachers that were selected for each new employee. The total number of teachers hired into the selected division over the three-year period selected for this study equaled 125. The number of mentors invited to participate in this study was fewer than 125. There are three reasons for this discrepancy; some teachers served as mentors in more than one year, some teachers served as a mentor for more than one teacher in the same year, and some teachers that served as mentors have either resigned or retired after the year in which they served as a mentor. The total number of mentees, the 125 teachers hired into the selected division, invited to participate in this study was also fewer than 125. The reason for this discrepancy was because many of those teachers no longer work in the selected division. The total sample ( $n$ ) size that received a survey questionnaire was 71 teachers. These teachers served as a mentor, or were assigned a mentor during the 2013-14, 2014-15, and/or 2015-16 school year. The number of teacher mentors who were invited to participate in this study equaled 23. The number of teacher mentees who were invited to participate in this study equaled 48.

### **Data Gathering Procedures**

Data collection utilized in this study included survey questionnaires. A *Certificate of Completion* for the researcher, signifying training in human subjects protection, is included in Appendix A. The researcher received the *IRB Application Approval Letter* (see Appendix B)

from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University on December 18, 2017. The researcher was granted approval from the superintendent of the selected school division to gather data necessary to complete the study. The *Cover Letter to the District Superintendent* is included in Appendix C. The *District Consent Form* signed by the superintendent is included in Appendix D. A *Participant Recruitment Email* (see Appendix E) with the *Implied Consent Agreement* (see Appendix F) was sent electronically through email to all participants in this study explaining the researcher's interest in the topic and directions of how to return the survey. One week later, a *Participant Follow-up Email* (see Appendix G) was sent to all participants in this study.

### **Instrument Design**

Two researcher-developed surveys were used to gather data from teacher mentors and teacher mentees that served during the 2013-14, 2014-15, and/or 2015-16 school year. The data collected from the survey responses were used to answer the research questions of this study. The *Teacher Mentor Survey* for this study included 17 questions. Questions 1 and 2 addressed the experience of the mentor teacher. According to McCann and Johannssen (2010), the number of years a teacher has taught has an impact on the effectiveness of a mentor. Questions 3 and 4 address the selection process of the teacher mentor. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) suggest matching the correct mentor and mentee may be the most critical aspect of an effective mentor program. The remaining questions, 5-17, answer specific research questions for this study. Table 4 below explains which survey question responds to each research question. Some survey questions may respond to more than one research question.

Table 4

*Mentor Survey Questions Relevant to Research Questions*

<b>Survey Question</b>	<b>Research Question</b>
5. Typically, how often did you and your mentee meet during the school year?	1 & 3
6. How often do you think you and your mentee should have met specifically to discuss instruction to positively impact teacher performance and teacher retention?	2
7. Typically, how long was an average meeting with your mentee?	1 & 3
8. How often did you observe (and meet to discuss the observation with) your mentee?	1
9. How often do you think you should observe (and meet to discuss the observation with) your mentee to impact the teacher's decision to remain in their current teaching assignment next year?	2
10. When did you and your mentee meet during the school day?	1 & 3
11. Which components below do you feel are present in your current school's mentor program? Please select all options that apply.	1
12. In order of importance, rank your top three choices from the options below that you think should be present in a mentor program in order to improve the retention rates of teachers each year.	2
13. Prior to becoming a mentor teacher, I was clear about my expectations for my role as a mentor teacher.	3
14. I feel I was adequately trained to be a mentor teacher prior to becoming a mentor teacher.	2 & 3
15. I feel the current mentor program in my school is designated to motivate new teachers to return to our school.	2 & 3

(continued)

Table 4 (cont.)

Survey Question	Research Question
16. To what degree do you think the mentor program in your school helps new teachers in the following areas:	
17. In the space provided below, please list components or characteristics that you think should be included in your school's current mentor program in order to enhance the mentor program with respect to improving the chances of your mentee returning to their current assignment next school year.	3  2 & 3

The Teacher Mentee Survey for this study included 14 questions. Questions 1 and 2 address the experience and education of the mentee teacher. The remaining questions, 3-14, answer specific research questions for this study. Table 5 below explains which survey question responds to each research question. Some survey questions may respond to more than one research question.

Table 5

*Mentee Survey Questions Relevant to Research Questions*

Survey Question	Research Question
3. Typically, how often did you and your mentor meet during the school year?	1 & 3
4. How often do you think you and your mentee should have met specifically to discuss instruction to positively impact teacher performance and teacher retention?	2
5. Typically, how long was an average meeting with your mentor?	1 & 3

(continued)

Table 5 (cont.)

Survey Question	Research Question
6. How often do you think your mentor should observe you (and meet to discuss the observation with you) to impact your decision to remain in your current teaching assignment next year?	2
7. When did you and your mentor meet during the school day?	1 & 3
8. Which components below do you feel are present in your current school's mentor program? Please select all options that apply.	1
9. In order of importance, rank your top <b>three</b> choices from the options below that you think should be present in a mentor program in order to improve the retention rates of teachers each year.	2
10. My mentor seemed clear about his/her expectations for their role as a mentor teacher year.	1 & 3
11. I feel my mentor teacher was adequately trained to be a mentor teacher prior to becoming my mentor teacher.	2 & 3
12. I feel the current mentor program in my school is designated to motivate new teachers to return to our school.	2 & 3
13. To what degree do you think the mentor program in your school helps new teachers in the following areas:	3
14. In the space provided below, please list components or characteristics that you think should be included in your school's current mentor program in order to enhance the mentor program with respect to improving the chances of your mentee returning to their current assignment next school year.	2 & 3

### Validity and Reliability

A survey validation instrument was used to measure validity of the researcher-developed surveys for this study. The survey validation instrument included all survey questions. Content validity is the ability of an assessment to measure what it is intended to measure and can be measured through expert opinion (Vogt, 2005). The expert panel of experienced teachers, who

held master's degrees, piloted the interview questions. During the time of this study the researcher served as an adjunct instructor for Longwood University. Students in the Longwood University cohort consisted of 15 teachers from five school divisions. Each student in the cohort had previously obtained a master's degree in an area other than Education Leadership and Administration, a pre-requisite for this program. The Longwood cohort is a year-long program that results in an Education Leadership and Administration endorsement to be added to each student's Virginia Department of Education teaching license. The validation instrument was distributed for both the Draft Teacher Mentor Survey (see Appendix H) and the Draft Teacher Mentee Survey (see Appendix I) to the members of the Longwood cohort on November 4, 2017. The original Teacher Mentor Survey consisted of 18 questions. The original Teacher Mentee Survey consisted of 19 questions. The purpose of the validation instrument for both surveys was to measure the face and content validity of each survey question prior to distribution.

According to Trochim (2006), 80% is the "accepted" number to measure validity in the Behavioral and Social Sciences. Therefore, the numerical goal the researcher was seeking for validity was 80%. This means that each survey question had to have alignment with at least one specific research question by having an 80% agreement by cohort members on each question. The researcher used a four-point Likert Scale to determine clarity (question was easy to understand) as follows: 4 = very clear (VC), 3 = clear (C), 2 = somewhat clear (SC), and 1 = not clear (NC). The numerical goal the researcher was seeking for clarity was 3.0 or higher.

If a survey question failed to reach the 80% target for validity, or at least a 3.0 clarity rating on the Likert Scale, the question was considered unreliable and was revised or eliminated prior to distribution of the final surveys to mentor and mentee teachers. The survey validity results from both surveys for alignment and clarity are included in the Appendices, (see Appendices J - M).

The survey validation instrument given on November 4, 2017 had 17 out of 18 survey questions on the Teacher Mentor Survey reach an 80% cohort agreement and a clarity rating at 3.0 or above. This means that at least 12 out of 15 cohort members agreed that 17 out of 18 survey questions had alignment and/or clarity as specified above. The survey question that did not have an 80% alignment was eliminated. There was one question on the original Teacher Mentor Survey that resulted in a 3.0 clarity rating, and one question that resulted in a 2.93 clarity rating. Both questions were reworded for improved clarity.

The survey validation instrument given on November 4, 2017 had 14 out of 19 survey questions on the Teacher Mentee Survey reach an 80% cohort agreement and a clarity rating at 3.0 or above. This means that at least 12 out of 15 cohort members agreed that 14 out of 19 survey questions had alignment and/or clarity as specified above. The five survey questions that did not have the 80% alignment were eliminated. There were two questions on the original Teacher Mentee Survey that resulted in a clarity rating less than 3.0, one 2.86, the other, 2.93. Both questions were reworded for improved clarity. The surveys in Appendix N and Appendix O are the final surveys used for this study.

As part of the validation process, reliability must be considered (Cronbach, 1951). To test the reliability for this study, a Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) was calculated using the Likert questions from both surveys. The Cronbach's Alpha for the Teacher Mentor Survey was .9039. The Cronbach's Alpha for the Teacher Mentee Survey was .9340. A score of more than 0.7 is considered acceptable (Cronbach, 1951).

### **Data Treatment and Management**

All participants in the study participated through implied consent. The *Implied Consent Agreement* (see Appendix F) was included in an email received by each identified participant. It was explained via email that the identity of all participants, and the data collected, would be held in strict confidence. Additionally, all participants were informed of their rights and the option to participate, or decline, at any time during the study.

Surveys were distributed to participants electronically through email. Each participant received an email with a link to obtain to the survey online. It was thoroughly explained in the email to participants that consent for this study was implied consent. Once a participant opened the link to the survey, consent to participate in the survey was implied upon the electronic submission of responses. Once participants completed the survey and pressed submit, their responses were automatically entered into a Qualtrics database. The database was the sole property of the researcher. The database could only be accessed through login and password. The login and password were unknown to everyone except the researcher. A hard copy of each survey response was printed as a backup. The printed hard copies were stored in a locked file cabinet. The researcher was the only person with a key to the file cabinet. Once the study is complete, and the dissertation has been successfully defended, the electronic database will be deleted, and the hard copies of the survey results will be shredded.

## **Data Analysis Techniques**

Surveys were distributed to participants electronically through email. Participant responses were returned to the researcher electronically through Qualtrics. The data automatically formulated into a database. Data gathered from the database were analyzed to answer the research questions of the study.

## **Timeline**

The initial draft surveys for this study were developed during August 2017. The draft surveys were placed into a survey validation process to a selected group of educational professionals during November 2017. Upon completion of the survey validation process, the surveys were submitted to the researcher's dissertation chair for review. Finally, the researcher submitted the surveys to Virginia Tech's Institutional Review Board in November 2017. Upon IRB approval (December 18, 2017), the survey was distributed to participants on January 2, 2018. The survey response collection concluded on January 12, 2018. The survey responses were analyzed during the remainder of January 2018.

## **Methodology Summary**

The research design for this study was a non-experimental quantitative design. This study was completed in an urban school district in central Virginia. A survey was distributed to 71 participants, all of which had served as a mentor or mentee teacher during the 2013-14, 2014-15, and/or the 2015-16 school year. Prior to distributing the survey, it was evaluated for validity and clarity through a validation instrument process. It was explained to participants in this study that by completing and submitting the survey they received, implied consent was understood for their participation in the study. The email sent to each identified participant outlined the purpose and procedures of the study and informed them of their rights and option to participate, or decline, at any time during the study. Collected data for this study were secured and were only accessible to the researcher throughout the entire study and data analysis.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS OF THE STUDY**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this quantitative study was to identify mentor and mentee teachers' perceptions about the current mentoring program and their recommendations for future actions that will increase teacher retention. The study used a survey collection methodology. Two surveys were administered. One survey for teacher mentors and one for teacher mentees. Data collected from the two surveys are documented in this chapter and reflect the responses of teacher mentors and teacher mentees from one urban school district in northern Virginia. Survey questions aligned with the following research questions:

1. What specific practices or interventions are mentors in the selected schools utilizing to retain teachers?
2. What specific practices or interventions do mentors and mentees in the selected schools recommend to be added to or deleted from the existing program to improve the retention rates of teachers and lessen the attrition rate of recent years?
3. What challenges do mentors and mentees face related to the structure and participation in the mentorship program?

This chapter is organized as follows: description of sample data, data reporting and analysis, identification of emergent themes, and chapter summary.

#### **Description of Participant Data**

The selected school district's Human Resources department assisted in the collection of data for this study. Three school years were selected to create a list of possible participants for this study. The total number of teachers that had to be replaced for the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years were collected. The Human Resources department provided the following information to the researcher: the name of each teacher that resigned, the name of the teacher that was hired to replace each teacher that resigned, the number of new positions added at each school, and the names of the new teachers added at each school. During the selected three-year period, 125 teachers were hired into the school district. Following the raw data collection, the researcher contacted each school and obtained the names of mentor teachers that were identified to support each new hire.

## Data Reporting

The sample size selection was not random; instead, it was a targeted group of mentors and mentees for the three-year period. Consent was implied if the participants completed the survey. The total sample (*n*) size that was identified for the survey was 71 teachers. Twenty-three of the 71 teachers were mentor teachers. Forty-eight of the 71 teachers were mentee teachers.

Both surveys were sent electronically. The researcher sent an email (see Appendix E) that contained a link to the survey to each participant on January 2, 2018. By the end of the day on Friday, January 5, 2018, there was a total participation rate of 46.5% (33 of 71). The researcher sent a follow-up email (see Appendix G) to participants on Monday, January 8, 2018. The researcher paused collection of the surveys on Friday, January 12, 2018. In the end, there was a total response rate of 61% (43 of 71). Of the 43 surveys that were completed, 19 were submitted by teacher mentors and 24 were submitted by teacher mentees. All survey responses were utilized for this study. Participants averaged approximately 14 minutes to complete the survey.

To ensure alignment between teacher mentor and teacher mentee perceptions of the mentor program, 10 identical questions were used in both surveys. The 10 questions that were the same are as follows:

1. How many years of experience do you have as a full-time teacher?
2. Typically, how often did you and your mentor meet during the school years?
3. How often do you think you and your mentee/mentor should have met specifically to discuss instruction to positively impact teacher performance and teacher retention?
4. Typically, how long was an average meeting with your mentee/mentor?
5. How often do you think you should observe (and meet to discuss the observation with) your mentee/mentor to impact the teacher's decision to remain in their current teaching assignment next year?
6. When did you and your mentee/mentor meet during the school day?
7. Which components below (select all that apply) do you feel are present in your current school's mentor program?
8. In order of importance, rank your top three choices from the options below that you think should be present in a mentor program in order to improve the retention rates of teachers each year.

9. Please rate your agreement with the following statement: *I feel the current mentor program in my school is designed to motivate new teachers to return to our school.*
10. To what degree do you think the mentor program in your school helps new teachers in the following areas: *stay in the field of education, grow as a professional, learn to work collaboratively with other professionals, and develop effective parent communication?* Rating response options for this question were as follows: *none, hardly any, some, and a great deal.*

Table 6 depicts questions from both surveys that were present on both surveys and which research question they aligned with.

Table 6  
*Alignment of Survey Questions by Research Question*

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Mentor Survey Question</b>	<b>Mentee Survey Question</b>
RQ 1. What specific practices or interventions are mentors in the selected schools utilizing to retain teachers?	5, 7, 8, 10, 11	3, 5, 7, 8, 10
RQ 2. What specific practices or interventions do mentors and mentees in the selected schools feel could be added to or deleted from the existing program to improve the retention rates of teachers and lessen the attrition rate of recent years?	6, 9, 12, 14, 15, 17	4, 6, 9, 11, 12, 14
RQ 3. What challenges do mentors and mentees face related to the structure and participation in the mentorship program?	5, 7, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17	3, 5, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14

To differentiate between mentor and mentee perceptions, separate questions were asked of each participant group. The questions asked that were specific to teacher mentors are as follows:

1. How many years have you been teaching in this division?
2. How were you selected to serve as a mentor teacher?
3. How was it determined who your mentee would be?
4. How often did you observe (and meet to discuss the observation with) your mentee?
5. Please rate your agreement with the following statement: *Prior to becoming a mentor teacher, I was clear about my expectations for my role as a mentor teacher.*

6. Please rate your agreement with the following statement: *I feel I was adequately trained to be a mentor teacher prior to becoming a mentor teacher.*

The questions asked that were specific to teacher mentees are as follows:

1. Please describe your most recent degree.
2. My mentor seemed clear about his/her expectations for their role as a mentor teacher.
3. I feel my mentor was adequately trained to be a mentor teacher prior to becoming my mentor teacher.

The Teacher Mentor Survey (see Appendix N) consisted of 17 questions. The Teacher Mentee Survey (see Appendix O) consisted of 14 questions. The final question on both surveys provided participants an opportunity to list components or characteristics that they thought should be included in their school’s current mentor program.

Questions 1 through 4 of the Teacher Mentor Survey and questions 1 and 2 of the Teacher Mentee Survey did not align to the research questions. Questions 1 and 2 of the Teacher Mentor Survey addressed the teaching experience of the mentor. Questions 3 and 4 of the Teacher Mentor Survey addressed the selection process for each mentor. Questions 1 and 2 of the Teacher Mentee Survey addressed the experience and education of the mentee teacher.

Table 7 reveals the responses to question one of the Teacher Mentor Survey. The table shows that most of the teacher mentors had over 7 years of experience as full-time teachers.

Table 7

*Teacher Mentor Years of Experience*

<b>Years of Experience</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
0-3 years	0	0%
4-6 years	3	16%
7-9 years	4	21%
10+ years	12	63%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100%</b>

Specifically, 21% of the teacher mentors (4 teachers) had between 7 and 9 years of experiences, and 63% of the teacher mentors (12 teachers) had more than 10 years’ experience as full-time classroom teachers. 16% of the teacher mentors (3 teachers) had between 4 and 6 years of experience, and there were no teacher mentors with 0 to 3 years of full-time experience.

Table 8 illustrates the responses to question one of the Teacher Mentee Survey. The table displays the years of experience for mentee teachers.

Table 8

*Teacher Mentee Years of Experience*

<b>Years of Experience</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
0-3 years	6	25%
4-6 years	8	33%
7-9 years	4	17%
10+ years	6	25%
Total:	24	100%

Data from Table 8 show most of the teacher mentees (58% combining 0-3 years and 4-6 years) had zero to 6 years of experience as full-time teachers. Specifically, 25% of the teacher mentees (6 teachers) had zero to 3 years of experience and 33% (8 teachers) had between 4 and 6 years of experience. 17% of the teacher mentees (4 teachers) had 7-9 years of experience and 25% of the teacher mentees (6 teachers) had 10 or more years of experience.

Question 2 of the Teacher Mentor Survey was used to identify the years of experience of the teacher mentors in the selected school division. This finding is illustrated in Table 9.

Table 9

*Teacher Mentor Years of Experience within Selected Division*

<b>Years of Experience</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
0-3 years	3	16%
4-6 years	3	16%
7-9 years	3	16%
10+ years	10	52%
Total:	19	100%

Data from Table 9 reveal most of the teacher mentors have worked in the selected school division for 10 or more years. Specifically, 52% of the teacher mentors (10 teachers) have worked in the selected school division for 10 or more years. 16% of the teacher mentors (3 teachers) indicated they have worked in each of the other three categories, 0-3 years, 4-6 years, and 7-9 years.

Question 2 of the Teacher Mentee Survey was used to identify the most recent level of education of the teacher mentees. This is illustrated in Table 10.

Table 10

*Most Recent Degree of Teacher Mentees*

<b>Most Recent Degree</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Bachelor's	11	46%
Master's	11	46%
Educational Specialist	1	4%
Doctorate	1	4%
Total:	24	100%

Data from Table 10 reveal that most of the teacher mentees hold a bachelor's or master's degree. Specifically, 46% of the teacher mentees (11 teachers) hold a bachelor's degree and another 46% (11 teachers) hold a master's degree. Two teachers hold degrees beyond a master's degree. One teacher holds an educational specialist (Ed.S) degree and another holds a doctorate degree.

Question 3 examined the selection process for teacher mentors. Question 3 of the Teacher Mentor Survey is shown in Table 11.

Table 11

*Teacher Mentor Method of Selection*

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
I went through an interview process prior to selection	0	0%
I was asked and agreed to serve as a mentor	9	47%
I was informed I would serve as a mentor	10	53%
I asked if I could serve as a mentor	0	0%
Total:	19	100%

This question examined their current school's selection process for the mentor program. The data revealed that 53% of the teacher mentors (10 teachers) were informed that they would serve as a mentor and 47% of the teacher mentors (9 teachers) were asked and agreed to serve as a mentor. No teacher mentor reported having gone through an interview process prior to the selection.

Responses to Question 4 of the Teacher Mentor Survey is illustrated in Table 12. Question 4 of the Teacher Mentor Survey examined the process of determining who the mentee would be.

Table 12  
*Mentor/Mentee Method of Matching*

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
I completed a questionnaire to determine if I was a good fit for my mentee	0	0%
I have no idea, I was simply told	9	47%
My input was included in making the decision	3	16%
My mentee was assigned to me because our classrooms were close in proximity	7	37%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100%</b>

Question 4 examined the process for determining who each teacher’s mentee would be. The data revealed that nine teacher mentors (47%) had no idea about the selection process; they were told who their mentee would be. Seven teacher mentors (37%) reported that their mentee was assigned to them due to classroom proximity. Three teacher mentors (16%) reported that their input was included in the decision to select the teacher mentee.

**Data Analysis**

**Research Question 1: What specific practices or interventions are mentors in the selected schools utilizing to retain teachers?** Descriptive statistics, including cross tabulation and frequency of responses for survey questions 5, 7, 8, 10, and 11 of the Teacher Mentor Survey (see Table 13) were used to identify current practices or interventions mentors in the selected school division are currently using to retain teachers.

Table 13

*Teacher Mentor Responses to Answer Research Question 1*

<b>Question</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
5. Typically, how often did you and your mentee meet during the school year?		
○ Once a month, or less often	4	21%
○ Every two weeks	2	10%
○ Weekly	7	37%
○ More than once a week	6	32%
○ Total	19	100%
7. Typically, how long was an average meeting with your mentee?		
○ 30 minutes or less	16	84%
○ 1 hour	3	16%
○ 1 hour and 30 minutes	0	0%
○ 2 hours or more	0	0%
○ Total	19	100%
8. How often did you observe (and meet to discuss the observation with) your mentee?		
○ At least monthly (10 times or more per year)	1	5%
○ At least quarterly (4 times or more a year)	6	32%
○ At least each semester (2 times or more per year)	3	16%
○ I have never observed my mentee	9	47%
○ Total	19	100%
10. When did you and your mentee meet during the school day?		
○ During our common planning time	8	42%
○ Before the school day began	2	10%
○ After the school day ended	6	32%
○ Hardly ever because our schedules did not allow us to meet	3	16%
○ Total	19	100%

(continued)

Table 13 (cont.)

Question	Count	Frequency
11. Which components below do you feel are present in your current school's mentor program? Please select all options that apply.		
○ A selection/recruiting process to determine the most effective mentors	2	10%
○ A defined method to match mentors with mentees	1	4%
○ Effective and open communication between mentor/mentee	10	48%
○ Regular observations and meetings between mentor and mentee	3	14%
○ An ongoing evaluation of the mentee's progress and effectiveness	2	10%
○ Required documentation of meetings and reflections between mentor/mentee	2	10%
○ All of the above	1	4%
○ Total	19	100%

The data from question 5 revealed that majority of the teacher mentors met with their teacher mentees weekly or more frequently. Specifically, six teacher mentors (32%) met with their mentees more than once a week. Seven teacher mentors (37%) met with their mentees on a weekly basis. Question 5 also revealed that two teacher mentors (10%) met with their mentees every two weeks, while four teacher mentors (21%) met with their mentee once a month or less often.

Question 7 asked about the average meeting time between teacher mentors and teacher mentees. Data from question 7 revealed the average meeting time for mentors and mentees was 30 minutes or less. Specifically, 16 teacher mentors (84%) reported they met with their mentee for 30 minutes or less. Three teacher mentors (16%) reported they met with their mentee for an hour.

Question 8 asked how frequently teacher mentors observed teacher mentees. Data from question 8 revealed that 47% of the teacher mentors (9 teachers) never observed their mentees, while 16% of the teacher mentors (3 teachers) observed their teacher mentees at least each semester. Question 8 also revealed that 32% of the teacher mentors (6 teachers) observed their teacher mentees at least quarterly while 5% of the teacher mentors (1 teacher) observed his or her teacher mentee at least monthly.

Question 10 asked when the teacher mentor and teacher mentee met during the school day. Question 10 data revealed most of the teacher mentors met with their teacher mentee during their common planning period or after the school day ended. Two teacher mentors met with their teacher mentees before the school day began. Additionally, 16% of the teacher mentors (3 teachers) reported that they hardly ever met with their teacher mentees because their schedules did not allow them to meet.

In question 11, teacher mentors had to select components they felt were present in their current school’s mentor program from a comprehensive list. Question 11 data revealed that 48% (10 teachers) of the teacher mentors indicated that effective and open communication between mentor/mentee was present in their current school’s mentor program. Question 11 also revealed that 10% of the teacher mentors (2 teachers) reported that there was a selection/recruiting process to determine mentors, that their school required documentation of meetings and reflections between mentor/mentee, and that there were ongoing evaluations of the mentee’s progress and effectiveness. Only one teacher mentor said that the current school’s program had all the components listed in question 11.

Responses for survey questions 3, 5, 7, 8, and 10 of the Teacher Mentee Survey (see Table 14) were used to identify current practices or interventions currently used by mentors in the selected school division to retain teachers.

Table 14

*Teacher Mentee Responses to Answer Research Question 1*

<b>Question</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
3. Typically, how often did you and your mentor meet during the school year?		
○ Once a month, or less often	13	54%
○ Every two weeks	5	21%
○ Weekly	0	0%
○ More than once a week	6	25%
○ Total	24	100%

(continued)

Table 14 (cont.)

<b>Question</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
5. Typically, how long was an average meeting with your mentor?		
○ 30 minutes or less	21	88%
○ 1 hour	2	8%
○ 1 hour and 30 minutes	1	4%
○ 2 hours or more	0	0%
○ Total	24	100%
7. When did you and your mentor meet during the school day?		
○ During our common planning time	11	46%
○ Before the school day began	0	0%
○ After the school day ended	7	29%
○ Hardly ever because our scheduled did not allow us to meet	6	25%
○ Total	24	100%
8. Which components below do you feel are present in your current school's mentor program? Please select all options that apply.		
○ A selection/recruiting process to determine the most effective mentors	3	8%
○ A defined method to match mentors with mentees	3	8%
○ Effective and open communication between mentor/mentee	17	48%
○ Regular observations and meetings between mentor and mentee	6	17%
○ An ongoing evaluation of the mentee's progress and effectiveness	4	11%
○ Required documentation of meetings and reflections between mentor/mentee	3	8%
○ All of the above	0	0%
○ Total	24	100%
10. My mentor seemed clear about his/her expectations for their role as a mentor teacher.		
○ Strongly disagree	4	17%
○ Disagree	5	21%
○ Agree	12	50%
○ Strongly agree	3	12%
○ Total	24	99%

Question 3 inquired about how frequently the teacher mentee met with his or her teacher mentor. Data from question 3 revealed that the 54% of the teacher mentees (13 teachers) met with their teacher mentors once a month or less often. Question 3 also revealed that 25% of the teacher mentees (6 teachers) met with their teacher mentors more than once a week, while 21% (5 teachers) of the teacher mentees reported to have met with their teacher mentors every two weeks.

Question 5 inquired about the average meeting length between teacher mentees and their teacher mentors. Question 5 data revealed that 88% of the teacher mentees (21 teachers) met with their teacher mentors for an average of 30 minutes or less, while 8% of the teacher mentees (2 teachers) met with their teacher mentors for an hour. One teacher mentee reported to have met with her teacher mentor for an hour and 30 minutes. No teacher mentee reported to having met with a mentor for 2 hours or more.

Question 7 asked about when the teacher mentee and teacher mentor met during the school day. Responses to question 7 revealed that 46% of the teacher mentees (11 teachers) met with their teacher mentors during their common planning period. Question 7 also revealed that 29% of the teacher mentees (7 teachers) reported having met with their teacher mentors after the school day began. Six teacher mentees (25%) reported they hardly ever met because their schedules did not allow them to meet.

Question 8 asked the teacher mentee to select (from a comprehensive list) those components they believed to be present in their current school's mentor program. Data from question 8 revealed that 48% of the teacher mentees (17 teachers) said that effective and open communication between mentor/mentee was present in their current school's mentor program. This result, by percentage, was identical in the Teacher Mentor Survey responses. Question 8 also revealed that 8% of the teacher mentors (3 teachers) felt there was a selection/recruiting process to determine mentors, a defined method to match mentors with mentees, and that their school required documentation of meetings and reflections between mentor/mentee. Additionally, question 8 revealed that 17% of the teacher mentees (6 teachers) reported that there were regular observations and meetings between mentor and mentee, and 11% of the teacher mentees (4 teachers) reported there were ongoing evaluations of the mentee's progress and effectiveness.

Question 10 examined the teacher mentees’ perception of whether the teacher mentors had clear expectations of their roles as teacher mentors. Responses to question 10 revealed that most of the teacher mentees believed that their teacher mentors had clear expectations of their roles as mentors. Specifically, 50% of the teacher mentees (12 teachers) agreed with the statement posed in question 10, and 12% of the teacher mentees (3 teachers) strongly agreed with the statement. Conversely, a total of 38% of the teacher mentees (9 teachers) either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement in question 10.

**Research Question 2: What specific practices or interventions do mentors and mentees in the selected schools recommend to be added to or deleted from the existing program to improve the retention rates of teachers and lessen the attrition rate of recent years?** Descriptive statistics, including cross tabulation and frequency of responses for survey questions 6, 9, 14, and 15 of the Teacher Mentor Survey (see Table 15), answer research question 2.

Table 15  
*Teacher Mentor Responses to Answer Research Question 2*

<b>Question</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
6. How often do you think you and your mentee should have met specifically to discuss instruction to positively impact teacher performance and teacher retention?		
○ Once a month, or less often	0	0%
○ Every two weeks	1	6%
○ Weekly	9	47%
○ More than once a week	9	47%
○ Total	19	100%
9. How often do you think you should observe (and meet to discuss the observation with) your mentee to impact the teacher’s decision to remain in their current teacher assignment next year?		
○ At least monthly (10 times or more per year)	13	68%
○ At least quarterly (4 times or more per year)	4	21%
○ At least each semester (2 times or more per year)	0	0%
○ I do not think I should observe my mentee	2	11%
○ Total	19	100%

(continued)

Table 15 (cont.)

Question	Count	Frequency
14. Please rate your agreement with the following statement: I feel I was adequately trained to be a mentor teacher prior to becoming a mentor teacher.		
○ Strongly disagree	6	32%
○ Disagree	8	42%
○ Agree	5	26%
○ Strongly agree	0	0%
○ Total	19	100%
15. Please rate your agreement with the following statement: I feel the current mentor program in my school is designed to motivate new teachers to return to our school.		
○ Strongly disagree	3	16%
○ Disagree	8	42%
○ Agree	8	42%
○ Strongly agree	0	0%
○ Total	19	100%

Question 6 examined the teacher mentors' perceptions on how often they should have met with their teacher mentees to discuss instruction. Responses to question 6 revealed that 94% of the teacher mentors (18 teachers) believed that they should meet with the teacher mentee weekly or more than once a week. One teacher mentor believed that she should have met with her teacher mentee every two weeks.

Question 9 examined the teacher mentors' perceptions on how frequently they should have observed and met to discuss the observation with their teacher mentees. Responses to question 9 revealed that 68% of the teacher mentors (13 teachers) thought that they should have observed and met with their teacher mentees at least monthly, and 21% of the teacher mentors (4 teachers) thought they should have observed and met with their teacher mentees at least quarterly. Question 9 also revealed that 11% of the teacher mentors (2 teachers) did not think they should observe their mentees.

Question 14 examined the teacher mentors' perceptions of being adequately trained for their role as a mentor. Responses to question 14 revealed that 26% of the teacher mentors (5 teachers) felt that they were adequately trained to be a mentor teacher prior to becoming a mentor teacher. Conversely, a total of 74% of the teacher mentors (14 teachers) felt that they

were not adequately trained. Six teachers (32%) strongly disagreed and eight teachers (42%) disagreed with the statement.

Question 15 examined the teacher mentors’ perceptions of the program and its role in motivating teachers to return to their school. Responses to question 15 revealed that 42% of the teacher mentors (8 teachers) thought the current mentor program at their school was designated to motivate new teachers to return to their schools. However, a total of 58% of the teacher mentors (11 teachers) either strongly disagreed or disagreed with this statement.

Descriptive statistics, including cross tabulation and frequency of responses for survey questions 4, 6, 11 and 12 of the Teacher Mentee Survey (see Table 16) answer research question 2.

Table 16

*Teacher Mentee Responses to Answer Research Question 2*

<b>Question</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
4. How often do you think you and your mentor should have met specifically to discuss instruction to positively impact teacher performance and teacher retention?		
○ Once a month, or less often	3	13
○ Every two weeks	6	25
○ Weekly	13	54
○ More than once a week	2	8
○ Total	24	100%
6. How often do you think your mentor should observe (and meet to discuss the observation with you) to impact your decision to remain in their current teacher assignment next year?		
○ At least monthly (10 times or more per year)	10	42
○ At least quarterly (4 times or more per year)	8	34
○ At least each semester (2 times or more per year)	3	12
○ I do not think I should observe my mentee	3	12
○ Total	24	100%

(continued)

Table 16 (cont.)

<b>Question</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
11. I feel my mentor teacher was adequately trained to be a mentor prior to becoming my mentor teacher.		
○ Strongly disagree	5	21
○ Disagree	5	21
○ Agree	10	42
○ Strongly agree	4	16
○ Total	24	100%
12. I feel the current mentor program in my school is designated to motivate new teachers to return to our school.		
○ Strongly disagree	2	8
○ Disagree	11	46
○ Agree	9	38
○ Strongly agree	2	8
○ Total	24	100%

Question 4 examined the teacher mentees’ perceptions of how frequently they should have met with their teacher mentors to discuss instruction in order to positively impact their performance and retention in the school. Data from question 4 revealed that a total of 87% of teacher mentees (21 teachers) thought they should have met often. Specifically, 54% of the teacher mentees (13 teachers) reported that they should have met weekly. Six teachers (25%) reported that they should have met every two weeks. Two teachers (8%) reported that they should have met more than once a week. In contrast, 13% (3 teachers) reported that they should have met once a month or less.

Question 6 examined the teacher mentees’ perceptions regarding how frequently their teacher mentors should have observed and met with them to discuss the observation and to impact their decisions to remain in their current teaching assignments the next year. Data from question 6 revealed that 42% of the teacher mentees (10 teachers) thought their teacher mentors should have observed them at least monthly. Eight teachers (34%) reported that they should have been observed at least quarterly. Three teachers (12%) reported that their teacher mentors should have observed them at least each semester. Three teachers (12%) reported that they did not think their teacher mentor should have observed them.

Question 11 examined the teacher mentees’ perceptions of whether their teacher mentors were adequately trained to be teacher mentors prior to becoming a mentor. Data from question 11 revealed a total of 58% of the teacher mentees (14 teachers) agreed that their teacher mentor was adequately trained to be a mentor. However, a total of 42% (10 teachers) reported that they did not feel that their assigned teacher mentor was adequately trained prior to becoming their mentor.

Question 12 examined the teacher mentees’ perception of the program and its role in motivating teachers to return to their school. Responses to question 12 revealed that 46% of the teacher mentors (11 teachers) felt the current mentor program at their school was designed to motivate new teachers to return to their schools. Conversely, a total of 54% of the teacher mentors (13 teachers) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Responses to survey question 12 of the Teacher Mentor Survey (see Table 17) were tabulated using rank order statistics to describe teacher mentors’ top three choices of components of an effective mentor program.

Table 17

*Mentor Rank Order of Components of Effective Mentor Program*

<b>Component</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Choice</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Choice</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Choice</b>
A selection/recruiting process to determine the most effective mentors	X (80%)		
A defined method to match mentors and mentees		X (75%)	
Effective and open communication between mentor and mentee			
Regular observations and meetings between mentor and mentee			
An ongoing evaluation of the mentee’s progress and effectiveness			
Required documentation of meetings and reflections between mentor/mentee			
Mentors/Mentees should be from the same grade/subject			

(continued)

Table 17 (cont.)

<b>Component</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Choice</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Choice</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Choice</b>
Mentors/Mentees should have a common planning time each day			X (67%)
Regularly scheduled meetings between mentor/mentee to collaborate and/or discuss instruction			

Table 17 illustrates the responses to question 12 of the Teacher Mentor Survey. For questions 12, teachers were asked to rank their top three choices, in order, of what they believe are the components of an effective mentor program. The component chosen most often as the number one choice (80%) was this: *a selection/recruiting process to determine the most effective mentors*. The second most common choice (75%) was *a defined method to match mentors and mentees*. Lastly, the third most common choice (67%) was *mentors/mentees should have a common planning time each day*.

Responses to survey question 9 of the Teacher Mentee Survey (see Table 18) were tabulated using rank order statistics to describe teacher mentee’s top three choices of components of an effective mentor program.

Table 18

*Mentee Rank Order of Components of Effective Mentor Program*

<b>Component</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Choice</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Choice</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Choice</b>
A selection/recruiting process to determine the most effective mentors	X (73%)		
A defined method to match mentors and mentees			
Effective and open communication between mentor and mentee			X (43%)
Regular observations and meetings between mentor and mentee			
An ongoing evaluation of the mentee’s progress and effectiveness			
Required documentation of meetings and reflections between mentor/mentee		X (50%)	

(continued)

Table 18 (cont.)

<b>Component</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Choice</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Choice</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Choice</b>
Mentors/Mentee should be from the same grade/subject			
Mentors/Mentee should have a common planning time each day			
Regularly scheduled meetings between mentor/mentee to collaborate and/or discuss instruction			

Table 18 illustrates the responses to question 9 of the Teacher Mentee Survey. Teachers were asked to rank their top three choices, in order, of what they believe are the components of an effective mentor program. The component chosen most often as the number one choice (73%) was this: *a selection/recruiting process to determine the most effective mentors*. The second most common choice (50%) was *required documentation of meetings and reflections between mentor/mentee*. Lastly, the third most common choice (43%) was *effective and open communication between mentor and mentee*.

Table 19 illustrates the combined responses to question 17 of the Teacher Mentor Survey and question 14 of the Teacher Mentee Survey. Both mentor and mentee teachers were asked to list components or characteristics that should be present in their school's current mentor program to enhance the mentor program with respect to improving the chances of mentees returning to their current assignment next year. Table 19 shows the collective responses of teacher mentors and teacher mentees in order of response frequency. According to the components listed by teachers, the most important choices are as follows: common planning periods, a defined selection and matching process, ongoing professional development, and frequent collegial observations.

Table 19

*Mentor/Mentee Perceptions of Components of Effective Mentor Program*

<b>Component</b>	<b>Teacher Mentors</b>	<b>Teacher Mentees</b>
Common planning periods	X	X
A defined selection and matching process	X	X
Professional development	X	X
Frequent collegial observations	X	X
Clear guidelines and expectations of roles	X	X
Structured meetings (documentation)	X	X
Scheduled meetings	X	X
Incentives for mentors	X	

**Research Question 3: What challenges do mentors and mentees face related to the structure and participation in the mentorship program?** To answer research question 3, the survey questions were aligned to mentorship best practices. Responses that identified challenges were those that indicated lack of agreement with best practices. Descriptive statistics, including cross tabulation and frequency of responses for survey questions 5, 7, 10, 13, 14, and 15 of the Teacher Mentor Survey (see Table 20) were used to identify challenges mentors face related to the structure and participation of the mentorship program.

Table 20

*Teacher Mentor Responses to Answer Research Question 3*

<b>Question</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
5. Typically, how often did you and your mentee meet during the school year?		
○ Once a month, or less often	4	21%
○ Every two weeks	2	10%
○ Weekly	7	37%
○ More than once a week	6	32%
○ Total	19	100%

(continued)

Table 20 (cont.)

Question	Count	Frequency
7. Typically, how long was an average meeting with your mentee?		
○ 30 minutes or less	16	84%
○ 1 hour	3	16%
○ 1 hour and 30 minutes	0	0%
○ 2 hours or more	0	0%
○ Total	19	100%
10. When did you and your mentee meet during the school day?		
○ During our common planning time	8	42%
○ Before the school day began	2	10%
○ After the school day ended	6	32%
○ Hardly ever because our schedules did not allow for us to meet	3	16%
○ Total	19	100%
13. Please rate your agreement with the following statement: Prior to becoming a mentor teacher, I was clear about my expectations for my role as a mentor teacher.		
○ Strongly disagree	3	16%
○ Disagree	9	47%
○ Agree	6	32%
○ Strongly agree	1	5%
○ Total	19	100%
14. Please rate your agreement with the following statement: I feel I was adequately trained to be a mentor teacher prior to becoming a mentor teacher.		
○ Strongly disagree	6	32%
○ Disagree	8	42%
○ Agree	5	26%
○ Strongly agree	0	0%
○ Total	19	100%

(continued)

Table 20 (cont.)

<b>Question</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
15. Please rate your agreement with the following statement: I feel the current mentor program in my school is designed to motivate new teachers to return to our school.		
○ Strongly disagree	3	16%
○ Disagree	8	42%
○ Agree	8	42%
○ Strongly agree	0	0%
○ Total	19	100%

Question 5 inquired about how frequently the teacher mentors met with their teacher mentees. Data from question 5 revealed most of the teacher mentors met with their teacher mentees weekly or more frequently. Specifically, 37% of the teacher mentors (7 teachers) met with their mentees on a weekly basis. Six teacher mentors (32%) met with their mentees more than once a week. Question 5 also revealed that 10% of the teacher mentors (2 teachers) met with their mentees every two weeks while 21% of the teacher mentors (4 teachers) met with their mentee once a month or less often.

Question 7 asked about the average meeting time between teacher mentors and teacher mentees. Data from question 7 revealed that in most cases, meeting time for mentors and mentees was 30 minutes or less. Specifically, 84% of the teacher mentors (16 teachers) reported that they met with their mentees for 30 minutes or less while 16% of the teacher mentors (3 teachers) reported to have met with their mentees for an hour.

Question 10 asked when did the teacher mentor and teacher mentee meet during the school day. Question 10 data revealed that 42% of the teacher mentors (8 teachers) met with their teacher mentees during their common planning period, while 32% of them (6 teachers) met their mentees after the school day ended. Two teacher mentors met with their teacher mentees before the school day began, while 16% of the teacher mentors (3 teachers) reported that they hardly ever met with their teacher mentees because their schedules did not allow them to meet.

Question 13 examined the teacher mentors' perceptions on having clear expectations for their roles as teacher mentors. Data from question 13 revealed that 38% of the teacher mentors (7 teachers) responded that they were clear about the expectations for their roles as a mentor teacher, while 63% (12 teachers) responded that they were not clear on the expectations of their roles.

Question 14 examined the teacher mentors’ perceptions of being adequately trained for their roles as mentors. Question 14 data revealed that 74% of the teacher mentors (14 teachers) felt that they were not adequately trained, while 26% of the teacher mentors (5 teachers) felt that they were adequately trained to be mentor teachers prior to becoming mentor teachers.

Question 15 examined the teacher mentors’ perceptions of the program and its role in motivating teachers to return to their schools. Data from question 15 revealed that 42% of the teacher mentors (8 teachers) felt the current mentor program at their schools was designed to motivate new teachers to return to their schools, while 58% of the teacher mentors (11 teachers) felt the program was not designed to motivate new teachers to return to their current school.

Descriptive statistics, including cross tabulation and frequency of responses for survey questions 3, 5, 7, 8, and 10 of the Teacher Mentee Survey (see Table 21) were used to identify challenges mentees face related to the structure and participation of the mentorship program.

Table 21

*Teacher Mentee Responses to Answer Research Question 3*

<b>Question</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
3. Typically, how often did you and your mentor meet during the school year?		
○ Once a month, or less often	13	54%
○ Every two weeks	5	21%
○ Weekly	0	0%
○ More than once a week	6	25%
○ Total	24	100%
5. Typically, how long was an average meeting with your mentor?		
○ 30 minutes or less	21	88%
○ 1 hour	2	8%
○ 1 hour and 30 minutes	1	4%
○ 2 hours or more	0	0%
○ Total	24	100%

(continued)

Table 21 (cont.)

Question	Count	Frequency
7. When did you and your mentor meet during the school day?		
○ During our common planning time	11	46%
○ Before the school day began	0	0%
○ After the school day ended	7	29%
○ Hardly ever because our schedules did not allow for us to meet	6	25%
○ Total	24	100%
10. My mentor seemed clear about his/her expectations for their role as a mentor teacher.		
○ Strongly disagree	4	17%
○ Disagree	5	21%
○ Agree	12	50%
○ Strongly agree	3	12%
○ Total	24	100%
11. I feel my mentor was adequately trained to be a mentor teacher prior to becoming my mentor teacher.		
○ Strongly disagree	5	21%
○ Disagree	5	21%
○ Agree	10	42%
○ Strongly agree	4	16%
○ Total	24	100%
12. I feel the current mentor program in my school is designated to motivate new teachers to return to our school.		
○ Strongly disagree	2	8%
○ Disagree	11	46%
○ Agree	9	38%
○ Strongly agree	2	8%
○ Total	21	100%

Question 3 inquired about how frequently the teacher mentees met with their teacher mentors. As mentioned previously, data from question 3 revealed that the 54% of the teacher mentees (13 teachers) met with their teacher mentors once a month or less often. Five teacher mentees (21%) met with their teacher mentors more than once a week. Five teacher mentees (21%) reported having met with their teacher mentors every two weeks.

Question 5 inquired about the average meeting time between teacher mentees and their teacher mentors. Question 5 data revealed that 88% of the teacher mentees (21 teachers) met with their teacher mentors for an average of 30 minutes or less, while 8% of the teacher mentees (2 teachers) met with their teacher mentors for an hour. A teacher mentee reported to have met with her teacher mentor for an hour and 30 minutes. No teacher mentee reported meeting with her teacher mentor for two hours or more.

Question 7 asked when the teacher mentee and teacher mentor met during the school day. Question 7 data revealed that 46% of the teacher mentees (11 teachers) met with their teacher mentors during their common planning period. Question 7 also revealed that 29% of the teacher mentees (7 teachers) reported having met with their teacher mentors after the school day began. Six teachers (25%) reported they hardly ever met because their schedules did not allow them to meet.

Question 10 examined the teacher mentees' perceptions of whether the teacher mentors had clear expectations of their roles as a teacher mentors. Data from question 10 revealed that 62% of the teacher mentees (15 teachers) thought their teacher mentors had clear expectations for their roles as mentor teachers, while 38% (9 teachers), thought their mentors did not have clear expectations of their roles as a mentor.

Table 22 illustrates the teacher mentors' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of their current schools' mentor program. Most of the teacher mentors reported that the current mentor programs helped new teachers to some degree regarding staying in the field of education, growing as a professional, learning to work collaboratively with other professionals, and developing effective parent communication.

Table 22

*Mentor Responses Evaluating School's Current Mentor Program*

<b>Question</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Hardly Any</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>A Great Deal</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>
Stay in the field of education	2	11%	5	28%	11	61%	0	0%	18
Grow as a professional	1	6%	3	17%	10	56%	4	22%	18
Learn to work collaboratively with other professionals	1	6%	2	11%	12	67%	3	17%	18
Develop effective parent communication	1	6%	5	28%	11	61%	1	6%	18

Data in Table 22 revealed that 61% of the teacher mentors (11 teachers) reported that their schools' current mentor programs helped new teachers to stay in the field of education to some degree, while 28% of the teacher mentors (5 teachers) reported that their current mentor programs helped new teachers to stay in the education field hardly any. Two teachers (12%) did not think the current programs helped new teachers at all. In regard to growing as a professional because of the current mentor program, 56% of the teacher mentors (10 teachers) reported that their current mentor program helped new teachers grow some as professionals while 22% (4 teachers) believed their current mentor program helped new teachers grow as a professional a great deal. Three teachers (17%) reported that the program helped teachers grow as professionals hardly any. Regarding learning to working collaboratively with other professionals, 67% of the teacher mentors (12 teachers) reported that their current program helped some, while 17% (3 teachers) believed that the program helped a great deal. Finally, in terms of developing effective parent communication, data revealed that 61% of the teacher mentors (11 teachers) believed their current mentor programs helped some, while 28% (5 teachers) believed they helped hardly any. One teacher mentor reported that the program did not help at all, and one other teacher reported that the current mentor program helped develop effective parent communication a great

deal. Table 23 illustrates the teacher mentees' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of their current schools' mentor program. Like the teacher mentors' perceptions, teacher mentees believed their schools' current mentor program helped new teachers to some degree in regard to staying in the field of education, growing as a professional, learning to work collaboratively with other professionals, and developing effective parent communication.

Table 23

*Mentee Responses Evaluating School's Current Mentor Program*

<b>Question</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Hardly Any</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>A Great Deal</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>
Stay in the field of education	2	10%	3	14%	13	62%	3	14%	21
Grow as a professional	2	10%	3	14%	10	48%	6	29%	21
Learn to work collaboratively with other professionals	2	10%	3	14%	11	52%	5	24%	21
Develop effective parent communication	3	14%	5	24%	12	57%	1	5%	21

Data in Table 23 revealed that 62% of the teacher mentees (13 teachers) reported that their schools' current mentor programs helped new teachers to stay in the field of education to some degree. Additionally, 14% of the teacher mentees (3 teachers) reported that their current mentor programs helped new teachers hardly any, while 14% of teacher mentees (3 teachers) reported that their current programs help a great deal. Conversely, 10% of the teacher mentees (2 teachers) do not think the current programs helped new teachers at all. In terms of growing as a professional because of the current mentor program, 48% of the teacher mentees (10 teachers) reported that their current mentor programs helped new teachers grow some as professionals, and 29% of them (6 teachers) believed their current mentor programs helped new teachers a great deal. Three teacher mentees reported that the programs helped teachers grow as professionals hardly any. In regard to learning to work collaboratively with other professionals, 52% of the

teacher mentors (11 teachers) reported that their current programs help new teachers some; 24% (5 teachers) believed programs helped a great deal, and 14% of the teacher mentees (3 teachers) believed programs helped new teachers hardly any. Lastly, in regard to developing effective parent communication, the data revealed that 57% of the teacher mentees (12 teachers) believed their current mentor programs helped some, while 28% (5 teachers) believed they helped hardly any. Three teacher mentees believed that their current mentor programs did not help at all in terms of developing effective parent communication.

### **Summary**

This chapter reported the data collected through the Teacher Mentor Survey and the Teacher Mentee Survey, both of which were aligned with the three research questions. There was a 61% response rate (43 of 71) utilized for this study. The data collected and described within this chapter summarize the current practices or incentives mentors utilize in the selected school division to retain teachers. Data yield the perceptions of teacher mentors and teacher mentees on ways to improve their current school's mentor program. Additionally, the data list challenges the mentors and mentees face related to the structure and participation of the mentor program. Mentors and mentees reported that common planning periods, a defined selection and matching process, ongoing professional development, and frequent collegial observations are the most important components of an effective teacher mentor program. Clear guidelines and expectations for teacher mentors and mentees, structured meetings with appropriate documentation, scheduled meetings, and incentives for mentors were also listed as components of an effective teacher mentor program. The data findings aligned to each of the research questions, the implications of this study, and recommendations for future studies are discussed in chapter five.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

#### **Introduction**

In recent years, teachers in the United States, in the early stages of their career, have exited the profession at the rate of approximately 50% (Heineke et al., 2014; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). A review of literature that addressed this problem yielded several reasons this exit occurs. Those reasons were as follows: (a) job satisfaction; (b) student demographics; (c) student discipline; (d) administrative support; (e) teacher autonomy; and (f) teacher mentor programs. Of the six factors, the researcher chose *teacher mentor programs* as the focus for this study. As a result, the purpose of this quantitative study was to identify mentor and mentee teachers' perceptions about the current mentoring program and their recommendations for future revisions that will increase teacher retention in one urban school district in Northern Virginia.

The following research questions guided, and were answered by, data collected and analyzed in this study:

1. What specific practices or interventions are mentors in the selected schools utilizing to retain teachers?
2. What specific practices or interventions do mentors and mentees in the selected schools recommend to be added to or deleted from the existing program to improve the retention rates of teachers and lessen the attrition rate of recent years?
3. What challenges do mentors and mentees face related to the structure and participation in the mentorship program?

#### **Summary of Findings**

This chapter will detail findings that were derived from descriptive statistics obtained from two surveys distributed in the selected division. The surveys were completed by teacher mentors and teacher mentees. Data analysis from the returned surveys yielded eight findings that are discussed in this chapter. Based on each of the eight findings, implications for practice are also discussed in the chapter.

## Discussion of Findings

**Finding one. Teacher mentors and teacher mentees met predominately during their common planning periods or during after-school hours.** Teacher mentors and teacher mentees reported they either met during a common planning period or during after-school hours. 42% of teacher mentors and 46% of teacher mentees met during their planning periods. 32% of teacher mentors and 29% of teacher mentees met after school. However, 25% of teacher mentees reported having never met with their teacher mentors because their schedules did not provide a common planning period. This finding is consistent with a study conducted by Smith and Ingersoll (2004) stating that a daily common planning time for the teacher mentors and their teacher mentees was an important component of an effective mentor program.

**Finding two. Teacher mentors perceived they were not adequately trained to serve as mentors prior to serving in that role.** This study found that 74% of the mentors either disagreed or strongly disagreed they were adequately trained before becoming a teacher mentor. Only 26% of them reported they felt they were adequately trained. Because of the perceived lack of training, 63% of the teacher mentors were not clear regarding expectations of a teacher mentor prior to becoming a mentor. An effective early career support program provided to novice teachers by adequately trained experienced teachers has a direct association with a teacher's intention to leave a location or the profession (DeAngelis, Wall, & Che, 2013).

**Finding three. Teacher mentees perceived their teacher mentors were adequately trained to serve as mentors prior to serving in that role.** This study found that 58% of the teacher mentees either agreed or strongly agreed their teacher mentors were adequately trained. Conversely, 42% of the mentees felt their mentors were not adequately trained. Additionally, 62% of the teacher mentees either agreed or strongly agreed their teacher mentors seemed clear on expectations of a teacher mentor prior to being assigned as their teacher mentor. An effective early career support program provided to novice teachers by adequately trained experienced teachers has a direct association with a teacher's intention to leave a location or the profession (DeAngelis et al., 2013).

**Finding four. Teacher mentors who participated in this study indicated they became a mentor by either being told they were selected, or by being asked and then agreeing to serve as a teacher mentor.** This study found that most teacher mentors (53%) were told that they would serve as a teacher mentor. The remaining 47% of teacher mentors that participated in

this study indicated they were asked, and they agreed to be teacher mentors. Therefore, 0% of teacher mentors had input into the selection process prior to being selected. This study also found that mentors were not included in the teacher mentee assignment process. In fact, 47% of teacher mentors were assigned their mentee with no input or information regarding the mentee. Additionally, 37% of teacher mentors reported their mentee was assigned to them because of classroom proximity. None of the teachers reported having completed a survey or questionnaire indicating their interest in becoming a mentor, their mentee preference, or metrics that would measure mentor-mentee interests and compatibility. In a guide for designing effective mentoring programs, McCann and Johannessen (2010) reported that recruiting and selecting mentors is essential.

**Finding five. Both teacher mentors and teacher mentees reported they met at least weekly throughout the school year for minimal amounts of time.** This study found that 69% of teacher mentors reported having met with their teacher mentees at least weekly. This finding was supported by teacher mentee responses as well. Most teacher mentees (75%) indicated they met with their teacher mentors at least weekly. However, data obtained from this study specified the duration of the meetings were 30 minutes or less. Most teacher mentors (84%) and teacher mentees (88%) reported that meetings were 30 minutes or less each time. “Teachers who received more hours of mentoring had higher student achievement score gains, in both math and reading, than those who had fewer hours of mentoring” (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011, p. 220). According to Schaefer (2013), increased student achievement matters because teachers with low-performing students are more likely to leave.

**Finding six. Approximately half of the teacher mentors that participated in this study reported they have never observed their teacher mentees.** This study found that 46% of teacher mentors reported they had never observed their teacher mentees. Both, teacher mentors (76%) and teacher mentees (89%), agreed that observations, followed by a post-observation conference, should occur at least quarterly during the school year. This finding is in contrast to research provided by Henry et al., (2011), which claimed there should be a comprehensive mentoring program available to all novice teachers that should “include classroom observations of the novice teachers by those with experience, followed by feedback and coaching on ways to improve instruction” (Henry et al., 2011, p. 278).

**Finding seven. Teacher mentors and teacher mentees indicate their current mentor program is ineffective and does not motivate new teachers in the division to remain in their current assignments.** This study found that teacher mentors and teacher mentees perceive that effective communication is present in the current mentor program of the selected division for this study. However, when asked if they thought their current program helped new teachers stay in the field of education, grow as a professional, learn to work collaboratively, and develop effective parent communication, teacher mentors and teacher mentees reported that the current program, at best, helps to some degree in every category presented. When they responded to the statement that indicated they believed their current mentor program motivated new teachers in the division to remain in their current position, 58% of teacher mentors and 54% of teacher mentees disagreed or strongly disagreed. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) reported, “higher quality or more comprehensive or intensive induction programs appear to have a greater impact on teacher retention rates than lower quality programs (p. 340).

**Finding eight. Teacher mentors and teacher mentees identify a selection/recruiting process as the most important component of an effective mentoring program.** Based on studies by Ingersoll and Strong (2011), McCann and Johannessen (2010), DeAngelis, et al. (2013), and Henry, et al. (2011), teacher mentors and teacher mentees were provided a list of nine components of an effective mentoring program and were asked to rank them in order of importance. This study revealed that teacher mentors and teacher mentees agreed that *a selection/recruiting process to determine the most effective mentors is the most important component to ensure an effective mentor program*. Most teacher mentors (80%) ranked this component as the most important component of an effective mentoring program. Additionally, 73% of teacher mentees ranked this component as the most important component of an effective mentoring program. According to Ingersoll and Strong (2011), and McCann and Johannessen (2010), a selection/recruiting process for selecting teacher mentors is the most critical component of an effective mentoring program.

### **Implications for Practice**

The following suggested implications for practice are based on the findings of this research study. These implications should inform the work of schools and school divisions in creating an effective mentoring program that results in increased teacher retention. These

implications should also be considered when evaluating a school or school division's current teacher-mentoring program.

**Implication one. Schools should make a concerted effort to create a master schedule providing time for teacher mentors and teacher mentees to meet on a regular basis during the working hours of the school day.** Ideally, this would happen during a daily common planning period for both teachers. Having a planned time to meet regularly, knowing they do not have to meet before or after school hours, would make it possible for the meetings to occur on a regular basis. As indicated in this study, mentor/mentee meetings that did occur, did so during a common planning period. One quarter (25%) of teacher mentees reported they never met with their teacher mentor. This implication is based on finding one.

**Implication two. Schools or school divisions should provide teacher mentors with adequate training prior to becoming teacher mentors.** Teacher mentor training should provide clear expectations and responsibilities to teacher mentors prior to their becoming a mentor. Teacher mentors should be equipped with skills and strategies on how to effectively serve as mentor. They should know how to conduct a collegial observation, hold a post-observation conference, provide constructive feedback, and serve as a support system/coach to their mentees. To place a portion of the responsibility to increase the retention rates of new teachers in a division on teacher mentors, the division should provide appropriate training prior to the school-year. This implication is based on finding two.

**Implication three. Schools and school divisions should have or create a comprehensive mentor selection process and a mentee assignment process.** Schools and school divisions should make a concerted effort to create a comprehensive mentor selection process in which prospective teacher mentors would complete an interest questionnaire or an application. School leaders could utilize a rubric with nonnegotiable indicators when selecting mentors and could hold interviews and have forthright conversations with prospective teacher mentors regarding what it entails to be a teacher mentor and the expectations of the role. Furthermore, schools and school divisions should include teacher mentors in the mentee assignment process. Numerous factors should be considered when assigning mentees. Some of the factors include same grade level/subject, classroom proximity, and mentor-mentee interests and compatibility (possibly measured by a personality assessment). This implication is based on finding four.

**Implication four. Schools and school division leaders should create and distribute a teacher mentor/mentee meeting schedule that provides the following information: day/time of meeting, meeting norms, discussion topics, and follow-up expectations.** This practice would ensure that mentors and mentees have consistent and meaningful meetings. By providing discussion topics and requiring a follow-up summary, essential topics would be addressed and intended discussions would take place. Building leaders could ensure teacher mentors and mentees are collaborating, sharing instructional practices, and having discussions regarding instruction. The pre-planned meetings should be meaningful and should align with the overall goals of improving teacher performance and motivating teachers to assist in retaining teachers in their current positions. This implication is based on finding five.

**Implication five. After providing adequate observation training to teacher mentors, schools and school divisions should create and provide an observation schedule to teacher mentors and mentees to ensure teacher mentors observe their mentee during the school year.** These opportunities would allow teacher mentors time to observe their mentee, provide constructive feedback, and to model effective instruction. Collegial observation is a major component of an effective mentor program. Structural and systematic barriers should be removed to allow teacher mentors to observe their mentee on a regular basis and to hold post-observation conferences to discuss the observation and provide additional instructional support. This implication is based on finding six.

**Implication six. Schools and school divisions should create an evaluation survey to distribute to teacher mentors and mentees two times per year to determine if the mentor program is meeting the needs of new teachers and motivating them to stay in their current assignment.** Schools and school divisions should seek data to ensure that their mentor program creates ongoing opportunities for teachers to grow as professionals, to work collaboratively with their colleagues, and to develop effective parental communication. Many division-wide initiatives are often implemented and seldom evaluated. Consistent and continuous data obtained through a survey can inform division leaders if changes should occur. To retain teachers, schools need to gather information during the year and make changes if necessary. If divisions wait until a teacher resigns, the only data that can be collected is why it happened, with no opportunity to make changes earlier to ensure that it does not happen. This implication is based on finding seven.

## **Suggestions for Future Research**

Future research possibilities in the realm of teacher mentor programs could be extensive. One limitation of this study is certainly the sample size of participants. Teachers that participated in the study represent one small urban school division within the Commonwealth of Virginia. Future research studies could increase the sample size by increasing the number of divisions that participate in the study. Additionally, only teacher mentors and teacher mentees were selected for this study. A future research study could also increase the sample size of participants by surveying more individuals than teachers. The survey, or a similar survey, could be distributed to all building level administrators within a division, region, or state.

The school division selected for this study is a school division that has experienced a high rate of turnover for several years in a row. A goal of this study was to retrieve data about the current mentor program in the selected division and determine recommendations to improve it, assuming with the high attrition rates, the mentor program needs improvement. Future research could select a school division, or school divisions, that have experienced high retention rates in recent years. Results from a study using participants from a school division with high retention rates could possibly yield recommendations regarding what works in a teacher mentor program that could be implemented in other schools.

Future research could target the same school division selected for this study and repeat the study to determine if improvements had been made after implementing findings that were suggested in this study. Because three consecutive years of teacher mentors and mentees were the selected participant pool for the study, a repeat of the study should ensure a similar sample size of participants.

## **Reflections**

Although this process has been challenging, I feel it has been rewarding. I must admit, prior to beginning this program, even before the very first class, the thought of completing a dissertation seemed like an impossible task. However, with great leadership and encouragement, this task is quickly approaching the end.

I feel fortunate to have been able to conduct this study in a familiar school division, one in which I can apply the results and hopefully, see positive changes because of this study. Being directly involved in the Human Resources department and seeing first-hand the negative effects

of high attrition rates, it is my hope to be able to assist in improving this issue. Additionally, by conducting this study, I have been afforded the opportunity to identify facets of the division that I would not have discovered otherwise. Although much of the information I have learned is not positive, I will be able to address it and make improvements that can possibly lead to the goal of improved teacher retention.

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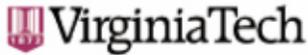
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APPENDIX A  
IRB TRAINING CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION



## APPENDIX B

### IRB APPLICATION APPROVAL LETTER



Office of Research Compliance  
Institutional Review Board  
North End Center, Suite 4120, Virginia Tech  
300 Turner Street NW  
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061  
540/231-4606 Fax: 540/231-0959  
email [irb@vt.edu](mailto:irb@vt.edu)  
website <http://www.irb.vt.edu>

#### MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** December 18, 2017  
**TO:** Carol S Cash, Jonathan Duane Russ  
**FROM:** Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires January 29, 2021)  
**PROTOCOL TITLE:** Perspectives Of Mentors And Mentees On How The Teacher Mentor Program Can Improve Teacher Retention Rates In A Small Urban School Division In Virginia  
**IRB NUMBER:** 17-1045

Effective December 18, 2017, the Virginia Tech Institution Review Board (IRB) approved the New Application request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at: <http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm>

(Please review responsibilities before the commencement of your research.)

#### PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved As: **Exempt, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 2,4**  
Protocol Approval Date: **December 18, 2017**  
Protocol Expiration Date: **N/A**  
Continuing Review Due Date\*: **N/A**

\*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

#### FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals/work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

*Invent the Future*

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*An equal opportunity, affirmative action institution*

**APPENDIX C**  
**COVER LETTER TO DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT**

Dear Superintendent of Schools:

Retaining teachers to lessen the rate of teacher attrition has become a focus of many school divisions throughout the United States. According to research, mentoring programs may be one avenue school divisions can modify to improve teacher retention. Therefore, we are conducting a study focusing on the current new teacher mentor program within your division. The purpose of this quantitative study, utilizing survey methodology, is to identify mentor teachers' perceptions about the practices and interventions used in the current mentoring program, and their recommended changes that would benefit teacher retention.

We are asking for your support to allow us to gather data from within your district from teachers who were newly hired, or served as new teacher mentors during the 2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16 school years. This data will be collected using a survey instrument that will be distributed, and returned, electronically. Analyzed results from this data might be helpful in providing educators suggestions and ideas to lead to a more effective new teacher mentor program which may result in improved teacher retention.

All information will be kept confidential. In addition, we would be more than willing to answer any questions that you may have about this study. We can be contacted by email at [inbruss@vt.edu](mailto:inbruss@vt.edu) or via phone at (540) 903-3997.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,



Jonathan D. Russ  
Graduate Student  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Dr. Carol S. Cash  
Clinical Associate Professor  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

**APPENDIX D**  
**SCHOOL DISTRICT CONSENT FORM**

Dear Superintendent of Schools:

Thank you for your support of Jonathan D. Russ in his effort to obtain the doctoral degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Your signature below serves as approval for Mr. Russ to collect and analyze the information for his study titled, "Perspectives of Mentors and Mentees on how the Teacher Mentor Program Can Improve Teacher Retention Rates in a Small Urban School Division in Virginia." The purpose of the study is to identify mentor teachers' perceptions about the practices and interventions used in the current mentoring program, and their recommended changes that would benefit teacher retention.

Again, your approval and support is greatly appreciated in this endeavor.

Sincerely,



Jonathan D. Russ  
Doctoral Candidate  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Dr. Carol S. Cash  
Clinical Associate Professor  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University



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Dr. David G. Melton  
Division Superintendent

**APPENDIX E**  
**PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT EMAIL**

[Emailed to each potential participant]

Greetings,

I am a doctoral student within the Education Leadership and Policy Studies Program at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. I am currently writing a research study/dissertation titled: “Perspectives of Mentors and Mentees on How the Teacher Mentor Program Can Improve Teacher Retention Rates in a Small Urban School Division in Virginia”.

The purpose of the study is to identify mentor and mentee teachers’ perceptions about the current mentoring program and their recommendations for future revisions that will increase teacher retention. The results from the study will be used in the researcher’s dissertation. Participation in the study is voluntary. Any decision not to participate has no bearing on your employment status with your current school division. Conclusions and recommendations from the study may be beneficial to school divisions throughout the state and perhaps, the nation.

I write to you in hopes you will agree to participate in this study which will entail completing and submitting a survey. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes of your time. The link to the survey is provided below:

[survey link here]

All participation is confidential and anonymous. Names or other identifying information will not be used in this dissertation. Please note, by completing and submitting the survey, you acknowledge that you are providing consent to participate in the study. Attached to this email is an *Implied Consent Agreement*. If you wish to not participate, simply do not complete the survey.

As a former teacher myself, I completely understand your time is valuable. I greatly appreciate your consideration regarding participation in this study.

Respectfully,

Jonathan D. Russ  
Doctoral Candidate  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

## APPENDIX F

### IMPLIED CONSENT AGREEMENT

**Research Title:** Perspectives of mentors and mentees on how the Teacher Mentor Program can improve teacher retention rates in a small urban school division in Virginia

**Investigator:** Jonathan D. Russ

**Contact email:** jnbruss@vt.edu

**Purpose of the research study:** The purpose of this quantitative study, utilizing survey methodology, is to identify mentor and mentee teachers' perceptions about the current mentoring program, its effectiveness, and their recommendations for future revisions that will increase teacher retention. The results of this study will be used for the development of a dissertation.

**Participation in the study:** As a participant in this study you will spend approximately 10 - 15 minutes completing and submitting a survey. Your responses to the survey will be submitted electronically through Qualtrics.

**Anticipated Risks:** There are no anticipated risks to persons who participate in the study.

**Time Period:** The survey will take approximately 10 - 15 minutes to complete and submit your responses.

**Benefits:** There are no direct benefits to participants in this study.

**Confidentiality:** All information disclosed on the survey instrument will be held in strict confidence. The data generated from the survey and that which will be included in the dissertation will contain no identifying information regarding the participants, the participants' school or school division. The survey results will only be accessible to the researcher. Information disclosed in the survey will be held for approximately one year following the defense of this dissertation. During this year, the results will only be accessible to the researcher.

**Compensation:** Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

**Participation:** Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary.

**Right to withdraw from the study:** As a participant in this study, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time of your choosing. Your survey responses will be destroyed and deleted at the time of withdrawal and the data will not appear in the final dissertation.

**Process for Withdrawal:** If you elect to withdraw from the study, please notify the researcher at any time at the phone number and/or address provided within this Agreement.

**Questions or Concerns:** Should you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, please contact the researcher, committee chair, or the VT IRB chair at the contact information below:

Researcher:

Jonathan D. Russ

11903 Rimswell Terrace

Midlothian, Virginia 23112

Phone: (540) 903-3997

Email: [jnbruss@vt.edu](mailto:jnbruss@vt.edu)

Committee Chair:

Dr. Carol S. Cash

Virginia Tech Richmond Center

2810 Parham Road, Suite 300

Richmond, VA 23294

Telephone: (804) 836-3611

Email: [ccash48@vt.edu](mailto:ccash48@vt.edu)

Virginia Tech IRB Chair

Dr. David M. Moore

Email: [moored@vt.edu](mailto:moored@vt.edu)

(540) 231-4991

**Participant Agreement:** By completing and submitting this survey, consent to participate in this study is implied.

**APPENDIX G**  
**PARTICIPANT FOLLOW-UP EMAIL**

[Emailed to each potential participant]

Greetings,

This email serves as a follow-up to the email sent to you on Tuesday, January 2, 2018. I realize this is a very hectic time of the year. I hope you will consider completing a short survey that will allow me to collect data for the study discussed in your previous email. Again, this will take approximately 10- 15 minutes of your time. Below is a link to the survey:

[survey link here]

Participation in the study is voluntary. Any decision not to participate has no bearing on your employment status with your current school division. Conclusions and recommendations from the study may be beneficial to school divisions throughout the state and perhaps, the nation.

As a reminder, all participation is confidential and anonymous. Please note, by completing and submitting the survey, you acknowledge that you are providing consent to participate in the study.

Sincerely,

Jonathan D. Russ  
Doctoral Candidate  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

**APPENDIX H**  
**TEACHER MENTOR SURVEY - VALIDATION**

Please select **one** option below each question that best answers the question.

1. How many years of experience do you have as a full-time teacher?
  - 0-3 years
  - 4-6 years
  - 7-9 years
  - 10+ years

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

2. How many years have you been teaching in this division?
  - 0-3 years
  - 4-6 years
  - 7-9 years
  - 10+ years

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

3. How you were selected to serve as a mentor teacher?
  - I went through an interview process prior to selection
  - I was asked and agreed to serve as a mentor
  - I was informed I would serve as a mentor
  - I asked if I could serve as a mentor

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

4. How was it determined who your mentee would be?
  - I completed a questionnaire to determine if I was a good fit for my mentee
  - I have no idea, I was simply told
  - My input was included in making the decision
  - My mentee was assigned to me because our classrooms were close in proximity

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

5. How often did you and your mentee meet specifically to discuss instruction?
  - At least monthly (10 times or more per year)
  - At least quarterly (4 times or more per year)
  - At least each semester (2 times or more per year)

- Never. All instructional meetings were done as a group or grade level

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

6. How often do you think you and your mentee should have met specifically to discuss instruction to positively impact teacher performance and teacher retention?
- At least monthly (10 times or more per year)
  - At least quarterly (4 times or more per year)
  - At least each semester (2 times or more per year)
  - Never. All instructional meetings are done as a group or grade level

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

7. How often did you observe (and meet to discuss the observation with) your mentee?
- At least monthly (10 times or more per year)
  - At least quarterly (4 times or more per year)
  - At least each semester (2 times or more per year)
  - I have never observed and then met to discuss the observation with my mentee

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

8. Typically, how long was an average meeting with your mentee?
- 30 minutes or less
  - 1 hour
  - 1 hour and 30 minutes
  - 2 hours or more

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

9. How often do you think you should observe (and meet to discuss the observation with) your mentee to impact the teacher's decision to remain in their current teaching assignment next year?
- At least monthly (10 times or more per year)
  - At least quarterly (4 times or more per year)
  - At least each semester (2 times or more per year)
  - I have never observed and then met to discuss the observation with my mentee

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

10. When did you and your mentee meet?

- During our common planning time
- Before school began
- After school ended
- Hardly ever because our schedules did not allow for us to meet

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

11. How was your input included in your mentee's evaluation?

- Administration regularly sought my input regarding my mentee
- Administration sometimes sought my input regarding my mentee
- Administration rarely sought my input regarding my mentee
- Administration has never sought my input regarding my mentee

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

12. Which components below do you feel are present in your current school's mentor program? Please select all options that apply.

- A selection/recruiting process to determine the most effective mentors
- A defined method to match mentors with mentees
- Effective and open communication between mentor/mentee
- Regular observations and meetings between mentor and mentee
- An ongoing evaluation of the mentee's progress and effectiveness
- Required documentation of meetings and reflections between mentor/mentee
- All of the above
- None of the above

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

13. Prior to becoming a mentor teacher, I was clear about my expectations for my role as a mentor teacher.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

14. I feel I was adequately trained to be a mentor teacher prior to becoming a mentor teacher.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

15. I feel the current mentor program in my school is designed to motivate new teachers to return to our school.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

16. To what degree do you think the mentor program in your school helps new teachers in the following areas:

Area	None	Hardly Any	Some	A Great Deal
Stay in the field of education				
Grow as a professional				
Learn to work collaboratively with other professionals				
Develop effective parent communication				

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

17. In order of importance, rank your top three choices from the options below that you think should be present in a mentor program in order to improve the retention rates of teachers each year.

- A selection/recruiting process to determine the most effective mentors
- A defined method to match mentors with mentees
- Effective and open communication between mentor/mentee
- Regular observations and meetings between mentor and mentee
- An ongoing evaluation of the mentee's progress and effectiveness
- Required documentation of meetings and reflections between mentor/mentee
- Mentors/Mentees should be from the same grade/subject
- Mentors/Mentees should have a common planning time each day
- Regularly scheduled meetings between mentor/mentee to collaborate and/or discuss instruction.

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

18. In the space provided below, please list components or characteristics that you think should be included in your school's current mentor program in order to enhance the mentor program with respect to improving the chances of your mentee returning to their current assignment next school year.

---

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

**APPENDIX I**  
**TEACHER MENTEE SURVEY - VALIDATION**

Please select **one** option below each question that best answers the question.

1. How many years of experience do you have as a full-time teacher?
  - 0-3 years
  - 4-6 years
  - 7-9 years
  - 10+ years

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

2. Please describe your most recent degree.
  - Bachelor's
  - Master's
  - Ed. S.
  - Doctorate

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

3. In what year did you begin teaching in this division?
  - 2013-14
  - 2014-15
  - 2015-16

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

4. How was your mentor selected to serve as a mentor teacher?
  - He/She went through an interview process prior to selection
  - He/She was asked and agreed to serve as a mentor
  - He/She was informed he/she would serve as a mentor
  - He/She asked if he/she could serve as a mentor

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

5. How was it determined who your mentor would be?
  - I completed a questionnaire to determine if I was a good fit for my mentor
  - I have no idea, I was simply told
  - My input was included in making the decision
  - My mentor was assigned to me because our classrooms were close in proximity

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

6. How often did you and your mentor meet specifically to discuss instruction?

- At least monthly (10 times or more per year)
- At least quarterly (4 times or more per year)
- At least each semester (2 times or more per year)
- Never. All instruction meetings are done as a group or grade level

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

7. Typically, how long was an average meeting with your mentor?

- 30 minutes or less
- 1 hour
- 1 hour and 30 minutes
- 2 hours or more

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

8. How often do you think you and your mentor should have met specifically to discuss instruction to positively impact teacher performance and teacher retention?

- At least monthly (10 times or more per year)
- At least quarterly (4 times or more per year)
- At least each semester (2 times or more per year)
- Never. All instructional meetings were done as a group or grade level

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

9. How often were you observed by (and met to discuss the observation with) your mentor?

- At least monthly (10 times or more per year)
- At least quarterly (4 times or more per year)
- At least each semester (2 times or more per year)
- I was never observed by my mentor

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

10. How often do you think you should have been observed by (and met to discuss the observation with) your mentor to impact your decision to remain in your current teaching assignment the next year?

- At least monthly (10 times or more per year)
- At least quarterly (4 times or more per year)
- At least each semester (2 times or more per year)
- Never, it would not have impacted my decision to remain in my current assignment

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

11. When did you and your mentor meet?

- During our common planning time
- Before school began
- After school ended
- Hardly ever because our schedules did not allow for us to meet

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

12. How was your input included in your mentor's evaluation?

- Administration regularly sought my input regarding my mentor
- Administration sometimes sought my input regarding my mentor
- Administration rarely sought my input regarding my mentor
- Administration never sought my input regarding my mentor

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

13. Which components below do you feel were present in your current school's mentor program? Please select all options that apply.

- A selection/recruiting process to determine the most effective mentors
- A defined method to match mentors with mentees
- Effective and open communication between mentor/mentee
- Regular observations and meetings between mentor and mentee
- An ongoing evaluation of the mentor's progress and effectiveness
- Required documentation of meetings and reflections between mentor/mentee
- All of the above
- None of the above

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

14. In order of importance, rank your top three choices from the options below that you think should be present in a mentor program in order to improve the retention rates of teachers each year.

- A selection/recruiting process to determine the most effective mentors
- A defined method to match mentors with mentees
- Effective and open communication between mentor/mentee
- Regular observations and meetings between mentor and mentee
- An ongoing evaluation of the mentee's progress and effectiveness
- Required documentation of meetings and reflections between mentor/mentee
- Mentors/Mentees should be from the same grade/subject
- Mentors/Mentees should have a common planning time each day
- Regularly scheduled meetings between mentor/mentee to collaborate and/or discuss instruction.

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

15. My mentor seemed clear about his/her expectations for their role as a mentor teacher.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

16. I feel my mentor teacher was adequately trained to be a mentor prior to becoming my mentor teacher.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

17. I feel the current mentor program in my school is designated to motivate new teachers to return to our school.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

18. To what degree do you think the mentor program in your school helps new teachers in the following area:

Area	None	Hardly Any	Some	A Great Deal
Stay in the field of education				
Grow as a professional				
Learn to work collaboratively with other professionals				
Develop effective parent communication				

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

19. In the space provided below, please list components or characteristics that you think should be included in your school's current mentor program in order to enhance the mentor program with respect to improving the chances of you (the mentee) returning to your current assignment next school year.

---

Relevance to Research Question: 1 2 3

Clarity: VC C SC NC

**APPENDIX J**

**SURVEY VALIDATION – ALIGNMENT RESULTS (TEACHER MENTOR SURVEY)**

Research Question	1	2	3
Survey Question			
1.	n/a	n/a	n/a
2.	n/a	n/a	n/a
3.	n/a	n/a	n/a
4.	n/a	n/a	n/a
5.	13 (87%)	2 (12%)	13 (87%)
6.	0 (0%)	15 (100%)	0 (0%)
7.	12 (80%)	3 (20%)	3 (20%)
8.	13 (87%)	2 (13%)	14 (93%)
9.	0 (0%)	15 (100%)	0 (0%)
10.	12 (80%)	3 (20%)	12 (80%)
11.	2 (13%)	7 (47%)	6 (40%)
12.	14 (93%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)
13.	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	14 (93%)
14.	2 (13%)	14 (93%)	12 (80%)
15.	2 (13%)	14 (93%)	12 (80%)
16.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	15 (100%)
17.	0 (0%)	15 (100%)	0 (0%)
18.	1 (7%)	12 (80%)	14 (93%)

**APPENDIX K**

**SURVEY VALIDATION – ALIGNMENT RESULTS (TEACHER MENTEE SURVEY)**

Research Question	1	2	3
Survey Question			
1.	n/a	n/a	n/a
2.	n/a	n/a	n/a
3.	7 (47%)	5 (33%)	3 (20%)
4.	6 (40%)	6 (40%)	3 (20%)
5.	6 (40%)	7 (47%)	2 (13%)
6.	13 (87%)	2 (13%)	14 (93%)
7.	12 (80%)	3 (20%)	13 (87%)
8.	0 (0%)	15 (100%)	0 (0%)
9.	5 (33%)	4 (27%)	6 (40%)
10.	0 (0%)	15 (100%)	0 (0%)
11.	12 (80%)	2 (13%)	13 (87%)
12.	3 (20%)	3 (20%)	9 (60%)
13.	13 (87%)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)
14.	0 (0%)	15 (100%)	0 (0%)
15.	14 (93%)	4 (27%)	12 (80%)
16.	3 (20%)	13 (87%)	12 (80%)
17.	2 (13%)	14 (93%)	12 (80%)
18.	1 (7%)	1 (7%)	13 (87%)
19.	2 (13%)	14 (93%)	14 (93%)

**APPENDIX L**

**SURVEY VALIDATION – CLARITY RESULTS (TEACHER MENTOR SURVEY)**

Survey Question	(VC) = 4	(C) = 3	(SC) = 2	(NC) = 1	Clarity
1.	15 (100%)				4.0
2.	15 (100%)				4.0
3.	14 (93%)	1 (7%)			3.93
4.	13 (87%)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)		3.83
5.	6 (40%)	3 (20%)	6 (40%)		3.0
6.	14 (93%)	1 (7%)			3.93
7.	14 (93%)		1 (7%)		3.86
8.	12 (80%)	1 (7%)	2 (13%)		3.67
9.	13 (87%)	2 (13%)			3.87
10.	5 (33%)	4 (27%)	6 (40%)		2.93
11.	12 (80%)	1 (7%)	2 (13%)		3.67
12.	13 (87%)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)		3.83
13.	13 (87%)	2 (13%)			3.87
14.	12 (80%)	3 (20%)			3.8
15.	14 (93%)		1 (7%)		3.86
16.	13 (87%)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)		3.83
17.	12 (80%)	2 (13%)	1 (7%)		3.73
18.	15 (100%)				4.0

**APPENDIX M**

**SURVEY VALIDATION – CLARITY RESULTS (TEACHER MENTEE SURVEY)**

Survey Question	(VC) = 4	(C) = 3	(SC) = 2	(NC) = 1	Clarity
1.	15 (100%)				4.0
2.	15 (100%)				4.0
3.	14 (93%)		1 (7%)		3.86
4.	13 (87%)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)		3.83
5.	12 (80%)	2 (13%)	1 (7%)		3.73
6.	5 (33%)	3 (20%)	7 (47%)		2.86
7.	12 (80%)	3 (20%)			3.8
8.	13 (87%)	2 (13%)			3.87
9.	13 (87%)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)		3.83
10.	12 (80%)	1 (7%)	2 (13%)		3.67
11.	6 (40%)	2 (13%)	7 (47%)		2.93
12.	12 (80%)	2 (13%)	1 (7%)		3.73
13.	14 (93%)		1 (7%)		3.86
14.	14 (93%)	1 (7%)			3.92
15.	13 (87%)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)		3.83
16.	14 (93%)	1 (7%)			3.93
17.	12 (80%)	3 (20%)			3.8
18.	12 (80%)	2 (13%)	1 (7%)		3.73
19.	15 (100%)				4.0

**APPENDIX N**  
**TEACHER MENTOR SURVEY**

By completing and submitting this survey, consent to participate in this study is implied.

Please select **one** option below each question that best answers the question.

1. How many years of experience do you have as a full-time teacher?
  - 0-3 years
  - 4-6 years
  - 7-9 years
  - 10+ years
  
2. How many years have you been teaching in this division?
  - 0-3 years
  - 4-6 years
  - 7-9 years
  - 10+ years
  
3. How were you selected to serve as a mentor teacher?
  - I went through an interview process prior to selection
  - I was asked and agreed to serve as a mentor
  - I was informed I would serve as a mentor
  - I asked if I could serve as a mentor
  
4. How was it determined who your mentee would be?
  - I completed a questionnaire to determine if I was a good fit for my mentee
  - I have no idea, I was simply told
  - My input was included in making the decision
  - My mentee was assigned to me because our classrooms were close in proximity
  
5. Typically, how often did you and your mentee meet during the school year?
  - Once a month, or less often
  - Every two weeks
  - Weekly
  - More than once a week

6. How often do you think you and your mentee should have met specifically to discuss instruction to positively impact teacher performance and teacher retention?
  - Once a month, or less often
  - Every two weeks
  - Weekly
  - More than once a week
  
7. Typically, how long was an average meeting with your mentee?
  - 30 minutes or less
  - 1 hour
  - 1 hour and 30 minutes
  - 2 hours or more
  
8. How often did you observe (and meet to discuss the observation with) your mentee?
  - At least monthly (10 times or more per year)
  - At least quarterly (4 times or more per year)
  - At least each semester (2 times or more per year)
  - I have never observed my mentee
  
9. How often do you think you should observe (and meet to discuss the observation with) your mentee to impact the teacher's decision to remain in their current teaching assignment next year?
  - At least monthly (10 times or more per year)
  - At least quarterly (4 times or more per year)
  - At least each semester (2 times or more per year)
  - I do not think I should observe my mentee
  
10. When did you and your mentee meet during the school day?
  - During our common planning time
  - Before the school day began
  - After the school day ended
  - Hardly ever because our schedules did not allow for us to meet

11. Which components below do you feel are present in your current school's mentor program? Please select all options that apply.

- A selection/recruiting process to determine the most effective mentors
- A defined method to match mentors with mentees
- Effective and open communication between mentor/mentee
- Regular observations and meetings between mentor and mentee
- An ongoing evaluation of the mentee's progress and effectiveness
- Required documentation of meetings and reflections between mentor/mentee
- All of the above
- None of the above

12. In order of importance, rank your top **three** choices from the options below that you think should be present in a mentor program in order to improve the retention rates of teachers each year.

- A selection/recruiting process to determine the most effective mentors
- A defined method to match mentors with mentees
- Effective and open communication between mentor/mentee
- Regular observations and meetings between mentor and mentee
- An ongoing evaluation of the mentee's progress and effectiveness
- Required documentation of meetings and reflections between mentor/mentee
- Mentors/Mentees should be from the same grade/subject
- Mentors/Mentees should have a common planning time each day
- Regularly scheduled meetings between mentor/mentee to collaborate and/or discuss instruction.

Please rate your agreement with the following statements:

13. Prior to becoming a mentor teacher, I was clear about my expectations for my role as a mentor teacher.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

14. I feel I was adequately trained to be a mentor teacher prior to becoming a mentor teacher.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

15. I feel the current mentor program in my school is designated to motivate new teachers to return to our school.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

16. To what degree do you think the mentor program in your school helps new teachers in the following areas:

Targeted Area	None	Hardly Any	Some	A Great Deal
Stay in the field of education				
Grow as a professional				
Learn to work collaboratively with other professionals				
Develop effective parent communication				

17. In the space provided below, please list components or characteristics that you think should be included in your school’s current mentor program in order to enhance the mentor program with respect to improving the chances of your mentee returning to their current assignment next school year.

\_\_\_\_\_

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**APPENDIX O**  
**TEACHER MENTEE SURVEY**

By completing and submitting this survey, consent to participate in this study is implied.

Please select **one** option below each question that best answers the question.

1. How many years of experience do you have as a full-time teacher?
  - 0-3 years
  - 4-6 years
  - 7-9 years
  - 10+ years
  
2. Please describe your most recent degree.
  - Bachelor's
  - Master's
  - Ed.S.
  - Doctorate
  
3. Typically, how often did you and your mentor meet during the school year?
  - Once a month, or less often
  - Every two weeks
  - Weekly
  - More than once a week
  
4. How often do you think you and your mentor should have met specifically to discuss instruction to positively impact teacher performance and teacher retention?
  - Once a month, or less often
  - Every two weeks
  - Weekly
  - More than once a week
  
5. Typically, how long was an average meeting with your mentor?
  - 30 minutes or less
  - 1 hour
  - 1 hour and 30 minutes
  - 2 hours or more

6. How often do you think your mentor should observe you (and meet to discuss the observation with you) to impact your decision to remain in your current teaching assignment next year?
- At least monthly (10 times or more per year)
  - At least quarterly (4 times or more per year)
  - At least each semester (2 times or more per year)
  - I do not think my mentor should observe me
7. When did you and your mentor meet during the school day?
- During our common planning time
  - Before the school day began
  - After the school day ended
  - Hardly ever because our schedules did not allow for us to meet
8. Which components below do you feel are present in your current school's mentor program? Please select all options that apply.
- A selection/recruiting process to determine the most effective mentors
  - A defined method to match mentors with mentees
  - Effective and open communication between mentor/mentee
  - Regular observations and meetings between mentor and mentee
  - An ongoing evaluation of the mentee's progress and effectiveness
  - Required documentation of meetings and reflections between mentor/mentee
  - All of the above
  - None of the above
9. In order of importance, rank your top **three** choices from the options below that you think should be present in a mentor program in order to improve the retention rates of teachers each year.
- A selection/recruiting process to determine the most effective mentors
  - A defined method to match mentors with mentees
  - Effective and open communication between mentor/mentee
  - Regular observations and meetings between mentor and mentee
  - An ongoing evaluation of the mentee's progress and effectiveness
  - Required documentation of meetings and reflections between mentor/mentee
  - Mentors/Mentees should be from the same grade/subject
  - Mentors/Mentees should have a common planning time each day
  - Regularly scheduled meetings between mentor/mentee to collaborate and/or discuss instruction.

Please rate your agreement with the following statements:

10. My mentor seemed clear about his/her expectations for their role as a mentor teacher.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

11. I feel my mentor teacher was adequately trained to be a mentor teacher prior to becoming my mentor teacher.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

12. I feel the current mentor program in my school is designated to motivate new teachers to return to our school.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

13. To what degree do you think the mentor program in your school helps new teachers in the following areas:

Targeted Area	None	Hardly Any	Some	A Great Deal
Stay in the field of education				
Grow as a professional				
Learn to work collaboratively with other professionals				
Develop effective parent communication				

14. In the space provided below, please list components or characteristics that you think should be included in your school's current mentor program in order to enhance the mentor program with respect to improving the chances of your mentee returning to their current assignment next school year.

\_\_\_\_\_

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