

Gardner-Webb University

Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University

Doctor of Education Dissertations

College of Education

Summer 2022

A Program Evaluation of a Beginning Teacher Support Program in a Small Rural School District in North Carolina

Nicole B. McGhee

Gardner-Webb University, mmcghee1@gardner-webb.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/education-dissertations>



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

McGhee, Nicole B., "A Program Evaluation of a Beginning Teacher Support Program in a Small Rural School District in North Carolina" (2022). *Doctor of Education Dissertations*. 103.

<https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/education-dissertations/103>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Education at Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctor of Education Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University. For more information, please see [Copyright and Publishing Info](#).

A PROGRAM EVALUATION OF A BEGINNING TEACHER SUPPORT PROGRAM
IN A SMALL RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICT IN NORTH CAROLINA

By
Nicole B. McGhee

Dissertation Submitted to the
Gardner-Webb University College of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Gardner-Webb University
2022

Approval Page

This dissertation was submitted by Nicole B. McGhee under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Gardner-Webb University College of Education and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Gardner-Webb University.

Bruce Boyles, EdD
Committee Chair

Date

Sandra Carter, EdD
Committee Member

Date

Linda Hopson, EdD
Committee Member

Date

Prince Bull, PhD
Dean of the College of Education

Date

Acknowledgments

First, I give all the honor and glory to God. Thank you for your goodness and mercy. I thank you for the spirit of perseverance and determination. I could not have accomplished this great feat without you, Lord.

I am grateful for the opportunity to complete my course of study at Gardner-Webb University. I would like to thank Dr. Bruce Boyles, my committee chair, for your insightful feedback, encouragement, and patience throughout this dissertation. To my committee members, Dr. Sandra Carter and Linda B. Hopson, thank you for your support, feedback, encouragement, and willingness to work with me as well.

My sisters, Mary and Katina, I am grateful for your love, prayers, and words of encouragement that kept me uplifted and strengthened while pursuing this goal. Thank you to my son, AJ, for believing in me and pushing me to accomplish my goal. To my husband, Anthony, thank you for your support, motivation, understanding, and patience. You were always willing to put our plans aside to allow me time to write. I am grateful to have you by my side.

To my loving mother and my biggest cheerleader in your heavenly home, thank you for your unconditional love, guidance, and example you set for me to follow. You have always been with me in many of my endeavors. You instilled a strong work ethic in me at an early age, which has proven to be quite valuable. I know you would be proud of me.

Abstract

A PROGRAM EVALUATION OF A BEGINNING TEACHER SUPPORT PROGRAM
IN A SMALL RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICT IN NORTH CAROLINA. McGhee, Nicole
B., 2022: Dissertation, Gardner-Webb University.

As beginning teachers face challenges and seek support, many never receive the guidance needed to help them become effective teachers. Lack of support can build obstacles that lead to job dissatisfaction and failure to retain teachers. Nationwide, states have adopted legislation to require induction programs for new teachers to improve teacher retention and student achievement.

This study evaluated the components of a beginning teacher support program in a small rural school district and the perceptions of beginning teacher participants, mentors, and school administrators. In addition, this program evaluation aimed to identifying areas of strength and weaknesses. The analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data collected reveals three main themes: addressing the needs of BTs, lead mentors, and administrators; curriculum and instructional support; and resources to assist BTs with licensure requirements and relevant professional learning opportunities.

Based on the analysis of the data collected, recommendations for future research are included. Both the quantitative and qualitative data collected reveal that the beginning teacher support program is practical and beneficial, but there is a need to enhance professional development opportunities for all stakeholders and a need for adequate resources and support throughout a professional development model.

Keywords: beginning teacher, novice teacher, beginning teacher support program, mentor, induction program

Table of Contents

	Page
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem.....	7
Purpose of the Study	11
BTSP in North Carolina.....	12
Research Questions	16
Definition of Terms.....	16
Summary	19
Chapter 2: Literature Review	20
Teacher Attrition	20
BTSP	28
NTSP	33
Mentoring.....	35
Administrative Support.....	40
Professional Development	44
Summary	48
Chapter 3: Methodology	49
Introduction.....	49
Research Questions	49
Research Design.....	50
Procedures	50
Data Collection	51
Data Analysis	51
Setting	52
Participants.....	53
Instrument	53
District Profile: BTs and Mentors.....	55
Mentor Demographics	57
Teacher Working Conditions Survey.....	59
Summary	64
Chapter 4: Results	65
Methods and Procedures	65
Study Participants	67
Findings.....	68
Summary	92
Chapter 5: Discussion	94
Discussion of Findings.....	94
Summarized List of Recommendations	104
Limitations	107
Conclusions.....	109
Recommendations for Future Research	110
References	112
Appendices	
A Email Requesting Permission to Use Survey Questions	126
B Permission Granted	128

C	Introduction Letter/Email – Beginning Teacher Survey.....	130
D	Introduction Letter/Email – Mentor Survey	132
E	Introduction Letter/Email – Administrator Survey.....	134
F	Beginning Teacher Survey.....	136
G	Mentor Survey	143
H	Administrator Survey.....	149
I	Introduction Letter/Email – Beginning Teacher Focus Group	155
J	Introduction Letter/Email – Mentor Focus Group.....	157
K	Introduction Letter/Email – Administrator Focus Group	159
L	Beginning Teacher Focus Group Interview Questions.....	161
M	Mentor Focus Group Interview Questions.....	163
N	Administrator Focus Group Interview Questions	165
O	Proxy Request	167
P	Proxy Consent.....	169
Q	Permission to Conduct Research Study	171
Tables		
1	Small Rural School District Turnover Reasons	8
2	BT Turnover Rate	9
3	State Attrition Rates by Teacher Category 2017-2019	22
4	2018-2019 State Attrition Reason by Categories.....	23
5	Attrition Rates of the Five Highest and Lowest LEAs in North Carolina 2018-2019	24
6	State Attrition Rates by Teacher Category 2018-2019	53
7	The Study District 2019-2021.....	56
8	Mentors	58
9	Teacher Working Conditions Survey Results.....	60
10	Survey Participation.....	67
11	BT Demographic Information.....	68
12	Focus Group Sessions by School Level.....	68
13	BT Survey Question Responses Related to Program Effectiveness	69
14	Lead Mentor Survey Question Responses Related to Program Effectiveness	70
15	Administrator Survey Question Responses Related to Program Effectiveness	72
16	BT Survey Question Responses Related to Needs of BTs	74
17	Lead Mentor Survey Question Responses Related to Needs of BTs.....	77
18	Administrator Survey Question Responses Related to Needs of BTs	78
19	BT Survey Question Responses Related to Strengths and Weaknesses of BTSP	80
20	Lead Mentor Survey Question Responses Related to Strengths and Weaknesses of BTSP	81
21	Administrator Survey Question Responses Related to Strengths and Weaknesses of BTSP	82
22	BT Survey Question Responses Related to Support and Job Satisfaction.....	86
23	Administrator Survey Question Responses Related to BT and Mentor Support.....	89
24	Lead Mentor Survey Question Responses Related to BT and Administrator Support.....	91

Chapter 1: Introduction

Pierson expressed, “Every child deserves a champion” (7:49). All students deserve a chance to receive a quality education and effective teachers. There are various school- and home-related elements that influence student academic progress. Years of research consistently point to teacher effectiveness as a leading factor (Oppen, 2019; Kini & Podolsky, 2016). Unfortunately, not every student experiences a stable, high-quality teaching force (Darling-Hammond & Podolsky, 2019).

Since 2012, fewer individuals are enrolling in customary education preparation programs, while alternative educator preparation programs have had a 40% increase in enrollment from 2010 to 2018 (Partelow, 2019). Alternative certification is used to recruit talented people who do not have a background in education; however, the route to alternative certification is still not enough to meet the growing demand for teachers (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019), and only about half of these teachers are hired (Cowan et al., 2016).

As the teacher pipeline continues to shrink, student enrollment in undergraduate education programs across the state of North Carolina has declined by 41% since 2010 (Public Schools First, 2016). A 2017-2018 State of the Teaching Profession annual report showed that of the 15,595 novice teachers employed statewide, 1,925 left the teaching profession, creating an attrition rate of 2.34% (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction [NCDPI], 2019). The rate of teachers quitting the teaching profession has risen dramatically over the last 2 decades and is now hovering around 8%, a 3% increase since 1992 (Sutcher et al., 2016). All occupations have turnover, but the teacher turnover rate is higher than any other profession and varies across the United States (Riggs, 2013).

According to a report by Kan (2014), the turnover rate for teachers was higher than that of other professions, such as architects, police officers, and nurses. The employee turnover for teachers is 30%, police 28%, and architects 23% (Kan, 2014). Also, 8% of our teachers migrate to a different school district each year (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017), which allows some school districts to recoup their attrition losses by capitalizing on teacher mobility (NCDPI, 2019).

For decades, schools have canceled classes and/or courses due to the inability to find teachers and fill vacancies (Darling-Hammond & Podolsky, 2019). Many school districts are likely to hire individuals who enter the teaching profession through an alternative route (Aragon, 2016; Redding & Henry, 2019). The alternative certification aims to offer a nontraditional licensure route to put teachers in the classroom to fill vacancies without completing a traditional 4-year undergraduate education program (NCDPI, n.d.). In addition to not completing a teacher preparation program, these new teachers lack pedagogical knowledge and training (Darling-Hammond & Podolsky, 2019; Guha et al., 2016). One third of the secondary math and science classes are taught by teachers who did not complete an educator preparation program to obtain a license for the subject they are teaching (North Carolina Science, Mathematics, and Technology Education Center, 2013). In 2016, more than 100,000 unprepared teachers nationwide were hired due to the decline in teacher preparation programs, and the number is expected to keep rising (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Cowan et al., 2016). This is problematic because many new teachers who are not adequately prepared resign during or after their first year at a rate that has doubled compared to those beginning teachers (BTs) who completed student teaching and a rigorous education

preparation program (Guha et al., 2016). Under such conditions, everyone loses (Guha et al., 2016).

As rural school districts struggle to attract high-quality teachers for numerous reasons (Aragon, 2016), every state provides some form of alternative certification to earn a teaching license. Alternative programs may vary by district and state. These programs frequently concentrate more on “job” training than on theory (Aragon, 2016). NCDPI (n.d.) uses a residency license, the newest licensure process implemented in 2019 for alternative certification. The residency license recently replaced the lateral entry alternative license. Just like the lateral entry licensure process, residency licensure is also an alternative pathway to obtaining a teaching license. Residency licensure has opened the door of the educational world and allows individuals with a bachelor’s degree in a related area to get a teaching position and begin teaching in the classroom while completing coursework and the required State Board of Education assessments. The teacher residency program is designed to offer an innovative approach to recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers in many hard-to-staff schools (Guha et al., 2016).

Prospects now seeking licensure through the current alternative pathway residency license must attend an accredited college or university to complete at least a bachelor’s degree and maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.7 (NCDPI, 2020b). Residency licensure is issued on a provisional license in a teaching area that aligns with employee qualifications; it is valid for 1 year with up to two additional annual renewals if requested by the employing public school unit (NCDPI, 2020b). For this license, an approved educator preparation program must determine if the BT is qualified for a license and enroll the new teacher (NCDPI, 2020b). Enrollment in an

educator preparation program and employment as a teacher in a public school system are required for the residency licensure program, in addition to maintaining a teaching position (NCDPI, 2020b). Candidates will receive a plan of study from the educator preparation program to attain a clear teaching license and may be required to complete a program of approximately 30 credit hours; however, the hours may vary. The plan will include professional education courses, pedagogy courses, and possibly content courses (NCDPI, 2020b).

Leading to residency licensure, individuals may qualify for an emergency license and permit to teach, requiring employment for 1 year in a North Carolina public school system until accepted into an approved educator preparation program (NCDPI, 2019). The emergency license is good for 1 year and cannot be renewed. The new hire must hold a bachelor's degree with 18 semester hours of course work relevant to the requested licensure area. After the first year of teaching is completed, if the individual does not qualify for residency licensure at this point, the individual must enroll in an educator preparation program to continue to complete any prerequisite requirements. Another licensure option is the permit to teach. The permit to teach is also a 1-year nonrenewable license issued to an individual with a bachelor's degree. Individuals who select this initial license may not qualify for a license under any other options previously described. This individual must work towards meeting requirements for an emergency license or residency license. Due to teacher shortages across the nation, alternative teacher certification has become popular in public school units (Cochran-Smith et al., 2012; Zhang & Zeller, 2016).

Although certification does not appear to have a significant impact on whether a

teacher stays in the classroom for many years, many educators who enter the field through nontraditional routes leave within the first 3 years (Linek et al., 2012). Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) reported that those who entered the teaching profession through an alternative route were 25% more likely to leave than those who completed a traditional teacher preparation program. Preparation and support may be critical factors in teacher retention. In addition, the mentor's role is usually considered very significant in facilitating BT entry into the profession (Menon, 2012). Teachers who feel prepared to teach may remain in the profession longer, and coursework that focuses on teaching methods may contribute to their sense of preparedness.

It becomes more and more challenging to produce classroom-ready teachers, reduce the attrition rate, and increase retention. The federal government, state legislatures, school boards, and school leaders recognize the critical importance of improving teacher preparation (Greenberg et al., 2014). With an increased number of vacancies due to BTs leaving the teaching profession within their first 3 years and up to 50% leaving the profession within their first 5 years (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Fensterwald, 2015; McKinnon, 2016; Mingo, 2012; Sutchter et al., 2016), new teachers who enter teaching without enrolling in a traditional education program fill teaching positions in hard-to-staff schools and subjects, particularly science and math (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics., 2013). Although alternatively certified teachers participate in the same induction as traditionally certified teachers, preparing quality teachers and filling many vacancies continue to be challenges for many school districts (Bowling & Ball, 2018).

One way districts and schools have tried to resolve the teacher retention crisis is

by offering support for induction. In the United States, efforts are being made to build and provide a comprehensive, 21st century teacher induction system for BTs with 1, 2, or 3 years of teaching experience. Induction programs are designed to provide set standards and guidance in helping new teachers grow and develop into effective teachers. Induction programs include preparation and training on the job and may consist of workshops, seminars, support systems facilitated by school administrators, instructional coaches, and mentors. Also, across the country in many states, school districts are developing more effective policies to attract, retain, and offer a strong support structure to help BTs succeed (Education Northwest, 2014; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2015).

Administrators are an important part of the overall program because they provide assistance throughout the Beginning Teacher Support Program (BTSP). According to Reeder (2013), induction programs should provide support for BTs. With such help in place, more school districts will begin to see a decline in attrition rates and improved job satisfaction, positively impact instructional practices, and improve student achievement (Reeder, 2013). The national teacher shortage could be largely eliminated if attrition rates in the United States could be cut in half (Sutcher et al., 2016).

Another integral part of the BTSP is mentoring. According to the New Teacher Center (NTC, 2016) and other research findings, BTs should receive support from their assigned mentor for at least the first 2 years. Mentor support should help improve teaching practices and student achievement (NTC, 2016). Mentors who are effectively trained can help facilitate and guide the induction for BTs and provide the needed support. Mentors also help craft their skills and develop effective teaching practices to

achieve maximum effectiveness (NTC, 2016). At a minimum, a 1-year mentoring program can provide BTs with the initial resources they need to survive their first year (NTC, 2016).

Statement of the Problem

For years, politicians and school administrators have been concerned about new teacher attrition (DeAngelis & Presley, 2011). Yearly, approximately half a million teachers in the United States transfer or leave the profession, incurring yearly expenditures of up to \$2.2 billion (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014). The Alliance of Excellent Education (2014) reported the turnover rate among BTs has significantly increased over the last 2 decades, by more than 40% in the United States. Approximately 13% of the American workforce, 3.4 million public school teachers, either transfer or leave the profession each year (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014). National data compiled by Sutchter et al. (2016) show the most substantial portion of teacher turnover is attributed to pre-retirement, with only one-third due to actual retirement. At this rate, by 2025, school districts will see an increase of approximately 20% in teacher demand, reaching 316,000 teachers annually (Sutchter et al., 2016). Although district personnel spend a substantial amount of time seeking opportunities to recruit new teachers, school districts must find it equally important to retain the teachers they already have in place (Sutchter et al., 2016). When there is a shortage of qualified staff to teach in the fields needed, severe consequences such as increased turnover rates or high attrition, or both, will inevitably affect the student achievement rate, teacher quality, and teacher effectiveness (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). As teacher education programs continue to severely decrease, fewer teachers qualify and apply for teaching jobs. On a national level,

in 2018, one-third fewer teachers enrolled in teacher preparation programs than in 2010 (Partelow, 2019).

The 2017-2018 State of the Teaching Profession Annual Report shows that of 188 teachers employed in the study district, 25 teachers left. The school district had an overall turnover percentage of 17.6%, above the state of North Carolina at 8.1%. In the 2018-2019 school year, there were 180 teachers in the study district. The attrition was slightly higher, at 19.4%, due to 22 teachers leaving the school district. The overall state attrition rate is somewhat lower than the previous year at 7.5%. The reasons why the teachers left the school district are listed in Table 1 (NCDPI, 2019, 2020a).

Table 1

Small Rural School District Turnover Reasons

Explanation of turnover	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Beyond control of local education agency	7	5	9
Initiated by local education agency	2	1	6
Personal reasons	9	7	5
Other reasons	2	9	5

The teacher turnover rate for this small rural school district has steadily increased each year since 2016-2017, with a slight decrease in 2018-2019 but increased again in 2019-2020. The turnover percentages for the district of study are shown in Table 2 (NCDPI, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020a, 2021)

Table 2*BT Turnover Rate*

School year	Small rural district	North Carolina BTs
2019-2020	31.80%	11.70%
2018-2019	22%	11.30%
2017-2018	33.30%	12.34%
2016-2017	12%	12.31%
2015-2016	39%	12.78%

In addition to recruitment and hiring of novice teachers, retaining qualified teachers is critical to student success. Teachers are more effective as they gain 3 to 5 years of experience in the classroom (Johnson et al., 2012). Students in schools with a high teacher turnover rate and few qualified teachers are adversely affected (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Kini & Podolsky, 2016). Teacher turnover also impedes school stability; threatens student achievement; disrupts the adoption of a shared vision; delays instructional improvements, collaboration, and collegial relationships in a school; and leads to an increase in the number of inexperienced teachers (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017, 2019; Garcia & Weiss, 2019; Redding & Henry, 2018, 2019; Ronfeldt et al., 2013; Simon & Johnson, 2015).

Teacher shortages are harmful to students, teachers, and the overall public school system (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). Teachers who quit the profession mid-year or end of the school year negatively impact student achievement (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Economically, a lot of time and resources are devoted to recruiting, onboarding, and training new teachers year after year, and teacher turnover can become costly. Urban school communities spend on average \$20,000 on each new hire (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). School district funds could be better used for

support initiatives to address all concerns and needs as BTs transition into the profession and stay there. Districts also devote a significant amount of time and money for curricula resources and professional development that is lost when the BT leaves. The estimated cost of replacing a teacher in a rural school district due to teacher turnover is a little under \$10,000 in rural areas in North Carolina which factors in the expenses related to separation, recruitment, hiring, and the training of new teachers (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Instructional practices are interrupted when teachers who leave during the school year are replaced with short- or long-term substitutes (Redding & Henry, 2019). On average, students score lower on standardized tests when a teacher leaves the school (Redding & Henry, 2018, 2019) and leaves the school district in dire need to hire qualified teachers to improve the educational outcomes of all students.

It is critical to recruit and retain good teachers. The State Board of Education requires teachers with up to 3 years of experience to participate in an induction (Reeder, 2013). While many states provide a formal orientation, quality mentoring programs to network, and guidance and support through the evaluation process, school districts have the autonomy to plan and facilitate how the BTSP will operate (Reeder, 2013).

As fewer teachers join the education profession, school districts must implement new ways to recruit and retain new teachers in order to reduce teacher turnover. According to research, lack of support from school administration is one of the most prevalent reasons new teachers leave the field (NTC, 2016). The foundation of successful teaching is strong leadership. Educational leaders must lead with an open mind to educate and direct new and experienced teachers while setting high goals and even higher expectations for students. The principal is expected to play an essential role in the

induction program (NTC, 2016). Principals may help BTs create and grow relationships by shaping the culture. Principals also need to understand the induction program's goals, assign and match mentors to new teachers, and evaluate BT performances; however, the demand on the administrator's time and the nature of their job often prevent the intense mentoring needed by BTs and intrude on forming the type of relationship BTs need and deserve.

Purpose of the Study

As teacher education programs continue to decline in enrollment, BT induction and support programs have become an important topic in education policy and reform (Ingersoll, 2012). Since fewer teachers are entering the teaching profession, public school units often find themselves having to hire less-qualified personnel or non-traditionally licensed teachers to meet the demands in many hard-to-fill positions, particularly in the areas of math, science, and exceptional children (Sutcher et al., 2016). Teachers who are not traditionally trained, have earned a postsecondary degree or higher, and met residency licensure requirements are hired by a school district to teach without a college-based teacher education program background. Still, they must meet the new residency licensure program requirements. New teachers who seek alternative licensing routes are placed in a classroom to teach immediately while completing certification requirements in a university or college; however, some alternative certification programs are more rigorous than others (Espinoza et al., 2018). Many BTs struggle with the coursework for licensure requirements, assessments, and the on-the-job daily demands of teaching requirements. Traditionally licensed as well as non-traditionally licensed teachers across the nation need and deserve a structure of support. By hiring and sustaining great BTs, districts

across the country can establish stronger schools, communities, and a better-educated society (Mingo, 2012).

Any induction program's goals should be to prepare BTs better, offer support, help new teachers thrive as professionals, and retain new teachers. Twenty-nine states across the nation require some type of support system for BTs. Nearly half provide help and support for first- and second-year teachers, while some states such as Indiana, Hawaii, Oklahoma, and Vermont have eliminated their teacher mentoring program (NTC, 2016). In states such as Delaware, Hawaii, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, North Carolina, and Utah, schools and districts must provide new teachers support for 3 years (NTC, 2016). In Ohio, new teachers must participate in a 4-year induction program (NTC, 2016). In 2015-2016, 20 states set higher standards for teacher induction programs.

My study sought to understand how teachers with 3 or fewer years of experience perceive a BTSP in a small public school unit in North Carolina and determine if their perceptions have any bearing on retaining BTs.

BTSP in North Carolina

The BTSP is a 3-year state-mandated induction program for BTs. The BTSP is primarily intended to assist BTs in developing their professional skills, improving their teaching abilities, and gaining confidence in order to become successful educators. The 3-year induction process includes a formal orientation and optimum working conditions to ensure BTs have the opportunity to become effective teachers through mentor selection, mentor training, and closely monitored professional development that may be required or recommended to fulfill their individual requirements. This program also offers support

with lesson planning, classroom management, and other needed areas. The study district's goal is to assist and support BTs in their efforts to meet the professional teaching standards established by the state to effectively impact student learning and retain and grow teacher leaders.

Small rural districts across the state are partnering with the New Teacher Support Program (NTSP). The NTSP is also an induction program designed to help BTs acquire knowledge and the necessary skills to provide quality instruction, increase student achievement, and improve retention in low-performing areas (Bastian & Marks, 2017). In the state of North Carolina, \$7.7 million was allocated from Race to the Top funds to create the NTSP. This program was developed and implemented by faculty from colleges of education at the University of North Carolina system and run by the University of North Carolina general administration and four University of North Carolina system institutions (Bastian & Marks, 2017). It was made available for 108 lowest-performing school districts and/or high schools with graduation rates below 60% in the state in 2008-2009. By 2013-2014, the program expanded to serve third-year teachers while previously serving first- and second-year teachers who worked in schools eligible for Race to the Top funds and agreed to participate (Bastian & Marks, 2017).

The NTSP is also a comprehensive university research-based induction program aligned with the district goals and is offered to increase teacher effectiveness, enhance skills to teach and support learning, and reduce attrition among BTs. The program is delivered in three parts: individualized in-person coaching and virtual instructional coaching, up to six professional development sessions, and institutes that are facilitated by experienced teacher leaders and administrators who offer training sessions for BTs

with 3 or fewer years of experience (Bastian & Marks, 2017). This induction support was designed to improve and help BTs gain understanding and achieve competency in the Common Core State Standards, academic goal setting, assessment, classroom management, successful instructional strategies, data-driven decision-making, and reflection (Bastian & Marks, 2017).

The BTSP also includes a 3-day orientation 2 weeks before the start of the school year, where BTs obtain an overview of district and school goals, policies, and procedures. BTs receive information regarding licensure procedures, requirements, and information on converting from an initial professional license to a continuing professional license established by the State Board of Education. Central office staff introduce themselves to BTs and provide an overview of their departments. BTs are assigned to a lead mentor and buddy teachers early on to assist with their needs, questions, and procedures and offer support. BTs also receive information about the North Carolina Educator Effectiveness Program, which includes the teacher appraisal process, the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, local curriculum guides, and an overview of students' safe and appropriate seclusion and restraint (NCDPI, 2020b). Certain working conditions are established and followed to help BTs develop into competent teachers with limited “non-instructional duties” that generally involve student collaboration outside of the general school day and may not be directly related to instruction or required activities. In a study by McGeehan (2019), new teachers found this type of orientation at the start of the school year valuable as it introduced them to policies, benefits, department leads, procedures, and team building.

In addition to lead mentors, mentors or buddy teachers are selected and matched

with BTs. Lead mentors and buddy teachers are also selected and assigned by the building administrator to work with teachers with little to no teaching experience. A lead mentor in each of the schools is expected to facilitate the BTSP at the school level in each school. Lead mentors are responsible for providing training and support and must be rated as “proficient” or higher on the North Carolina teacher evaluation standards. Lead mentors frequently collaborate with buddy teachers. Buddy teachers serve on the same grade level or department in the same subject area, if applicable. Buddy teachers assist with procedures, answer questions, and support lesson planning and classroom management as many serve the same group of students.

BTs are often guided by their mentor and/or administrator to complete a professional development plan with their principal and mentor. The professional development plan includes the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards, goals, strategies, and self-assessment of the BT’s professional skills. BTs formally meet with their principal and mentor at the initial start of the academic school year, mid-year, and at the end of the year to reflect on the BT’s progress of the goals established in the professional development plan.

Given the conditions presented in the problem statement and the need to reduce teacher turnover and improve retention, this study focused on the BTSP’s components and how BTs perceive the current program and if their perceptions impact teacher retention.

The following questions guided this research study. These questions were intended to help identify the key components of a 3-year induction program that helps BTs improve their skills and build confidence to become master educators.

Research Questions

1. How do BTs, administrators, and mentors perceive the effectiveness of the BTSP?
2. What are the needs of BTs with 3 years or less experience?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the BTSP?
4. To what extent are BTs supported by administrators and mentors?

Definition of Terms

The terminology in this study will help the reader comprehend the research and its implications.

Administrative Support

The principal and assistant principals at local schools.

BT

An educator with little or no previous paid teaching experience as an educator (Sweeny, 2008).

BTSP

A mandated, 3-year induction program for BTs (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2020).

Continuing Professional License

A license issued to PreK-12 teaching professionals who have 3 or more years of teaching experience and who have met all of the North Carolina State Board of Education tests required for the North Carolina Educator Preparation Program completers or comparable exams and effectiveness data from another state with a current license held for out-of-state approved educator preparation program completers.

Emergency License

An alternative route to the North Carolina Professional Educator License requires employment in the North Carolina public schools and 18 semester hours related to the subject taught. An emergency license is valid for only 1 year.

Induction Program

Induction is the process of providing support and direction to new teachers and school administrators at the start of their employment. Orientation to the workplace, socialization, mentoring, and guidance through starting teacher practice are all elements of induction.

Initial Professional License

A license issued to PreK-12 teachers with fewer than 3 years of experience or with 3 or more years of experience but have not satisfied the requirements needed for a continuing professional license.

Lateral Entry Teacher

Individuals employed who hold at least a college or university degree in the subject area they are hired to teach.

Local Education Agency (LEA; School System or Public School Unit)

The local education agency (LEA) across the state of North Carolina. There are 115 LEAs in North Carolina.

Lead Mentor

The person designated to primarily facilitate the induction program for BTs and mentors at the school level.

Mentor

The title and position of someone who offers support and guidance to novice teachers (Sweeny, 2008).

Mentoring

The complex developmental process that is used by effective educators and career-long learners to support, guide, and grow their BTs through their induction (Sweeny, 2008).

Mobility

Employees who relocate to another school in the district or public school unit in the same state or to another within the state.

New Teacher

The employee is unique to the teaching profession.

Novice/Beginning/New Teacher

A newly hired teacher with fewer than 3 years of teaching experience.

Permit to Teach

An alternative licensure route to obtain the state professional educator license once hired in the North Carolina public schools. This license is valid for 1 year.

Proxy

A person who has the power or authority to act on behalf of another.

Public School Unit

Public, charter, or regional school in North Carolina.

Residency Licensure

Issued to PreK-12 teachers employed in the North Carolina public school system

and enrolled in a North Carolina approved educator preparation program. The teacher must have 24 semester hours relevant to the subject or subjects taught or have completed all the required North Carolina State Board of Education tests.

Retention

Continued possession, use, or control of something.

Teacher Attrition

At the state and/or LEA level, the rate at which teachers quit the profession.

Teacher Turnover

The rate in which classroom teachers leave or separate from the district or change from one school to another each school year or within the school year (Colorado Department of Education, 2019).

Summary

Teachers serve a major part in the educational system and the success of all students. Districts across the state recognize the need to provide the necessary support system for all teachers while seeking solutions to improve the teaching profession; however, the teacher shortage makes it difficult for schools and districts to fill vacancies due to teacher turnover and attrition. In an effort to retain and possibly recruit quality teachers, BTSP components were established to offer support and provide professional growth opportunities to help school districts retain and grow quality teachers. Alternative licensing programs are also helpful for school districts that face the challenge of filling vacancies with licensed teachers. This study evaluated the components of the BTSP and the needs of BTs. The findings will improve the BTSP within a small rural district and possibly reduce teacher turnover.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

School districts across North Carolina and the nation are facing ongoing teacher shortages mainly due to teacher turnover (Espinoza et al., 2018), which are likely to increase at a higher rate in the upcoming years (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017, 2019). A national review of Title II data in North Carolina by Barth et al. (2016) found that teacher turnover reached a 5-year high in 2015. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), an increase in teacher attrition rates is a major contributing factor in teacher shortages. More than 200,000 teachers leave the profession each year, with about two of three leaving for reasons other than retirement, at an annual rate of about 8% (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017, 2019; Podolsky et al., 2016). In times of shortages, it is common for school districts and policy makers to focus their attention on how to get more teachers into the profession. It is imperative for all stakeholders to focus on keeping teachers who are already in the classrooms (Sutcher et al., 2016). A number of BTs leave the teaching profession early due to a lack of support and guidance from mentors and/or administrators to help them grow and develop into effective teachers, which contributes to the high attrition rate. Educational opportunities are threatened when school communities lose BTs who can succeed in the classroom to grow and become effective experienced teachers (Shockley et al., 2013). According to the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (2016), new teachers who participate in induction programs are likely to remain in the teaching profession.

Teacher Attrition

All 115 LEAs in the state of North Carolina report their district-level employment

data to NCDPI. In the North Carolina 2018-2019 State of the Teaching Profession report, the overall state attrition rate was 7.5% and currently remains at 7.5%. There were 94,672 teachers employed, and 7,115 teachers were reported in the attrition rate. The current total attrition rate is lower than the 2017-2018 attrition rate of 8.09%. There was an 8.7% state attrition rate in the 2016-2017 reporting year (NCDPI, 2019, 2020a). The state attrition rate of BTs is nearly 60% higher than career status teachers. Teachers with 3 plus years of experience left at a rate of 11.3% compared to 6.8% for experienced licensed teachers. The most recent data show that there were 15,404 BTs in North Carolina between March 2019 and March 2020 employed statewide, and 1,806 were reported as attrition. The BT attrition rate in 2019-2020 in North Carolina was 11.7%, which is slightly higher than the previous year and significantly higher for those teachers who are not classified as BTs (NCDPI, 2021). The report also indicates the attrition rate of BTs in North Carolina was 12.34% in the 2017-2018 school calendar year. This attrition rate, 7.25%, is significantly greater than the attrition rate for those teachers who are considered career status teachers (NCDPI, 2019). The attrition rates of these teacher subgroups are presented in Table 3. In March 2016, there were 4,643 lateral entry teachers working in North Carolina public schools; 726 were not employed in public schools in North Carolina in 2017, resulting in a state attrition rate of 15.64%. There were 636 lateral entry teachers hired in 2017-2018. By March 2018, 15.51% (874) of the 5,636 were no longer employed. In March 2018, there were 4,868 beginning lateral entry teachers; of those lateral entry teachers, 683 (14%) quit working in North Carolina public schools by March 2019 (NCDPI, 2019, 2020a).

Table 3*State Attrition Rates by Teacher Category 2017-2019*

Categories	Number of teachers 2017-2018	Number of teachers 2018-2019	Teachers leaving 2017-2018	Teachers leaving 2018-2019
Experienced, licensed teachers	79,314	78,981	5,749	5,347
Beginning teachers	15,595	15,691	1,925	1,768
Teach for America	499	419	127	84
Visiting International Faculty teachers	1,176	1,382	197	218
Lateral entry	5,636	5,902	874	804

Note. State Attrition Rates by Teacher Category 2017-2019. Adapted from 2019 and 2020 Report from the North Carolina General Assembly Report by North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Retrieved from <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/districts-schools-support/district-human-capital/surveys-and-reports>

Table 4 compares the total state attrition rate in 2018-2019. In 2016-2017, 53.6% of teachers who left the North Carolina public school system cited “personal reasons” as the reason for their departure. Personal reasons were also the main reason (53.9%) reported in 2017-2018 for teachers leaving the profession, and again in 2018-2019 but with a slight increase in the percentage, 58.3% (NCDPI, 2019, 2020a).

Table 4*2018-2019 State Attrition Reason by Categories*

Reasons	Number	Percentage of attrition
Personal reason	4,315	60.7%
Initiated by LEA	567	8%
Beyond control of LEA	1,689	23.7%
Other reason	544	7.6%

Note. State Attrition Rates by Teacher Category 2018-2019. Adapted from Report to the North Carolina General Assembly, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, February 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/districts-schools-support/district-human-capital/surveys-and-reports>

There are five LEAs with the highest attrition rate in North Carolina and overall in the state. These five counties include Warren County Schools, Northeast Regional Schools, Northampton County Schools, Thomasville City Schools, and Bertie County Schools (NCDPI, 2019, 2020a). Other counties like Graham County Schools, Gates County Schools, Clinton County Schools, Caldwell County Schools, and Alexander County Schools all have attrition rates that are less than half of the state average (NCDPI, 2020a). Table 5 shows the attrition rate of 10 educational districts in North Carolina compared to the overall state attrition rate.

Table 5*Attrition Rates of the Five Highest and Lowest LEAs in North Carolina 2018-2019*

	Number of teachers in each county	Number of teachers who left	Attrition rate
<u>Highest attrition rate</u>			
Tyrrell County	52	9	17.30%
Northampton County	126	20	15.90%
Hoke County	580	70	13.60%
Vance County	412	56	13.60%
Onslow County	1,613	217	13.50%
<u>Lowest attrition rates</u>			
Graham County	91	2	1.1%
Gates County	325	17	3.1%
Clinton County	127	4	3.9%
Caldwell County	1,221	54	4%
Alexander County	264	16	4%

Note. State Attrition Rates by Teacher Category 2018-2019. Adapted from Report to the North Carolina General Assembly, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, February 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/districts-schools-support/district-human-capital/surveys-and-reports>

In 2018-2019 several public school districts were identified as low-performing: Weldon City, Northampton County, Scotland County, Tyrrell County, Martin County, Edgecombe County, Robeson County, and Nash-Rocky Mount Schools. Of these eight LEAs, the data show variability in the LEA attrition rates. Two districts (Tyrell and Northampton) are almost doubled the state average of 12.05% (NCDPI, 2020a). Northampton County Schools continues to be among the 11 LEAs identified as low performing in the 2017-2018, 2016-2017, and 2015-2016 school years (NCDPI, 2017, 2018, 2019).

Nearly a decade ago, the cost to replace teachers who leave was estimated to

range from approximately \$4,400 in a rural school district compared to nearly \$18,000 in a large urban school community (Podolsky et al., 2016). If there is a reduction in the national attrition rate of 8% to 4%, the rate will be closer to where it is in some of the other countries, and recruitment needs would decrease by around 130,000 teachers annually, cutting the demands for teachers in half (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Darling-Hammond & Rothman, 2011; Sutchter et al., 2016). A reduction this large would help to eliminate teacher shortages and would also allow room for increased selectivity in hiring, which would inevitably boost teacher quality in the classroom. BTs today struggle with various demands and obstacles daily. They need guidance in instructional standards, lesson planning, and classroom management; they lack parental support and involvement; and time limits the opportunity to build relationships with colleagues and students. BTs have difficulty keeping up with all required paperwork and record keeping demands, struggle to meet their administrator's expectations at the school and district levels, and sometimes fall short in student achievement measures. These findings make evident that school systems must put parameters in the place for anticipated struggles and needs of BTs.

There are decades of studies showing that teacher turnover rates vary according to teacher type and are highest among BTs (Ingersoll et al., 2012). Redding and Henry (2019) conducted a study using North Carolina data to measure teacher turnover rates monthly for a year. Also, Redding and Henry (2019) examined similarities and differences compared to prior research investigating turnover each year and the characteristics of BTs who transition to other schools or leave the profession. The study consisted of teachers who entered the profession in 2009-2010, 2010-2011, or 2011-2012

(Redding & Henry, 2019). The cohorts' sample sizes varied from year to year, starting at 3,761, 4,767, and 5,137 (Redding & Henry, 2019).

There were five categories for the teachers' entry pathways: in-state, traditional preparation, alternative routes, Teacher for America, out-of-state prepared teachers who attended an out-of-state university, and other preparation. Out-of-state teachers prepared at the undergraduate level, trained at the graduate level, or only earned their licensure (Redding & Henry, 2019). The reference group consisted of traditional university teacher education programs at the undergraduate or graduate levels or individuals who obtained their teaching license in North Carolina.

Redding and Henry (2019) also investigated the teacher turnover rate in association with the characteristics of novice teachers who transfer or left the educational profession and the effectiveness of the teachers who were already hired. The sample consisted of three cohorts of teachers who entered the profession in 2009-2010, 2010-2011, or 2011-2012 in North Carolina, following teachers the first 3 years monthly (Redding & Henry, 2018, 2019). The sample size of first-year teachers varied across the years due to a dip in the profession. Consistent with previous studies (Papay et al., 2017), at the end of Year 3, only 38% of teachers remained in the school where they started their careers (Redding & Henry, 2019). In a Kaplan-Meier survival curves plot, data show that 38% of the BTs remained in the same school where they started their career, 40% moved to a different school, and 33% left teaching (Redding & Henry, 2019). When reviewing the turnover type, the survival curve shows that BTs are somewhat more likely to move schools in the year they are initially hired and at the end of that year, but this slightly decreases over the first 3 years of teaching (Redding & Henry, 2019). At the end of the

year, 12% of the new teachers left the profession after their first year, an additional 11% left in their second year, and 10% left in their third year (Redding & Henry, 2019). In comparison with previous research, Redding and Henry (2019) found that only 38% of the teachers remained where they initially started teaching.

Another study led by the Education Policy Center at Utah University followed approximately 2,700 teachers between 2008-2009 and 2014-2015 over 8 years (Ni & Rorrer, 2018). Data were reported on the stayers, movers, and leavers. In the 2008 cohort, 211 teachers were identified as stop-out teachers. These teachers did not teach an entire school year but returned to the teaching profession during the study period (Ni & Rorrer, 2018). Educators who left the teaching profession were categorized by age groups of 25 years or under, 26-30, 31-39, and 40 or older. This report showed data collected every 2 years between 2008-2009 and 2014-2015. Among the teachers, 735 were ages 25 and younger. In this age range, teacher turnover increased from 21% to 73% (Ni & Rorrer, 2018). In this study, 683 teachers were in the 26- to 30-year-old group and the teacher turnover rate increased from 15% to 54%. Within the 31- to 39-year-old group of 510 teachers, there was a 42% increase, rising from 12% in teacher turnover, and there was a 16% to 48% teacher turnover rate in the 560 teacher group aged 40 or older (Ni & Rorrer, 2018). Overall, the highest rate of turnover was in the youngest age group. About half (56%) of the teacher cohort left the teaching profession by the end of the 8-year study in Utah (Ni & Rorrer, 2018).

BTSPs have developed, grown, and been instrumental in helping to improve teacher attrition rates in recent years. The North Carolina State Board of Education requires a 3-year plan that provides support and nurtures the professional growth of BTs

by way of a quality induction program (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2020).

BTSP

According to Bastian and Marks (2017), the modal category of experience in the teacher workforce was 15 years 25 years ago. Today, the median experience category is 1 year, and almost a quarter of teachers have less than 5 years of experience (Bastian & Marks, 2017; Ingersoll et al., 2012).

Although induction programs may vary from state to state, policy makers rely on the components of an induction program to help smoothly transition new teachers into the profession, help new teachers become competent professionals in the classroom, increase student achievement, and help new teachers have the desire to remain and make a positive difference in the teaching profession (Harris, 2015; Literacy Information and Communication System [LINCS], 2015). Policy makers are implementing induction programs to combat teacher turnover for new teachers (Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017). The BTSP is a required 3-year program for BTs. The BTSP is one approach to improve teacher retention rates, quality teaching practices, and student achievement gains. BT induction programs that are well-designed and provide the required support will produce a higher retention rate, accelerate professional growth among new teachers, and improve learning for students (Podolsky et al., 2016). The BTSP also aims to adhere to state-mandated education standards to positively impact student achievement and build capacity to help grow effective teacher leaders and skilled administrators.

NTC (2016) stated students suffer when new teachers struggle. NTC also claimed high standards, adequate funding, protected time, trained mentors, and quality mentoring contribute to the success of BTs. NTC examined state policies on providing high-quality

support programs for teachers, school administrators, and mentors assigned to them (NTC, 2016). According to NTC, three states have met their standards for providing high-quality BT support. These three states are Connecticut, Delaware, and Iowa; they provide support for BTs over several years, provide a licensed program for mentors, and maintain funding to sustain the NTSP (NTC, 2016). There are 29 states that have BT support programs to help new teachers, and 15 states only provide help in the first 2 years. There are nine states, one being North Carolina, that require support for BTs beyond their first 2 years of teaching.

Hawaii's public school system conducted a case study with five participants to assess and understand the experiences and perceptions of new teachers in order to identify what and how to improve teacher support, promote retention of effective teachers, and strengthen student achievement (Martin et al., 2016). The carefully selected participants were typical new teachers in their schools and described below:

- College graduates who finished a certification program at a continental college or university in the United States, were promised a placement, and were hired (Martin et al., 2016; McGeehan, 2019).
- Certified teachers who attended a college and completed their teacher preparation requirements such as student teaching in Hawaii public schools were selected (Martin et al., 2016).
- College graduates who agreed to teach at low-performing schools would receive a 6-week teaching course that would count towards their master's degree in education and certification during a 2-year agreement with Teach for America (Martin et al., 2016).

Having the opportunity to observe how their peers structured their lessons, organized activities, and professionally collaborated helped all five teachers their first year (Martin et al., 2016). All five participants found observing teachers as their most beneficial professional development activity throughout the year (Martin et al., 2016). Sharing, giving feedback, and rethinking are standard practices in healthy professional cultures (Reilly, 2017). One of the participants reflected that her mentor gave her suggestions that were tried, but she struggled to comprehend what exactly her mentor described (Martin et al., 2016). Teaching models were more influential for the participant and necessary (Martin et al., 2016). In one school, teachers observed other educators and met weekly in professional learning groups to discuss their classroom management and higher-order thinking practices (Martin et al., 2016). Another participant learned how to structure things and make things clear for their students (Martin et al., 2016). Four of the five teacher participants were assigned a mentor in their schools and met in professional learning communities. The instructional support provided was believed to impact their teaching, and the participants were appreciative of having experienced colleagues or mentors who were familiar with their teaching content (Martin et al., 2016). BTs need a supportive mentor while actively participating in an induction program to increase their success. One of the findings was that new teachers needed a confidant, a supportive mentor, and someone they could rely on. They also needed structures that facilitated learning and planning time with colleagues of the same content to influence student achievement (Martin et al., 2016).

Novice teachers who had worked less than 5 years, had completed a traditional teacher preparation program at a New Jersey university, and had taught between 2011-

2016 were identified and surveyed to better understand the components that influenced their decision-making processes positively or negatively (McGeehan, 2019). This research study aimed to assist school districts in supporting and retaining new teachers while decreasing attrition rates. The experiences of the teacher participants were Pre-K to Grade 12 with various assignments such as general education, special education, and content-specific teachers. The survey included questions about age, gender, experience, grade level, and content-specific questions. Other questions were divided into six categories, including induction programs, quality of induction programs, mentor experience, professional development embedded in induction, administrative support, and future plans. Seventy-two teachers completed the survey. The majority of the survey completers were in the age range of 21-30 years old. There were 42 people who were surveyed between the ages of 21 and 30, accounting for 53.55% of the total. There were 17 participants (23.61%) in the 31- to 40-year-old age group, 10 (13.9%) in the 41- to 50-year-old age group, and three (4.17%) in the 51- to 60-year-old age group. Sixty-six (94.29%) of the 72 participants said they received a formal introduction program, while four (5.71%) said they did not and were asked to explain why. At this point, the original 72 participants had decreased to only 53 people. It is unclear why some individuals dropped out of the study (McGeehan, 2019).

Another prevalent feature of induction programs is mentoring. One participant did not respond when asked if they had been allocated a mentor, 45 beginning instructors (86.54%) had been appointed a mentor, and seven (13.46%) had not been assigned a mentor. Before the start of the school year, just around half of the new teachers were assigned a mentor. Approximately 17 participants (32.08%) met their mentor before the

school year, and the other participants could not meet. The majority of the participants could not observe their mentor or were not allowed to meet with their mentor. Most of the participants found collaboration with their mentor helpful and felt their mentor gave them perspectives on dealing with problematic students and answering questions they had. McGeehan (2019) found that 25 participants (62.5%) thought their mentor was an essential element of their induction experience, 11 individuals (27.5%) were indifferent, and the remaining four participants (10%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that their mentor was a valuable part of their induction experience. At this point in the study, only 40 people had signed up.

The participants who continued answered several questions about professional development. Professional development topics varied. Four participants replied they did not participate in ongoing professional development, but 49 (92.45%) did participate throughout the year. The majority of the participants believed the professional development was not geared toward BTs, and 24 participants (44.44%) explained it was geared towards new teachers (McGeehan, 2019). Of the remaining participants in this case study, 73.85% felt professional development impacted their teaching. When asked if principals provided resources needed for their classrooms, the majority agreed that their principal provided new teachers with the necessary resources for their classrooms. When asked if new teachers felt supported by their principal, 30 participants (73.17%) agreed, three (7.32%) remained neutral, and eight 19.15% disagreed or strongly disagreed with principal support (McGeehan, 2019).

Overall, 64% of the participants strongly agreed that the induction program supported them and the support systems played a vital part in their induction process; and

because of the support, BTs felt comfortable and successful as new teachers with little to no experience. In response to the question of whether their induction program made them feel more comfortable in their role as an educator, 71.8% strongly agreed or agreed, and 53.84% strongly agreed or agreed when asked whether their induction program helped in their decision to remain a teacher. Lastly, when asked if the induction program made an impact on their decision to stay a teacher, 21 of participants (53.84%) agreed or strongly agreed, the remaining 12 participants (30.77%) remained neutral, and six (15.36%) disagreed or strongly disagreed (McGeehan, 2019).

As the teacher shortage continues to increase in school districts across the nation, this study emphasizes the need for BTs to participate in teacher induction programs, which are seen as a factor in the success and retention of new teachers (McGeehan, 2019). Teachers who are assigned mentors early on can collaborate with mentors and other teachers and have relevant professional development opportunities, which played a vital role in the decision of this sample of teachers to remain in the teaching profession.

NTSP

A university-based induction program for low-performing schools in North Carolina is known as the NTSP (Bastian & Marks, 2017). The NTSP was created by faculty from four universities in North Carolina and facilitated by the General Administration to aid BT practice and retention (Bastian & Marks, 2017). NTSP is a 3-part induction model that includes face-to-face and virtual instructional coaching and six professional development sessions, and institutes were held before and during the school year for participating BTs (Bastian & Marks, 2017). Altogether, 377 BTs in 59 of the lowest-achieving schools were served in 2012-2013, and 846 BTs in 91 lowest-

performing schools in 2013-2014 were served (Bastian & Marks, 2017). The main objective of the NTSP is to maintain BTs and provide an induction, particularly in the lowest-performing schools and districts (Bastian & Marks, 2017).

Bastian and Mark (2017) compared the success and retention results of BTs participating in the NTSP in their study. North Carolina used \$7.7 million Race to the Top funds to create the NTSP (Bastian & Marks, 2017). The federal funding provided resources to help BTs acquire skills and knowledge to promote quality instruction and improve student achievement (Bastian & Marks, 2017; Manna & Ryan, 2011). Another goal of the NTSP, which continues to be the primary goal today, is to retain BTs in the profession, especially in districts served by the program (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014; Bastian & Marks, 2017; Ronfeldt et al., 2013). In collaboration with colleges, schools and districts include induction to improve student-teacher placements and college graduate recruiting and opportunities to refine and innovate teacher education systems and broaden teacher education while maintaining leverage over BT success (Bastian & Marks, 2017).

Although the components of the NTSP were not new, and as with most induction programs, it offered mentoring and professional development, there were four reasons the NTSP stood out. First, the NTSP was planned and implemented by university teacher education faculty and staff. Secondly, the NTSP invited all BTs to participate regardless of their preparation, traditional or alternative. Thirdly, the NTSP supported low-performing school districts by providing fiscal and human resources to schools in need and teachers willing to work in a difficult and challenging school setting. Lastly, the NTSP is part of a statewide university system of 15 institutions in North Carolina that

collectively work together (Bastian & Marks, 2017).

Overall, there was no significant difference in performance between the teachers served by the NTSP and the sample teachers being compared. The NTSP teachers, on the other hand, were more likely to return to their previous teaching position. Mingo (2012) evaluated a BTSP program with teachers in their second, third, and fourth years of teaching in a small public school district. Information was provided by mentors, administrators, school-level support leadership, the BTSP coordinator, and the assistant superintendent of human resources. Qualitative and quantitative data were compiled to evaluate the BTSP's efficacy and effects on teacher retention (Mingo, 2012). Mingo administered surveys to BTs, mentors, and administrators in addition to conducting focus group discussions and in-person interviews to obtain a greater understanding of the BTSP's success. The statistics showed that the BTSP had an effect on teacher retention and that there were trends in some areas (Mingo, 2012). BTs indicated a need for administrative assistance, onsite mentors, and professional development support as areas of consistency.

However, not all school districts can afford or do not choose to participate in the NTSP. North Carolina has identified several of the most important features of an induction program that are embedded in the BTSP. The following section will explore several key components of the BTSP. These components include mentoring, administrative support, and professional development (NCDPI, 2020b).

Mentoring

Mentoring is one key component of the BTSP. Mentoring is reserved primarily for the induction of individuals new to an environment or profession (Carr et al., 2017)

and can be crucial in giving new teachers the assistance they deserve throughout their early years in the classroom. Ideally, mentoring is embedded in the opportunity to collaborate, set goals, and problem solve (Carr et al., 2017). Pairing a BT with a skilled practitioner who can deepen the new teacher's understanding of teaching theories and approaches, classroom management, policies and procedures, using data for lesson planning, and nurturing critical and reflective thinking is essential (LINCS, 2015). Mentoring can support BTs in reaching targeted outcomes for themselves and their students (LINCS, 2015).

Harris (2015) said skilled mentors can influence new teacher retention. The following “to-do” list provides an excellent beginning for establishing or assessing a mentoring program.

- **Principals select mentors with suitable characteristics carefully.** A mentor should have an upbeat demeanor, an optimistic outlook of the teaching profession, and strong communication skills; be a professional model, flexible and open-minded to new ideas, and reliable; and have a nonjudgmental attitude.
- **Ensure the mentors receive training.** After selecting mentors, provide training and ongoing support. Mentors need to recognize their role is to guide and support the new teacher, not expecting the new teacher to behave or teach the same way as the mentor.
- **Allow time for the mentor and BT to meet before the start of the school year.** Principals should meet with mentors to establish expectations and coach and guide mentors as they support new teachers.

- **Establish the expectation of confidentiality.** New teachers should be able to trust their mentors. Many BTs struggle with classroom management, student behavior, organization, and communication. Mentors should not report struggles to administration but seek the guidance or support of administrations.
- **Have ongoing meetings with mentors.** The principal or district leadership should meet regularly with mentors to help cultivate professional growth and foster collaboration.

As school districts around the country continue to explore solutions to improve teacher retention rates, induction has become a popular strategy (Matsko et al., 2007). It is generally characterized as a means to orient, assist, guide, and grow BTs into capable practitioners (Matsko et al., 2007). Matsko et al. (2007) found that new elementary teachers who received a healthy level of support, such as mentoring, were twice as likely to report a good experience that encouraged them to continue in the profession.

Chicago Public Schools analyzed survey data for 1,737 BTs at the elementary and high school levels with limited teaching experience in the spring of 2005 (Matsko et al., 2007). A total of 915 elementary teachers and 414 high school teachers in the sample participated in the induction program during the 2004-2005 school year. One fifth of the BTs did not participate in a formal induction, even though participation was required (Matsko et al., 2007). Matsko et al. (2007) investigated the influence of induction program participation on the following outcomes: BT experience, intent to continue teaching, and plan to stay in the same school. Participation in the formal induction appears to have a positive effect but had little bearing on the BTs' quality and intent to

continue teaching (Matsko et al., 2007).

In the sample, three quarters of BTs responded to questions about their formal mentors (Matsko et al., 2007). Nearly 70% met with their mentors every 2 weeks, and more than half met weekly or even more frequently (Matsko et al., 2007). Matsko et al. (2007) found that the frequency of meeting with a mentor is equally important as the assistance of the mentor. Teachers at both the elementary and high school levels found mentor content useful in receiving guidance with teaching strategies, classroom management, policies and procedures, observation and discussion of teaching, and other self-selected issues (Matsko et al., 2007). In addition to mentoring, BTs should have access to various supports as they start the teaching profession (Matsko et al., 2007). Support could include collegiality support, professional learning communities at their grade or subject-level teams, or release time to observe another teacher's practice and receive feedback of one's teaching from a peer observer (Matsko et al., 2007). Two supports significantly impacted elementary teachers. These supports are encouragement and assistance from their principal and opportunities to collaborate with peers (Matsko et al., 2007). In contrast, high school teachers reported that principal support and peer collaboration influenced their intention to continue teaching.

Cook (2012) surveyed 97 BTs to learn about their experiences with various mentoring programs. Cook stated, "Whether the mentor program is mandated or voluntary, the overall goal of teacher mentoring is to foster a relationship of ongoing support, collaboration and the development of knowledge and skills that improved teaching strategies" (p. 3). The study participants were asked to answer eight quantitative questions and two qualitative questions (Cook, 2012). Responses of participants indicated

that 78.5% (73 teachers) of BTs received mentoring in their first year, but a little over 20% did not receive mentoring during their first year of teaching (Cook, 2012). The 73 responses varied, with some being very satisfied with their mentoring experience and some reports of mentoring being a horrible experience (Cook, 2012). Participants who responded negatively regarding their mentoring experience reported a lack of support, structure, and effective communication skills; mentors were not available due to offsite responsibilities; mentors were not familiar with the content area; mentors were forced to be involved; there was little to no contact; and a mentor encouraged the mentee to mirror their teaching style (Cook, 2012). Cook found that mentoring practices that were more structured and consistent, mentor/mentee pairing with an effective veteran teacher with at least 10 years of experience, mentors that were familiar with the content areas of the mentee, mentors who worked in the same building, and mentors who were formally trained were considered to have more effective mentoring practices. According to Cook, trust is also important in the relationship between the mentor and mentee. He suggested that the mentor should be involved in the evaluation of the BT. Mentors who know their teachers and the context in which they work will create inductions programs that deliver better mentoring and needed support. Support enables this generation and future generations of teachers who will possibly remain in the teaching profession (Matsko et al., 2007).

BTs, as well as the leadership of the school-based BTSP and induction, require the support of a mentor. The role of the principals in the BTSP is discussed in the following section.

Administrative Support

The BTSP program also relies heavily on administrative support. School principals play a key role in the induction process for new teachers. The induction program encompasses hiring, welcoming, and assigning a class to a BT, while the principal cultivates a pleasant working environment that supports BTs. Quality of leadership and support can significantly affect teacher turnover (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). BTs feel reassured to know that they can trust their school administrator to care for the building and hold students accountable (Burke et al., 2012; Scherer, 2012).

Boyd et al. (2011) conducted a study where two groups of teachers were surveyed. Teacher turnover is higher among the less experienced than the more experienced as well as teacher preparation experiences and pathways to teaching (Boyd et al., 2011). This study extended prior research by using data on all schools and teachers in the New York City public school district to disclose the relationship between working conditions and teacher attrition (Boyd et al., 2011). In the spring of 2005, first-year teachers were surveyed, a follow-up survey was conducted with the same teachers a year later, and district administrative data were obtained from first-year teachers (Boyd et al., 2011). The survey was completed by 4,360 teachers; a little over 70% responded (Boyd et al., 2011). Participation was voluntary, but those who completed the survey received \$25.00. Building on prior research studies, six factors were used to measure school working conditions: teacher influence, administration including principals and assistant principals, staff relations, students, facilities, and safety (Boyd et al., 2011).

Teachers who completed the first-year survey and stayed in the classroom for the second year were given follow-up surveys (Boyd et al., 2011). Teachers were polled on

their teaching experiences, opinions concerning those experiences, and their plans for the future (Boyd et al., 2011). Boyd et al. (2011) also matched survey responses to New York Department of Education administrative data. The data included demographics, background, and retention data. Of the first-year teachers, 80% who responded remained in the same school the following year, while 10% changed schools within New York City, and 9% left teaching in New York City. Overall, the administration component was the only one that predicted teacher retention decisions in a significant way (Boyd et al., 2011). Teachers in New York City were more likely to move to another school or abandon the profession altogether if they had bad feelings about their school administration (Boyd et al., 2011).

Pratt (2010) examined the induction process in a local school environment for BTs. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to determine a relationship between the principal's and teacher's leadership styles. This study looked at the school administrator's role in cultivating an environment that recruits and supports BTs to reduce teacher attrition. Three thousand one hundred surveys were emailed within California, and 267 elementary principals responded. Leadership style was not found to be a major predictor of successful induction methods in the study by Pratt. According to Pratt, principals do not have the time or financial resources they believe are required to properly assist new teachers in the induction process; nevertheless, they do use new teacher orientation and mentorship as feasible support.

The leadership of a school is a crucial component of teacher induction (LINCS, 2015). Harris (2015) proposed that principals and assistant principals could positively impact BT retention, mainly first-year teachers. Often, the quality of administrative

support is the top reason teachers leave the profession or stay in the profession and is often more important than salaries (Podolsky et al., 2016); however, the quality of school leadership is also associated with many other factors that emerged from attrition research, including lack of ample workshops, training, professional learning opportunities, instructional leadership, lack of quality mentoring and induction programs, time for collaboration and planning, collegial relationships, and decision-making input that extend beyond the first year (Sutcher et al., 2016).

Administrators at the school level should make an effort to cultivate a culture of collaboration valued by all and provide feedback to assist BTs with growth and development. Principals are the backbone of good mentoring for new teachers, and their participation in mentoring programs can be advantageous (Clark & Byrnes, 2012; Gordon & Lowrey, 2017). Principals are often viewed as the leader, supporter, and guide of BTs (Gordon & Lowrey, 2017). School administrators must provide more than a basic back-to-school orientation or a randomly selected partnership with an experienced teacher (Boogren, 2015). Even if a school utilizes mentors, principals can make a substantial difference in the development of new teachers. Principals have the opportunity to provide the needed feedback by performing walkthroughs and examining lesson plans as part of the BT's formative evaluation. As trusted partners, principals convey their expectations to BTs explicitly during the summative evaluation (Feiman-Nemser, 2012). Principals also encourage BTs to work with other teachers to develop their instructional skills through collaborative planning and coteaching (Burke et al., 2012).

Dumler (2010) conducted a mixed methods research study to examine the relationship between principal support and the likelihood of first-year teachers remaining

in the teaching profession. The study's quantitative portion was based on Q methodology, also known as Q sort. Q methodology is used to investigate the participant's viewpoint on an issue by ranking and scoring a series of statements. The first-year teachers ranked statements about principal support behaviors according to their importance of influencing them to remain in teaching. Fifth-year teachers voluntarily received the same Q sort to validate the perceptions of first-year teachers. The qualitative data showed pertinent findings from the Q sort interviews.

In a study conducted by Quinn and Andrews (2004), support with teaching and learning the curriculum, emotional support, materials, procedures, policies, rules, classroom management, and parent support were all found to have a strong connection with principal support and the total support perception (Gordon & Lowrey, 2017). The purpose of this study was to see if the support and help provided to first-year teachers from their principals was substantial in comparison to the total amount of support they believed they received (Quinn & Andrews, 2004). In a district of about 60,000 students, all first-year teachers were asked to participate in the study (Quinn & Andrews, 2004). Questionnaires were sent to 182 first-year teachers for the 2001-2002 school year. Some teachers were in schools that were high achieving with high socioeconomic populations, while others taught at-risk students. A 21-item questionnaire was completed by Year 1 BTs to measure the level of support they felt they received (Quinn & Andrews, 2004). The first section of the questionnaire asked BTs to rank principal support they received on a scale of 1 to 10 (Quinn & Andrews, 2004). The other 20 items addressed other critical areas of support for BTs, such as assistance with instruction and curriculum, information on district and school procedures, suggestions for dealing with parents or

parent conferences, and a few other items (Quinn & Andrews, 2004). Fifty-nine teachers were interviewed by phone; the phone interview confirmed the need for more or better orientation for first-year teachers (Quinn & Andrews, 2004). The teachers felt lost and felt the district and school assumed teachers knew more than they actually did (Quinn & Andrews, 2004). In conclusion, principals must lead by example in providing support and encourage other staff to do the same. Principal support of first-year teachers is critical and helps retain new teachers (Quinn & Andrews, 2004).

Professional Development

Beyond mentoring and administrative support, BTs need professional development that focuses on their subject matter and pedagogical methods and that will help them improve teaching practices (Hinds & Berger, 2010). Professional development is one key component to improving the quality of U.S. schools (Desimone, 2011).

Although BTs bring enthusiasm, energy, and commitment into their classrooms, they also face challenges and need support in policy and procedure, materials, curriculum, lesson planning, classroom management, and student achievement. The quality of a BT's initial experience is fundamental (Karlberg & Bezzina, 2020). Professional development is widely recognized as a supplement to the teacher's workday. It comes in the form of workshops, local and national conferences, college courses, institutes, seminars, and digital learning, and the list goes on (Desimone, 2011). The paradigm of professional learning has shifted. Professional development is sometimes viewed as a one-shot workshop approach in many parts of the country, outdated and insufficient for BTs (Reeves, 2010).

Retention rates are higher among teachers who are better prepared for the

challenges and issues they will face (Warren, 2016). During the first years of teaching, BTs form their professional identity, construct their professional practice, and make a conscious decision to stay or leave (Karlberg & Bezzina, 2020). A BT's needs are not always the same as a more experienced teacher's (Warren, 2016). This generation of teachers needs to be armed with the knowledge and skills required to help students succeed (Warren, 2016). Strong (2006) stated that teacher support in their first 2 years of teaching is critical to their effectiveness, state certification, and subject matter skills. New and rigorous teacher evaluation systems have become the center of our nation's school reform issues in the past 4 years (DeMonte, 2013). One goal of the new evaluation process is to collect data about teachers for human capital decisions to identify effective and ineffective teachers (DeMonte, 2013). Secondly and most importantly, it helps to improve the quality and the overall education of all children (DeMonte, 2013). Those who study expert performance in various fields find that high-quality feedback helps BTs become competent and skilled (DeMonte, 2013).

BTs faced several challenges, according to a study conducted in Cyprus in late 2008-2009, that were divided into three categories: adapting to the organizational setting and realities of schools, issues related to teaching effectively and classroom management, and the lack of a supportive and collaborative culture (Menon, 2012). BTs are not well informed on these matters, and in addition, many lack effective induction practices (Menon, 2012). In this study, 25 teachers who graduated from the education department of the University of Cyprus were interviewed. The graduates were randomly selected. All the teachers were under the age of 28. Four of the BTs were in their first year of teaching, five had taught for 5 years, and the others were divided between 2 to 3 years of

experience. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. In addition to the previously mentioned problems, respondents reported a lack of equipment and materials needed for support. In line with the recommendations of this study, a mentoring program was introduced in addition to an induction program. The findings of this study suggest that BTs expect lead teachers to serve as mentors and indicate their involvement demonstrates a supportive and caring commitment to the organization. School leaders are considered more supportive when they extend their trust to those who appear in need. Trust is built through frequent communication with BTs and greater involvement in the induction and mentor program (Menon, 2012).

Hinds and Berger (2010) conducted a case study on the professional development experiences and the impact of those experiences. The study included interviews of BTs with 5 or fewer years of experience in a secondary school setting. In addition, the study included the perspectives of three administrators from the same school regarding the impact of professional development on these teachers and six teachers (Hinds & Berger, 2010). Three of the six defined professional development as a way to improve, while the other three perceived professional development as socio-political (Hinds & Berger, 2010). According to the three administrators, professional development is an institutional goal to change teacher practices and improve student outcomes and a tool to grow teacher capacity (Hinds & Berger, 2010). Their finding indicated that BTs needed professional development for subject content and instructional strategies, ongoing mentoring, and skills in classroom management and mapping the curriculum (Hinds & Berger, 2010).

Melnick and Meister (2008) conducted a study where new teachers reported concerns about classroom management, effective instructional strategies, planning for

diverse groups of students, and technology in classroom instruction. Their main concerns were classroom management, discipline, parent involvement, and preparation. School districts have to play a vital role in mentoring their new teachers (Melnick & Meister, 2008). It is more than just bureaucratic details of helping BTs understand their teaching context (Melnick & Meister, 2008). Districts need to develop ongoing systematic assessments of teachers' professional development needs and provide appropriate ongoing training within the school district and schools (Melnick & Meister, 2008).

Ten letters were mailed to principals across 50 states. Principals were asked to distribute the letters to first- and second-year teachers in their building to access a website and respond to the survey. After that, an email was sent to 500 more principals, urging them to forward the email to any first- and second-year teachers in their building or outside of it. There were 273 BT responses. In addition, Melnick and Meister (2008) wanted to determine the difference between experienced teacher concerns and BT concerns. The same instrument was used with experienced teachers (Melnick & Meister, 2008). Approximately 1,240 experienced teachers were randomly selected, and a total of 218 teachers responded. As a result, there were disparities in classroom management and parent interactions between BTs and veteran teachers; however, there was no significant difference in the academic preparation or time management scales. BTs who obtain preservice experience in college classrooms and practice while teaching find their first teaching assignment substantially different (Melnick & Meister, 2008). BTs need to gain feedback and exposure to other settings (Melnick & Meister, 2008). Teachers who spend an academic year with their cooperating teacher can better examine and reflect on their practice (Melnick & Meister, 2008). Experienced teachers felt better prepared to

communicate with parents about conflict, progress, and various methods to communicate with parents (Melnick & Meister, 2008). Using a variety of assessment methodologies, BTs felt more prepared than experienced teachers (Melnick & Meister, 2008). Both groups stated they had trouble managing their time (Melnick & Meister, 2008).

Summary

The BTSP is used by school districts across the state and country to provide support and guidance to BTs. Although induction programs differ, policy makers rely on the induction programs to help BTs become competent professionals and improve student achievement (Harris, 2015 & LINCS, 2015). According to the literature, the workplace environment, mentoring, professional development, and administrative support are all key components of the BTSP and play a role in teacher retention when implemented well. The elements that contribute to teacher turnover must be identified and analyzed by educational leaders.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter describes the research questions, setting, and participants. It also describes the research design, procedures, data collection, and data analysis of a program evaluation of the BTSP implemented in a small rural district in North Carolina. The goal of this study was to explore how BTs perceive a teacher preparation program in the district of study in North Carolina and grasp an understanding of how their perceptions affect their decisions to remain in the profession.

BTs in North Carolina are required to participate in a 3-year induction program. The induction program requires the school district to assign mentors at the school level to BTs. Mentors are required to meet with Year 1 BTs weekly, Year 2 BTs bi-weekly, and Year 3 BTs monthly to discuss specific topics required by the state and based on needs shared by principals. In addition, an instructional coach observes, collaborates, and supports Year 1 and Year 2 BTs. This induction program begins with a full-day workshop for all new BTs hired for the school district and is followed by monthly BT support meetings at the district and school sites.

Research Questions

1. How do BTs, administrators, and mentors perceive the effectiveness of the BTSP?
2. What are the needs of BTs with 3 years or less experience?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the BTSP?
4. To what extent are BTs supported by administrators and mentors?

Research Design

This study was conducted to better understand how BTs perceive a BTSP in a small rural school district in North Carolina and determine if their perceptions have any bearing on their decisions to stay in the teaching profession. In addition, an evaluation of the program was used to collect feedback from individuals participating in the BT support program. The survey and interview questions were designed by Dr. Lori T. Powell and used in my mixed methods study to capture quantitative and qualitative data. These questions were used to examine if the BTSP is meeting the perceived needs of BTs. An email requesting permission to use her survey questions was sent (Appendix A). With Dr. Powell's consent, the survey and interview questions were used for this research study (Appendix B). Introduction letters were sent via email to BTs (Appendix C), mentors (Appendix D), and administrators (Appendix E) explaining the purpose of the study. The quantitative data of this study were collected from Likert-type survey questions (Appendices F, G, & H). Introduction letters were sent via email also to BTs (Appendix I), mentors (Appendix J), and administrators (Appendix K) requesting participation in focus groups sessions, and the qualitative data were gathered from open-ended survey questions (Appendices L, M, & N) to better understand the BTSP and how it impacts BTs and BT retention. A proxy, a person who has the power or authority to act on behalf of another, was asked to conduct focus groups sessions (Appendix O) and gave consent (Appendix P).

Procedures

The program evaluation involved data collected from surveys and focus group meetings. The focus group sessions were recorded, transcribed, and disaggregated to help

evaluate the current BTSP and its impact on retaining teachers.

I obtained permission from the superintendent. A letter also was provided to introduce the purpose to the requested participants of the study and to gain informed consent. The surveys were generated using Survey Monkey, an online educational survey program that allowed me to customize online questions to be completed by voluntary participants. The participants were given 1 week to respond to the survey. At the end of the week, a reminder was sent out to participants who had not responded. An invite was also sent which requested participation in focus groups interviews with all teachers, mentors, and school administrators.

Data Collection

I obtained permission from the study district's superintendent (Appendix Q). Once approved, the surveys were distributed, and focus group interviews were conducted. The survey was emailed via Survey Monkey to the participants in their BT years. The survey was also mailed to teachers who were in their fourth year of teaching and were participants in the BTSP in this district of study. A separate survey was sent to school administrators and to lead mentors as well. All surveys were accompanied by a letter describing the study's goal and instructions. Once participants were surveyed, data were collected and displayed in charts.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using an exploratory mixed methods approach. This design involved a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection (Creswell, 2014). I gathered and analyzed the quantitative and qualitative data separately and compared the results to validate or refute the findings (Creswell, 2014). The

quantitative data were collected through SurveyMonkey from three separate groups of professionals. The professional groups included BTs, mentors, and school administrators. Focus groups were used to gather qualitative data after the online questionnaires were completed. Additional focus group questions derived from the online survey and later were discussed. I transcribed the qualitative data and used descriptive statistics to describe what the data showed. Finally, the existing BTSP was assessed using quantitative and qualitative data to identify strengths and weaknesses to improve the BTSP and teacher retention.

Setting

There are six schools in the study district: one high school, one middle school, and four elementary schools. The small rural district has 194 certified staff members and approximately 2,618 students. Approximately 40 to 50 BTs are hired annually as shown in Table 6. Table 6 displays the number of BTs hired over the past 5 years in the state of North Carolina, the attrition rate of the BTs hired, the number of BTs hired in the small rural district in this study, and the attrition rates. In the school community studied, the teacher turnover rate in 2019-2020 was 31.80%. The attrition rate has increased by almost 10% from the previous year. BTs in this school district took part in a new teacher induction program before the start of the school year. As part of the induction program, BTs were provided support through various activities, including a 3-day new teacher orientation, meeting and working with their school-level mentors for the first time, and high-quality professional development before the start of the school year.

Table 6*State Attrition Rates by Teacher Category 2018-2019*

Category of teachers	Number of BTs hired in NC	Attrition	State attrition rate	Number of BTs hired in small district	Attrition	County attrition rate
2015-2016	17,618	2,252	12.78%	41	18	43%
2016-2017	21,276	2,619	12.31%	50	6	12%
2017-2018	15,595	1,925	12.34%	45	15	33.30%
2018-2019	15,691	1,768	11.30%	50	11	22%
2019-2020	Not available	Not available	Not available	44	14	31.80%

Participants

Teachers with 5 years or less of teaching experience who were being served in the BTSP or had previously participated in the BTSP were invited to participate in this program evaluation. Principals and mentors were asked to voluntarily participate in this study. The director of human resources, who also serves as the BT coordinator, facilitated surveys and data collection. All participants were invited to respond to the survey to address induction components, professional development, administrative support, and district-level support. Surveys and focus group discussions provided further information. The results were utilized to see if the induction program helps with retention.

Instrument

The quantitative data for this study were collected by giving BTs, mentors, and administrators Likert scale surveys. Open-ended survey items and focus group discussion questions were used to collect data. Dr. Lori T. Powell granted permission for me to use the BT questionnaires used in her study (Powell, 2016). Dr. Lori T. Powell wrote the survey and interview questions used for this program evaluation, and they were validated by the executive director of human resources, the director of student services and

research, and the district coordinator of BTs and teacher recruitment in a rural school district in Central North Carolina.

There were three sets of survey questions and three sets of focus group questions for this study. The survey questions for BTs are found in Appendix F, for mentors in Appendix G, and for school administrators in Appendix H. Interview questions for BTs are found in Appendix L, mentor interview questions in Appendix M, and school administrator questions in Appendix N.

The BT survey comprises 47 questions that were answered on a Likert scale. The following sections make up this survey: 10 of the questions are about mentor support or issues, six are about self-assessments and their own needs, five relate to administrative support, four address support of school level BT meetings, six discuss district level BT meetings, 12 questions relate to job satisfaction, and lastly, there is one open-ended question to allow additional comments. The mentor survey has a total of 34 questions, also Likert scale responses: nine questions address issues and support related to mentees, five relate to school administration, four questions pertain to school level BT meetings, six questions analyze the mentee's needs, five questions cover district-level mentor training and program efficacy, five questions relate to school site BT meetings, and lastly, there is an open-ended question for comments. The administrator survey also has 34 questions. The questions are divided into sections: 10 questions address the matching of BTs and mentors, six address the assessment of the BTs needs, four pertain to the school site BT meetings, five address district-level training, and program effectiveness, five pertain to administrative support, and lastly, there is an open-ended question for additional comments.

In addition to the survey, participants were asked to participate in focus group questions virtually. Three types of interviews were conducted: BT, mentor, and administrator. Five open-ended questions were asked to address needs, strengths, support, and relationships during each focus group discussion. To describe the data collected and what the data showed, descriptive statistics was employed.

District Profile: BTs and Mentors

This year, two schools, School A and School B, have been classified as low-performing. About a fourth of the teaching staff from grades prekindergarten through 12th are participants of the BT induction program in this district of study. Eleven percent make up the BTs who started their careers before earning a professional teaching license and are considered lateral entry teachers. Since the start of the 2019-2020 school year, 10 teachers have resigned from the school district; five of the 10 participated in the BTSP.

Table 7 indicates the number of teachers currently completing their first, second, or third year of teaching in the study district. BTs who did not complete a traditional education program enter the teaching profession as lateral entry, which residency licensure recently replaced. Lateral entry and residency licensure are both described as alternative pathways to teaching. Both allow individuals to obtain a teaching position and begin teaching while completing a course of study and/or assessments for licensure requirements.

Table 7*The Study District 2019-2021*

Beginning teachers	2019-2020 # of BTs	2019-2020 # of lateral entry/residency licensure	2020-2021 # of BTs	2020-2021 # of lateral entry/residency licensure
1 year of experience	17	13	10	8
2 years of experience	12	8	15	12
3 years of experience	15	9	12	7

There are six schools in the district with 2,530 students. Unfortunately, the number of students is progressively decreasing compared to prior years. Nearly half the students enrolled are minorities, and 77.5% of the students are economically challenged. During the 2018-2019 school year, 73.1% of the students enrolled in this school district received free or reduced lunch. Households in this school district that have incomes below the federal poverty line are eligible to receive free or reduced meals. All four elementary schools qualify for the National School Lunch Program. Schools receive a cash reimbursement for each lunch and snack served. The poverty rate in this district is 16.2%, with a typical household income of \$45,733.

Due to a widespread pandemic prompting school closures, the U.S. Department of Education waived the statewide spring assessments, accountability, and other reporting obligations for North Carolina on March 23, 2020. Based on previous performance data, two of the six schools in this small rural district are considered low-performing. “Schools that obtain a D or F in school performance and school growth are low-performing,”

according to North Carolina General Statute 115C-83.15 (FindLaw Staff, 2020).

In the 2019-2020 school year, the study district had a total of 44 BTs: 17 first-year teachers, 12 second-year teachers, and 15 third-year teachers participating in the BTSP. In 2020, 75.8% of the teachers in this district were experienced teachers, 18.4% were BTs, and 10.2% were provisional teachers. Teachers who are completing their first 3 years of teaching in North Carolina or other states are considered BTs. Provisional licensed teachers are individuals who add additional teaching areas to their licenses on a provisional basis. The provisional licensed teachers are also fully trained in appropriate pedagogical practices and demonstrate mastery in the North Carolina licensure assessments, earn 24 credit hours in the subject matter they teach, or continue to do so until all requirements are completed.

Mentor Demographics

At the district and school levels, principals were required to choose one lead mentor to act as the facilitator of the starting teacher support program. Mentor requirements are as follows:

- Mentors must have a “proficient” or above rating on all five standards on their most current summative evaluation or Standard 1 and 4 on an abbreviated evaluation.
- The principal shall select which mentor best matches each teacher’s needs and will assign the most appropriate mentor teacher to the new teacher, giving the highest priority to those ranked as “distinguished” or “accomplished” on the Education Value-Added Assessment System. The Education Value-Added Assessment System is a customized software system that offers educators

resources to promote student learning and reflect on and improve their effectiveness. This tool is available to all North Carolina school districts.

- All mentors must attend training provided by the regional education facilitator or complete an online training module when the facilitator is unavailable.
- Mentors are also expected to participate in ongoing professional development specific to mentor standards or other staff development deemed relevant.
- Mentors are asked to share the BT guidelines for 21st century professionals with all mentors in their professional learning community meetings.

Currently, 40 mentors are serving Years 1, 2, and 3 BTs. In addition, some serve in a dual role as mentor and buddy teacher, a teacher who may teach the same subject and/or serve on the same grade level team. The data in Table 8 show the number of mentors helping in each of the schools.

Table 8

Mentors

Schools	1 year of experience	2 years of experience	3 years of experience	Buddy – new to study district	Experience less than 10 years	10 years or more	Experience 20 years
High School A	4	8	3	1	6	3	6
Middle School B	2	1	2	3	3	0	0
Elementary School 1	2	6	0	0	1	1	5
Elementary School 2	1	5	0	4	2	1	3
Elementary School 3	4	3	0	2	1	2	3
Elementary School 4	0	3	0	0	0	1	2

In addition to mentors, the administrative team comprises one principal and two assistant principals at the middle and high school levels. One secondary curriculum/career technical education director serves both the high school and middle school. There are two curriculum facilitators at the middle school level, one for math and one for English languages. There is one curriculum facilitator at the high school level.

One principal serves at the elementary school level in each of the schools. There are no assistant principals assigned to the elementary schools. One elementary curriculum director serves all four elementary schools, and one elementary curriculum facilitator is assigned to each of the schools at the elementary level.

An instructional coach from the University of North Carolina Greensboro serves all Year 1 BTs in each of the schools. Mentors are paid a \$150 stipend per month to support and help BTs. It is the district's goal to select well-qualified mentors to aid in improving teacher development, teacher retention, and student success.

Teacher Working Conditions Survey

The 2016-2020 Teacher Working Conditions Survey, an anonymous statewide online survey, is designed to measure educator perceptions about present teaching and learning conditions that research has shown to increase student learning and teacher retention, shown in Table 9. The data are used to inform state education policies and annual improvements that best support educators, students, and administrators. In comparison to state norms, there are no differences with the district being studied; however, there are areas where the percentage is lower when assigning common planning and formal meetings with mentors. In some cases, the percentages were higher for the district when matching mentors than the state data.

Table 9*Teacher Working Conditions Survey Results*

Teacher Working Conditions Survey results						
Question 11.1 As a beginning teacher, I have received the following support.	2016	2016	2018	2018	2020	2020
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
a. Formally assigned mentor	87%	13%	100%	0%	97%	3%
b. Seminars specifically designed for new teachers.	87%	13%	85%	15%	94%	6%
c. Reduced workload	13%	87%	18%	82%	22%	78%
d. Common planning time with other teachers	67%	33%	62%	38%	67%	33%
e. Release time to observe other teachers	53%	47%	21%	79%	36%	64%
f. Formal time to meet with mentor during school hours	47%	53%	44%	56%	42%	58%
g. Orientation for new teachers	93%	7%	88%	12%	78%	22%
h. Access to professional learning communities where I could discuss concerns with other teachers	73%	27%	74%	26%	81%	19%
i. Regular communication with principals, other administrators, or department chair	87%	13%	74%	26%	72%	28%
j. I receive no additional support as a new teacher			11%	89%	17%	83%

(cont.)

Teacher Working Conditions Survey results						
Question 11.2 On average, how often did you engage in each of the following activities with your mentor?	2016 Never to less than once per month	2016 Several times to almost daily	2018 Never to less than once per month	2018 Several times to almost daily	2020 Never to less than once per month	2020 Several times to almost daily
a. Developing lesson plans	60%	40%	48%	53%	47%	53%
b. Being observed teaching by mentor	82%	19%	90%	10%	69%	31%
c. Observing my mentor's teaching	87%	13%	88%	12%	83%	17%
d. Analyzing student work	63%	35%	60%	40%	53%	47%
e. Reviewing the results of students' assessment	63%	37%	60%	40%	56%	44%
f. Addressing student or classroom behavioral issues	47%	53%	39%	61%	42%	58%
g. Reflecting on the effectiveness of my teaching together	49%	52%	47%	53%	47%	53%
h. Aligning my lesson planning with the state curriculum and local curriculum	59%	40%	42%	58%	53%	47%
Question 11.3 How much did the support you received from your mentor influence your practice in the following areas?	2016 Not at all to some of the time	2016 Quite a bit to a Great Deal	2018 Not at all to some of the time	2018 Quite a bit to a Great Deal	2020 Not at all to some of the time	2020 Quite a bit to a Great Deal
a. Instructional strategies	55%	46%	59%	41%	56%	44%
b. The subject matter I teach	64%	37%	56%	44%	64%	36%
c. Classroom management strategies	54%	46%	62%	38%	56%	44%
d. Using data to identify student needs	62%	38%	68%	32%	61%	39%
e. Differentiating instruction based on individual student needs and characteristics	60%	40%	65%	35%	58%	42%

(cont.)

Teacher Working Conditions Survey results						
f. Creating a supportive, equitable classroom where differences are valued	57%	42%	71%	29%	55%	45%
g. Enlisting the help of family members, parents, and/or guardians	69%	32%	71%	29%	67%	33%
h. Working collaboratively with other teachers at my school	56%	44%	59%	41%	61%	39%
i. Connecting with key resource professionals (e.g., coaches, counselors, etc.)	62%	38%	65%	35%	64%	36%
j. Complying with policies and procedures	52%	46%	54%	46%	55%	45%
k. Completing administrative paperwork	54%	46%	56%	44%	63%	37%
l. Providing emotional support	43%	57%	42%	58%	52%	48%
Question 11.4. Please indicate whether each of the following was true for you or your mentor.	2016 Yes	2016 No	2018 Yes	2018 No	2020 Yes	2020 No
a. My mentor and I were in the same building	92%	8%	88%	12%	89%	11%
b. My mentor and I taught the same content area.	77%	23%	74%	26%	50%	50%
c. My mentor and I taught the same grade level.	69%	31%	73%	27%	61%	39%

(cont.)

Teacher Working Conditions Survey results						
	2016 Strongly disagree to disagree	2016 Agree to strongly agree	2018 Strongly disagree to disagree	2018 Agree to strongly agree	2020 Strongly disagree to disagree	2020 Agree to strongly agree
Question 11.5. Overall, the additional support I received as a new teacher improved my instructional practice.	14%	86%	15%	85%	23%	77%
Question 11.6. Overall, the additional support I received as a new teacher has helped to impact my students	20%	80%	16%	84%	21%	79%
Question 11.7. Overall, the additional support I received as a new teacher has been important in my decision to continue teaching at this school.	14%	86%	29%	71%	27%	73%

Chen (2016) and Papay and Kraft (2015) discovered common threads in teacher retention and teacher working conditions, such as managing individual student behavioral expectations and coping with student individual needs. In addition, building relationships and having opportunities to collaborate with colleagues and working in a safe, well-equipped classroom all influence whether or not BTs want to stay in the profession (Chen, 2106; Papay & Kraft, 2015).

When educators first start their careers, they often focus on the fundamentals of what they are expected to teach (Cowan et al., 2017); however, if there are good mentors in place, new teachers could rely on their mentors to share excellent teaching methods and make those connections with key stakeholders, such as counselors, social workers, and instructional coaches, while developing a connection with parents and/or guardians.

Summary

This study evaluated the effectiveness of a BTSP and how this program impacts teacher retention. Participants included BTs in their second, third, or fourth year of teaching in the school community studied in North Carolina. Mentors and school administrators participated as well. Data were collected from surveys, interviews, and focus groups. Survey data gathered from BTs, mentors, and school administrators were disaggregated and used to measure the effectiveness, the needs of BTs with 3 years or less of experience, and the strength and weaknesses of the BTSP already implemented.

Chapter 4: Results

The goal of this program evaluation was to determine the success of an existing BTSP in a rural school district in the state of North Carolina, as well as to enhance the program by analyzing its strengths and weaknesses to better support new teachers. Four questions guided this program evaluation toward analyzing the perspectives and experiences of similarly prepared BTs during the BTSP:

1. How do BTs, administrators, and mentors perceive the effectiveness of the BTSP?
2. What are the needs of BTs with three years or less experience?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the BTSP?
4. To what extent are BTs supported by administrators and mentors?

To analyze the program, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. Participants first took an anonymous online survey to express their thoughts and feelings about their BTSP. Participants included elementary and secondary BTs, lead mentors, and administrators. The qualitative data were collected from open-ended survey question responses and focus group discussions with BTs, mentors, and administrators. There were four different focus group sessions facilitated.

Methods and Procedures

New teachers, lead mentors, and school administrators in six schools in a small rural school district were invited to complete an online survey to assess the perceptions of the district's BT program in SurveyMonkey. SurveyMonkey is a cloud-based online survey tool that allows researchers to create questionnaires to produce a detailed analysis of the survey results. Once the survey was created, a link was generated and sent to the

survey participants via email. This survey tool gathered data from three groups of education professionals: BTs, lead mentors-teachers, and administrators. In addition, there were three focus group sessions scheduled to collect information about the BT induction program in the district of study and to gain more insight into the survey questions.

The superintendent of the district of study gave me permission to survey participants via email. The survey and informed consent were explained in an email with a link to complete the study. Participants were also advised that their participation was voluntary and all findings would be anonymous.

On November 12, 2021, the initial introductory email outlining the research project for the recruitment of survey respondents and virtual focus group sessions was sent to 35 BTs who were current or previous participants in the BTSP in the district of study. Two weeks following the initial invitation, a follow-up reminder email was sent. The survey opportunity was extended 1 additional week and remained open for a total of 3 weeks. Of the 35 BTs, 29 (82.8%) completed the survey. An introductory email was also sent to principals and lead mentors. The survey was sent to six principals four of the six principals (67%) completed the survey. Lastly, three of six (50%) lead mentors completed the survey.

A proxy, a person who has the power or authority to act on behalf of another, was requested to facilitate both focus group sessions and consented. An introductory email was sent to all BTs. The first focus group session was facilitated on December 14, 2021, with BTs at the elementary level, followed by secondary BTs on December 16, 2021. There were a total of seven novice teacher participants in the elementary focus group

session, and four BTs participated in the secondary focus group session. The groups' discussions were held virtually via Google Meet. Introductory emails were also sent to lead mentors and administrators. There were five mentor participants.

Study Participants

Table 10 shows the total number of email invitations sent, the number of survey responders, and the response rate for each of the participant categories.

Table 10

Survey Participation

Survey type	Invitations sent	Respondents	Response rate
BTs	35	29	82.8%
Lead mentor	6	4	66.6%
Administrator	6	3	50%

Demographic information in Table 11 illustrates the licensure routes of BTs in the study district. Of the 29 BTs surveyed, 75% (21) are currently seeking licensure requirements through an alternative pathway to become a professional educator by completing the necessary coursework and assessment requirements as a residency licensure candidate or lateral entry. According to Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017), persons who entered the teaching profession through an alternate pathway were 25% more likely to leave a new career in education than those who finished a regular teacher training program.

Table 11*BT Demographic Information*

Route to Licensure	N	%
Lateral entry	9	32.14%
Residency license	12	42.86%
Traditional education program	7	25%

In addition to surveys, focus group discussions were held via Google Meet. Each group had their own set of questions. The focus group sessions were facilitated by a proxy to gain more information on the BTSP in this school system. Table 12 depicts the number of participants in the focus group sessions at the elementary and secondary levels.

Table 12*Focus Group Sessions by School Level*

Participants	Total interviews	Elementary	Secondary
BT	12	8	4
Lead mentor	5	3	2
Administrator	4	4	0

Findings

Questions about specific program elements were asked in surveys and open-ended questions during focus group sessions. The survey and discussion group findings revealed three primary themes: needs, support, and practical and relevant professional development.

Research Question 1: How Do BTs, Administrators, and Mentors Perceive the Effectiveness of the BTSP?

This question was addressed in each of the surveys and used to gather perception

data from BTs, mentors, and administrators to determine areas of strength and limitations of the BTSP program in the district of study. This question was also addressed during each of the focus group sessions.

One component of the BTSP is the BT orientation. Seventeen of the 29 BTs (58.6%) believed the BT orientation held at the start of the school year was beneficial, while four (13.7%) disagreed. At the district level, 12 (41.3%) remained neutral, while 17 (58.6%) believed the BT induction program given by the district of study provided them with assistance and guidance. Also at the district level, meetings were uninteresting to four (13.7%) of 29 BTs, but 18 (62%) perceived the meetings at the district level interesting, while seven (24.1%) remained neutral. BTs also found district meetings well planned, organized, and easily accessible.

Table 13

BT Survey Questions Responses Related to Program Effectiveness

Response statement	Agree N %	Neutral N %	Disagree N %
The BT orientation at the start of the school year was helpful.	17 58.6%	8 27.5%	4 13.7%
The district BT meetings are well planned and organized.	25 89.2%	4 14.2%	0 0%
The district BT meetings are locations easily accessible to me.	24 82.7%	4 13.7%	1 3.4%
Most of the topics addressed at the district BT meetings are of interest to me.	18 62%	7 24.1%	4 13.7%
I have received support and guidance through the BT induction program provided by our school district.	17 58.6%	12 41.3%	0 0%

The quantitative data collected from BTs, mentoring teachers, and administrators

via online surveys support the qualitative data collected from focus groups. One BT stated that meetings should be more focused on accomplishing practical tasks versus time spent talking about things: “I could read these things myself. I need someone going through the process of planning, not just talking about it, I need to see it” Another BT stated, “A lot of us are needing to still be in school to get our licensure, so a lot of us are out looking for our own resources, support us in helping us get licensed.”

Lead mentoring teachers and administrators were asked the same or similar question about the induction program. Table 14 reflects the questions and responses asked of lead mentors regarding the effectiveness of the BT support program. Overall, three of six (50%) lead mentors find the BTSP effective; however, 33.33%, one lead mentor, remained neutral regarding school site BT meetings, training for lead mentors, and use of technology by lead mentors.

Table 14

Lead Mentor Survey Questions Responses Related to Program Effectiveness

Response statement	Agree		Neutral		Disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
The time spent with my mentee is beneficial for my own professional growth.	2	100%	0	0%	0	0%
I am available to help my mentee when he/she has a problem.	3	100%	0	0%	0	0%
My mentee and I have trouble communicating at times.	0	0%	0	0%	3	100%
Our school district’s BT induction program (including mentoring) is effective in supporting new teachers.	3	100%	0	0%	0	0%

Lead mentors who participated in the focus group session offered a few

suggestions for the program. According to one lead mentor at the secondary level, the biggest challenge, unlike the elementary level, is the number of BTs assigned to one lead mentor. At the secondary level, there are eight or more BTs at one given time working with buddy teachers. The lead mentor stated, “I don’t have personal relationships.” At the secondary level, “We need help with three roles, the lead’s job, what is the buddy teachers’ job, and how do they get the information they need.” In addition, “There needs to be some clarification and maybe even some more help because it’s not working with the way we have it right now.” Another lead mentor stated,

I like the relationships that our county has with a university, having someone come in to assist and help our BTs, lead mentors or regular mentors don’t have all the time in the world to go in to watch and to assist.

The lead mentor perceives the extra support provided by an outside source of support to strengthen the BTSP.

The main concern for one mentor is how to balance everything:

With the requirements of just what we are asking them and trying to help them do, then with the school asking them to do, just know how to prioritize things. So being able to have those strong conversations about prioritizing, about balancing, and how that changes depending on what you got going on. But just having the time to do that which is, I consider, to be very vital things if you want to stay in this area.

Table 15*Administrator Survey Question Responses Related to Program Effectiveness*

Response statement	Agree		Neutral		Disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
I received training to be a mentor.	3	75%	0	0%	1	25%
I feel capable of guiding and supporting beginning teachers effectively.	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%
I feel confident in helping new teachers with implementation and use of technology.	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Our school district's BT (including mentoring) is effective in supporting new teachers.	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%
I feel that the administrative team at my school adequately supports new teachers.	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%

Administration perceives the BTSP program as effective. Although one of the four administrators has not received mentor training, all four administrators surveyed felt capable of guiding and supporting BTs effectively. In addition, all four administrators feel confident in helping new teachers implement and use technology and that the BT program, including mentoring, was effective. The qualitative data gathered indicated that more time is needed to support BTs. In the words of one respondent,

If there was a way to do more building level type support for our BTs, when we just don't have a lot of time to meet with just our BTs, either on a weekly or monthly basis would be helpful.

Another administrator stated, "One of the biggest things is just making sure we've got enough support for BTs because of their increasing challenges and needs." When administrators were asked by the proxy, "Do you feel that you are prepared and

supported to work with BTs at your school,” three of the four stated, “Yes.” One administrator did not respond. When asked by the proxy, “How could it better meet the needs of BTs,” an administrator responded,

Our BTs get support from a university. With the teacher coming into shadow and model and give feedback to our new teachers. As well as mentor teachers here as well go in and give feedback, the instructional coach, and myself. Being small it’s easier for us here to give them way more, much more frequent feedback since we have small classes, a small number of classes.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the BTSP is one approach that will offer the necessary support that will accelerate the professional growth among new teachers, keep new teachers in the profession, and improve student learning when all are well designed (Podolsky et al., 2016). To provide the necessary support, lead mentors and administrators must be able to identify the needs of their new teachers, which are highlighted in the data collected from BTs with 3 or less years of experience in the teaching profession in Research Question 2.

Research Question 2: What Are the needs of BTs With 3 Years or Less Experience?

In reviewing the data shown in Table 16, quantitative data collected from BTs show a need for curriculum and instructional support. The leading area of concern shows that 41.4% (12) of BTs agreed that they have trouble assessing student knowledge, 10.4% (3) are neutral and 48.4% (12) disagreed. Another area of concern was classroom management: 37.9% (11) say they sometimes have trouble with classroom management, 51.7% (15) do not have a problem with it, and 10.3% (3) were neutral. The data also show that 34.5% (10) have problems providing differentiated instruction to students who

struggle with content and 44.8% (13) also struggle with differentiating for students who master the content. Finally, several BTs agreed, 65.5% (19), it would have been difficult without the assistance of their mentor.

Table 16

BT Survey Question Responses Related to Needs of BTs

Response statement	Agree N %		Neutral N %		Disagree N %	
The school site monthly BT meetings are helpful.	19	65.52%	2	6.90%	8	27.58%
I would have struggled without the assistance of my mentor.	19	65.52%	4	13.79%	6	20.69%
I have a say in what we will discuss during meetings with my mentor.	25	86.21%	3	10.34%	1	3.45%
I sometimes have trouble with assessing student knowledge.	12	41.38%	3	10.34%	14	48.28%
I sometimes have trouble with classroom management.	11	37.93%	3	10.34%	15	51.72%
I sometimes have trouble with communicating with parents.	8	28.57%	5	17.86%	15	51.72%
I sometimes have trouble differentiating instruction to address the needs of students who struggle with content.	10	34.48%	2	6.90%	17	58.62%
I sometimes have trouble differentiating instruction to challenge students who master content quickly.	13	44.82%	3	10.34%	13	44.82%
I sometimes have trouble integrating our using technology effectively.	5	17.24%	2	6.90%	22	75.86%

Instructional support is believed to have an effective impact when BTs and mentors have the opportunity to observe how lesson plans are structured and how to organize activities and professionally collaborate (Martin et al., 2016). In a study by Martin et al. (2106), participants appreciated having experienced support from mentors and colleagues who were familiar with their subject area. These participants believed the instructional support received had an impact on their teaching.

In addition to the quantitative data, qualitative data were collected from BTs to identify their perceived needs. During the focus group session with BTs, the first question was, "What are the top two areas of need that you have?" The highlighted need for BTs was for help and resources from their team and administration which refers to support. Things were a lot better for BTs when they felt supported. Structure and time to understand the curriculum and having the materials needed for lesson plans were more important to BTs at the secondary level than spending so much time in meetings.

A BT also mentioned that the induction program may be enhanced by addressing support at different levels and not receiving the same type of professional development. "When you get assistance, is it the support of admin, is it the support of your team, who's support do you need," the proxy inquired. In response to the proxy's question, a BT replied, "Admin, the other grade level teacher, and my mentor, who was one of my most important support networks." One BT stated she needs support from administration and the teaching staff but also from parents: "I may mess up. I may make a mistake, like I am not perfect, offer me the same grace I offer your child when they mess up." The BT went on to say, "I need support from everybody that will be involved and educational resources that someone can give me whether it be training, whether it be somebody

modeling, whether it be somebody's old book when they're not teaching." Another BT stated,

BTs could use curriculum support by subject areas and across the district not necessarily at one grade level. Also, offer support based on the BT's need on their level. There needs to be a schedule in place for the additional support offered by the university's New Teacher Support Coach and all BTs should be aware of the available support.

One participant confirmed the importance of structure which now she feels has become one of her strengths. One BT stated that she lacked the connection with her students early on, so she lacked structure, but she was able to get past this once her expectations were set. Another BT agreed that there is a need for structure but said building relationships with parents is now her strength and how things in her classroom are totally different now than her first year of teaching. Several agreed that having an open mind to take suggestions and build relationships at the school level is a strength.

Another finding in the focus group was that BTs need assistance with study materials for licensure requirements. One BT explained, "A lot of us are out looking for our own resources or relying on the resources that the school gives and that might not be all that is needed."

In Table 17, data show that only three of the six lead mentors completed the survey, and only one agreed that BTs sometimes struggle with assessing student knowledge, struggle with classroom management, have trouble communicating with parents, and struggle with differentiating instruction for those students who master the content or still struggle with the content.

Table 17*Lead Mentor Survey Question Responses Related to Needs of BTs*

Response statement	Agree N %		Neutral N %		Disagree N %	
My mentee sometimes has trouble with assessing student knowledge.	1	33.33%	0	0%	2	66.67%
My mentee sometimes has trouble with classroom management.	1	33.33%	0	0%	2	66.67%
My mentee sometimes has trouble communicating with parents.	1	33.33%	0	0%	2	66.67%
My mentee sometimes has trouble creating engaging activities and/or lesson plans.	1	33.33%	0	0%	2	66.67%
My mentee sometimes has trouble differentiating instruction to address the needs of students who struggle with the content.	1	33.33%	0	0%	2	66.67%
My mentee sometimes has trouble differentiating instructions to challenge students who master content quickly.	1	33.33%	0	0%	2	66.67%

In the focus group session with mentors, one mentor discussed that this district has a lot of BTs coming in who are not certified teachers and need guidance to find training and where to find classes, which is the hardest thing for BTs. Many BTs ask, “What is the process?” and “How do I get started?” Another mentor discussed the concern of balancing everything with what mentors ask BTs to do, what the school is asking, and knowing how to prioritize things.

Contrary to the perceptions of BTs and administrators, one mentor said, “I am impressed with the classroom management. She realizes it is an area of need, but we have brand new BTs not fully licensed in elementary education and their classroom

management is going well for a beginning teacher.” Another participant chimed in that instruction is going well, the BTs are picking up on a lot of stuff, and they are going headfirst in it. Finally, another lead mentor expressed, “They seem very motivated, and they want to know as much as possible.”

Table 18

Administrator Survey Question Responses Related to Needs of BTs

Response statement	Agree N %		Neutral N %		Disagree N %	
BTs sometimes have trouble with assessing student knowledge.	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%
BTs sometimes have trouble with classroom management.	4	100%	0	0%	0	
BTs sometimes have trouble communicating with parents.	4	100%	0	0%	0	
BTs sometimes have trouble creating engaging activities and/or lesson plans.	4	100%	0	0%	0	
BTs sometimes have trouble differentiating instruction to address the needs of students who struggle with content.	4	100%	0	0%	0	
BTs sometimes have trouble differentiating instruction to challenge students who master content quickly.	4	100%	0	0%	0	

The data in Table 18 show that classroom management, assessing student knowledge, differentiating instruction, parent communication, and student engagement are all areas of need for BTs. When asked in their focus group session by the proxy, “What are the top two areas of need for the BTs at your school,” one principal stated, “The top need as we continue to go through COVID would be meeting the needs of the students, not only academically but the social-emotional piece is of great importance.”

Another principal agreed but went on to say, “Classroom management is something I feel new teachers can always use assistance with and then also teaching the fundamentals of reading is something that can use support as well.”

More time is constantly needed, according to one principal, and there needs to be a way to provide more building-level support for BTs. Principals do not have the time to meet with solely BTs on a weekly or monthly basis. They have a mentor, who may or may not be in their grade level, and they do not have the same amount of preparation time. The principal believed that meeting with BTs more frequently and as soon as possible would be beneficial.

Among the greatest challenges perceived by BTs and administration were assessing student knowledge, classroom management, and differentiation. Teachers who are better prepared for the challenges and issues they will confront have higher retention rates (Warren, 2016). BTs build their professional identity, construct their professional practice, and make a conscious decision to stay or quit at the beginning of their career (Karlberg & Bezzina, 2020). The needs of a new teacher are not usually the same as those of a more seasoned teacher (Warren, 2016). This generation of teachers must be equipped with the information and abilities necessary to assist students in achieving their goals (Warren, 2016).

Tables 19, 20, and 21 summarized quantitative data collected from an online survey regarding the strengths and weaknesses of BTs addressed in Research Question 3. The surveys were completed by BTs and were also completed by mentors and school administrators who support BTs.

Table 19*BT Survey Question Responses Related to Strengths and Weaknesses of BTSP*

Response statement	Agree		Neutral		Disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
I would like to have input into the topics covered at our district BT meetings.	10	34.48%	15	51.72%	0	0%
I have received support and guidance through the BT induction program provided by our school district.	17	58.62%	12	41.38%	0	0%
The school site monthly BT meetings are helpful.	19	65.52%	2	6.90%	8	27.58%
Most of the topics addressed at the school site monthly BT meetings are of interest to me.	18	62.06%	4	13.79%	7	24.14%
I have input into the topics covered at our monthly school site BT meetings.	12	41.38%	8	27.59%	9	31.03%
I would like to change the way that our school site monthly BT meetings are conducted.	5	17.24%	13	44.83%	11	37.93%

Table 20*Lead Mentor Survey Question Responses Related to Strengths and Weaknesses of BTSP*

Response statement	Agree		Neutral		Disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
I do not feel my mentee would be successful without the guidance and support of a mentor.	2	66.67%	0	0%	1	33.33%
The school site administrators understand my mentee's weaknesses and make efforts to get him/her help.	2	66.67%	1	33.33%	0	0%
The school site administrators are aware of my mentee's strength.	2	66.67%	1	33.33%	0	0%
The school site monthly BT meetings are beneficial to my mentee.	2	66.67%	1	33.33%	0	0%
Most of the topics addressed at the school site monthly BT meetings are applicable to my mentee and his/her needs.	2	66.67%	1	33.33%	0	0%
I would like to change the way that our school site monthly BT meetings are conducted.	0	0%	1	33.33%	2	66.67%

Table 21*Administrator Survey Question Responses Related to Strengths and Weaknesses of BTSP*

Response Statement	Agree		Neutral		Disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
The school site administrator understands the weaknesses of the BTs and makes efforts to get them help.	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%
The school site administrators are aware of BTs strengths.	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%
BTs are comfortable approaching our school site administrators.	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%
The school site monthly BT meetings are beneficial to my mentee.	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Most of the topics addressed at the school site monthly BT meetings are applicable to my mentee and his/her needs.	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%
I have input into the topics covered at our monthly school site BT meetings.	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%

Research Question 3: What Are the Strengths and Weaknesses of the BTSP?

A BTSP is designed to provide support and guidance for BTs. A BTSP and teacher retention are influenced by mentoring, administrative support, professional development, and job satisfaction, according to the literature. In the district of study, professional development is offered at the district and school levels for BTs. As reflected in Table 19, a large percentage of BTs selected to remain neutral (51.7%) regarding topics discussed in BT meetings at the district, whereas 34.5% would like to give input in selecting topics. The data show that BTs feel supported and receive guidance through the BT induction program at the school level at a rate of 58.6%, but 41.4% remain neutral in answering. At the school level, the vast majority of BTs feel that school-level meetings

are helpful, and the topics covered are of interest; however, this shows that perceptions are almost balanced with those who agree with the statement and those who disagree or remain neutral. The data also show that 37.9% of the BTs would like to change how BT meetings are conducted at the school, and 44.8% choose not to agree or disagree. Also, the data show that several teachers did not agree or disagree regarding support in professional development opportunities at the school level. Professional development is critical in providing chances for professional growth, improving teaching methodologies, assisting teachers in meeting needs such as classroom management and differentiation, and properly assessing and meeting the needs of their students.

Participants in the focus group further confirmed that BTs could use more curriculum support, allowing teachers to get together across the district and not just at their assigned school to talk about curriculum standards. One participant added that not all BT needs are the same. Some BTs may need structure, curriculum support, and support in general at their BT level: Year 1, 2, 3, and so on. Another participant added, “The difficult problem for me with the beginning teacher program is finding the time to meet, sometimes I am available and sometimes I am not.”

One BT, along with others, stated that her greatest area of strength is her connection with her students. Initially, one weakness for the BT was lack of structure, but she got past that when expectations were set. Another BT agreed that structure is a need but went on to say building relationships with parents is important and how things were totally different than when she first started teaching as well as building positive relationships in the building. Sharing, giving feedback, and rethinking are standard practices in healthy professional cultures (Reilly, 2017). Another participant said that her

ability to have an open mind, being able to accept help, and having the opportunity to offer suggestions even as a BT are strengths. She has colleagues who have taken her suggestions, and it makes her want to give herself a pat on her back.

Lead mentors and administrators were asked similar survey questions (Table 20 and Table 21). The responses of lead mentors demonstrate that they believe their mentees would succeed without their direction and assistance, with only one mentor disagreeing. Mentoring is a key component of the BTSP. Research by Harris (2015) suggested that skilled mentors are influential in retaining new teachers. Two (66.7%) of the three mentors who completed the survey felt that principals are aware of BT strengths and weaknesses, and the administrators agreed at 100%. Both lead mentors and administrators play a role in selecting topics for school BT meetings and are not interested in making any changes to the way meetings are conducted.

Administrators agree that mentors need guidance and directions on how to have those conversations with BTs as it pertains to instruction. When they see something not going well, although they are colleagues, they must have those tough conversations. Another administrator suggested,

Giving feedback is so crucial and important. It's something that is taught. It's a skill that has to be developed especially when there is an area of need or area of improvement. There is a way to have those conversations where they're not offended or get upset, having those conversations and then being able to give effective feedback.

Administrators play an essential role in helping BTs grow professionally, and they help foster a collaborative environment when properly trained. Over half of the BTs

surveyed agree that they feel comfortable approaching administrators at 69% (20 BTs), whereas 13.8% (four BTs) do not feel comfortable, and 17.4% (five BTs) did not agree or disagree. All stakeholders must understand the goals and expectations of the BTSP and provided BTs with programs that will offer the needed support. The data in Table 21 show that time spent with mentors is beneficial for 25 BTs (86.2%), with three neutral in answering and one indicating that it is not beneficial. BTs also agree that meetings are planned and mentors are available to help. In addition, 89.7% of the BTs indicate that their mentor gives good advice or their answers are helpful. One principal indicated mentors are often assigned by grade level and have a common planning time.

In addition, the data show that BTs are encouraged to observe other teachers, but 39.3% (11 BTs) are not given the opportunity to observe any teacher, and 44.8% (13 BTs) are not given the opportunity to observe their own mentors, which is an area of concern. Most of the BTs surveyed find the district meetings well planned, organized, and accessible. BTs are happy with their current mentor and are happy in their current position.

Research Question 4: To What Extent Are BTs Supported by Administrators and Mentors?

Table 22

BT Survey Question Responses Related to Support and Job Satisfaction

Respondent statement	Agree N %		Neutral N %		Disagree N %	
The time spent with my mentor is beneficial to me.	25	86.20%	3	10.30%	1	3.4%
I would have struggled without the assistance of my mentor.	19	65.50%	4	13.70%	6	20.60%
The meetings with my mentor are planned.	23	79.31%	4	13.79%	2	6.90%
When I have a problem, my mentor is available to help me.	26	89.65%	2	6.90%	1	3.45%
When I pose a problem to my mentor, he/she give me advice or answers that are helpful.	28	89.65%	1	3.45%	0	0%
My mentor and I have trouble communicating.	2	6.90%	1	3.45%	26	89.65%
I would like to change mentors.	1	3.45%	6	20.69%	22	75.87%
I am comfortable approaching my school site administrators with questions and problems.	20	68.96%	5	17.24%	4	13.8%
I am confident that my school site administrator wants me to succeed as an educator.	25	86.20%	3	10.34%	1	3.45%
I feel that my thoughts and ideas are welcomed at school and district PLC meetings.	19	65.51%	7	24.14%	3	10.34%
I have opportunities to observe other teachers (not just my mentor).	13	46.43%	4	14.29%	11	39.29

(cont.)

Respondent statement	Agree		Neutral		Disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
I have opportunities to observe my mentor teaching.	12	41.38%	4	13.79%	13	44.83%
I am encouraged to observe other teachers (any teachers).	14	48.28%	9	31.03%	6	20.68%
I am happy in my current teaching position.	25	86.21%	1	3.45%	3	10.34%
I would like to continue teaching but would be interested in moving to another school (same grade level).	2	6.90%	6	20.69%	21	72.41%
I would like to continue teaching but would be interested in moving into another grade level.	1	3.45%	9	31.03%	19	65.51%
I am actively seeing other careers outside of education.	4	13.79%	3	10.34%	22	75.86%
I am satisfied with my current income from teaching.	5	17.24%	5	17.24%	19	65.52%
I feel like a contributing member of my school faculty.	22	75.87%	4	13.79%	3	10.35%

The focus group session confirmed that BTs are satisfied in their current positions when asked, "How would you rate your job satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being entirely satisfied and 5 being completely dissatisfied?" Three of the five elementary BTs responded: One gave a 3, another typed a 2 in the chat box, and the third gave a 4.5.

In the BT focus group, when asked, "How would you rate your job satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not satisfied at all and 5 being completely satisfied," one BT stated,

I would rate my job satisfaction, I would say a 3. I am right in the middle. It has

been very difficult having three different classes to teach and having to worry about three lesson plans, three curriculums, and then not having all of that. So, kind of feeling like I am winging it so for the longest time I wasn't able to plan ahead. I was going day by day.

Another BT felt she was the opposite and has no problem winging it but does have a problem planning ahead. She stated, she wants to be more structured and rated her job satisfaction a 4.5. Her biggest complaint is she feels like she cannot work with the kids one-on-one because there were too many students, with a total of 84 students in three classes.

Research supports the idea that principals should have a clearly defined role and responsibility in coaching their BTs as well as mentors. One administrator commented that principals need to know more about their BTs, their background, and what is needed to ensure they are receiving the support that aligns with the school's vision and goals. Administrators want BTs to succeed. Administrators and lead mentors agree that support and coaching play a vital role in the BTSP. They also agree that mentors should be matched based on teaching assignments. The biggest discrepancy among administrators is not having enough highly qualified mentors to properly match BTs with mentors; 50% agreed and 50% disagreed. Lead mentors believe that BTs are more comfortable approaching school site officials with concerns and difficulties than administrators.

Table 23*Administrator Survey Question Responses Related to Support of BT and Mentor Support*

Respondent statement	Agree N %		Neutral N %		Disagree N %	
I have input when matching our newly hired BTs with a mentor from our school.	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%
It is important to match BTs and mentor based on their teaching assignment.	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%
It is important to match BTs and mentors based on their personalities.	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%
It is important to match BTs and mentors based on their location in the building and classrooms are close in proximity.	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%
When there is a problem with a BT, the mentor/buddy teacher should discuss the issue with their lead mentor first, before asking me to intervene.	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%
The relationship between a BT and his/her mentor is critical to the success of the BTs.	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Mentors grow as educators and as educational leaders when effective mentoring occurs.	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Without careful matching of BTs and mentors, the BTs' early teaching experience can suffer.	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%
I trust our school's lead mentor to match BTs and mentors.	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%
At my school site, I do not have enough highly qualified mentors to properly match BTs with mentors.	2	50%	0	0%	2	50%
I try not to assign any additional duties or responsibilities to BTs during the first year.	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%

In the focus group session with administrators, one administrator described her BTs as inquisitive:

They like to ask questions if they don't know something, they will ask. If they need assistance in teaching a specific lesson, they will ask. I am glad they do that because if they didn't then I would be worried if they don't seek help.

Another administrator described BTs as eager and energetic: "For the most part, they're happy to be here. They are open to feedback and ideas. They want to be told what they can improve on. I think that's strength." Another administrator said,

I would have to agree with all of that. They are just willing to learn and to be a part of the team. They bring very valuable ideas to their grade levels, especially with some of the more veteran teachers.

Lastly, an administrator said his BTs are extremely coachable: "I've had some in the past that weren't coachable and they're in the past. They're very eager, they want to know, they want to be critiqued and they are open to being critiqued and they don't take it personally."

Table 24*Lead Mentor Survey Question Responses Related to BT and Administrator Support*

Respondent statement		Agree N %		Neutral N %		Disagree N %
I am aware of my mentee's strengths.	2	66.67%	1	33.33%	0	0%
I am aware of my mentee's weaknesses.	2	66.67%	1	33.33%	0	0%
My school site administrators support my mentee.	2	66.67%	1	33.33%	0	0%
My mentee is comfortable approaching our school site administrators with questions and problems.	3	100%	0	0%	0	0%
I am confident that the school site administrators want my mentee to succeed as an educator.	3	100%	0	0%	0	0%

One BT expressed that she does not know who her mentor is, to be honest, and went on to say she does not think she even has one. The BT stated, "I haven't even had an observation or anything like that, so I really don't know who's who with that."

Another BT stated that she is blessed to have "a couple of mentors." She has the instructional coach from the university serving her and the lead mentor of the school. She described them both as amazing. In addition, her buddy teacher has worked 40 years as a teacher. One BT stated she feels that her mentor and her relationship with her mentor are very informal, and she feels like they always encourage her to ask them questions, but she does not necessarily know the questions to ask.

Another BT described the relationship with her mentor as "strange." Her mentor does not plan with her and does not teach the same course. She also stated her mentor leaves right after school is over, so she never talks to them after school, which is

“inconvenient.”

The daily demands of a principal and teacher leader and the nature of their job may prevent intense mentoring BTs so desperately need. In fact, support is more so needed because 75% of the BTs surveyed are all seeking an alternative route to licensure. Many have no prior experience or knowledge of the pedagogy of teaching. Time often intrudes, and often, relationships are slow to form or never form. As one principal stated in the focus group session, time is a factor that affects the level of support offered at the school level. Principals should find a way to provide an example of support and encourage other employees to follow suit.

In a study by McGeehan (2019), the participants found that when given an opportunity to collaborate with their mentor, it was helpful; their mentor gave them guidance on how to deal with student issues and took the time to answer their questions. Survey results for this study showed that 25 of the participants (62.5%) felt their mentor was a valuable part of the induction experience, 11 participants (27.5%) remained neutral, and the remaining four survey participants (10%) opposed or strongly disagreed that their mentor was an important part of their induction experience (McGeehan, 2019), in comparison to the district in this study.

Summary

In summary, the quantitative data collected through 38 online surveys completed by participants in a small school district in a rural area of North Carolina represent the perceived needs, support, strengths, weaknesses, and job satisfaction of the BTs served in the BTSP. The results also show how effective the new teacher induction program is thought to be. The qualitative data from focus groups conducted with 11 BTs, five lead

mentors, and four administrators also show the perceived needs of BTs, as well as suggestions for how to improve the district's BTSP, as well as the needs of mentoring teachers and administrators who help new teachers. These proposals and data analysis are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion

As BTs continue to leave the teaching profession within their first 5 years, school districts must better understand the importance and need for an effective induction program as well as the support and guidance needed for mentors. The BTSP is a professional development intervention aimed to attract, grow, and sustain BTs in the teaching profession. This study examined the BTSP in a small school community in North Carolina to improve the program, grow new teachers professionally, and reduce teacher retention rates. The findings of this study are organized by research questions. The research questions were as follows:

1. How do BTs, administrators, and mentors perceive the effectiveness of the BTSP?
2. What are the needs of BTs with three years or less experience?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the BTSP?
4. To what extent are BTs supported by administrators and mentors?

Throughout the program evaluation, three themes emerged from the data: addressing the needs of BTs, lead mentors, and administrators; curriculum and instructional support; and resources to help prepare BTs for licensure requirements and relevant professional learning opportunities. The findings are described following each of the research questions.

Discussion of Findings

Research Question 1: How Do BTs, Administrators, and Mentors Perceive the Effectiveness of the BTSP?

The results of the data collected for Research Question 1 show that BTs, lead

mentors, and administrators perceive the BTSP as effective in this small rural school district. The BTSP is a 3-year induction program for BTs regulated by state policy makers. The BTSP is primarily intended to assist BTs in developing their professional abilities, increasing their confidence, providing support, and helping them and their students excel. The 3-year induction includes mentor selection, mentor training, and monitored professional development that may be necessary or prescribed specifically to meet their needs.

Over half, 58.6%, of the BTs surveyed agreed that the orientation was helpful at the start of the year, 13.7% disagreed, and 27.5% remained neutral. In addition to the orientation, 89.2% of the BTs indicated the district meetings were well planned and organized, and 62% agreed that topics addressed at the district BT meetings are of interest, while 13.7% disagreed, and 24.1% did not agree or disagree. BT survey results also show that over half of the BTs agreed that the BTSP offers needed support and guidance, but 41.3% were neutral in answering. Although the survey data reflect many positive aspects of the BTSP program, the focus group discussion with BTs helped identify BT needs.

After analyzing qualitative data collected in the BT focus group sessions, it is evident that there is a need for more support. One BT described the need for more practical activities rather than talking about topics in meetings. Another BT also stated, "I need someone to model the process of planning, not just talking about it, I need to see it." BTs find it beneficial to see the process of what is to be learned. School districts must assist the professional development of BTs in the same way that BTs must establish settings that support and encourage student success. Teachers are more likely to learn

when they are able to participate actively and make sense of the materials presented. Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) argued that effective professional development provides teachers with opportunities to craft and develop their teaching skills and deliver effective lessons. BTs could benefit from seeing the process of what is to be learned, hands-on experiences instead of just discussing it. During the BT focus group session, the induction program was suggested to be improved by addressing support at various levels of need rather than having everyone receive the same type of professional development. Under the BT survey comments, several BTs expressed the need for more engaging experiences. One BT stated, “The meetings are not practical. I need time to lesson plan. I need to differentiate. I already have social and emotional intelligence as an adult. I need time to do practical things and actually accomplish work.” Another BT commented,

I am new to NC but not as new to teaching. I have taken courses in college that covered several of the topics shared in meetings, and they are not beneficial to me in my third year as a teacher.

Lastly, a BT expressed, “In BT meetings the activities are great but feel more like a time-killer than a helpful activity for new teachers. Meetings should be more focused on the teachers and less on the activities planned.”

In addition, BTs also expressed the need for resources to help them get fully licensed: “A lot of us are needing to still be in school to get a license, so a lot of us are out looking for our own resources, support us in helping us get licensed.”

Although 50% of the BTs and all lead mentors and administrators surveyed perceived the BTSP as effective, there are still improvements to be made. The data

suggest that BTs need and want more relevant and practical opportunities to learn during monthly meetings at the district and school levels. Administrators and lead mentors agreed that the ideal induction experience should include more time for building-level support. An administrator shared, “There is limited time available to meet with BTs on a weekly or sometimes a monthly basis.”

I recommend the district of study administer a needs assessment to identify, understand, and prioritize what BTs already know and/or need. Administrators should use the data collected from walkthroughs, observations, quick assessments, PLCs, and/or interest surveys to promote continual improvement and professional growth. Secondly, the district of study should expand professional development possibilities for BTs to choose from and how professional development is delivered, based on data collected from the needs assessments. Finally, the school district of study should plan meetings with breakout sessions facilitated by teacher leaders, instructional coaches, and/or administrators to allow BTs an opportunity to discuss and/or learn more about topics of need.

Research Question 2: What Are the Needs of BTs With 3 Years or Less Experience?

All stakeholders surveyed understand the rationale and need for BT meetings at the district and the school levels; however, in the following data, several of the BTs surveyed did not feel prepared to meet the demands of the teaching profession, such as assessing students, classroom management, and how to differentiate lessons. Forty-one percent (12) of the BTs agreed that they have trouble assessing student knowledge, 10.4% (3) were neutral, and 48.4 (14) disagreed. Another area of concern was classroom management, where 37.9% (11) of the BTs said they sometimes have trouble with

classroom management, 51.7% do not have a problem with it, and 10.3% (3) were neutral. The data also show that 34.5% (10) have problems differentiating instruction for students who struggle with content, and 44.8% (13) struggle with planning lessons to address the needs of students who struggle with content. Finally, 65.5% (19) of the BTs agreed they would have struggled without the help of mentors. According to the data, some BTs expressed that they need professional development opportunities that can help them develop teaching and instructional skills to feel confident in the classroom and help achieve student success.

According to the qualitative data gathered, when asked, “What are the top two areas of need that you have,” many BTs expressed that the BTSP could be more effective if support is differentiated and not a one-size-fits-all model when planning and facilitating professional development. BTs also suggested that more time is needed to understand the curriculum and lesson planning rather than meetings. Not all BTs progress at the same pace. One BT stated she could use more support such as training, modeling, or using someone’s old textbook. Another BT commented,

A previous lead mentor would meet once a week or at least once a month and discussed topics to help BTs who were struggling to find information or discipline (not usually content, but she provided resources). She would have slideshows, videos, and activities planned for us. This year, we had one BT meeting at school where we clicked on a spreadsheet, and we were asked if we needed anything. There is not a lot of assistance or support at our school.

The data collected reflect a need for instructional and curriculum support. It is recommended that BT meetings at the district and school levels be tailored to the

identified needs of BTs, including a structured classroom, classroom management, and instructional and curriculum support. BT meetings should also provide opportunities for panel discussions on topics selected by BTs. The panel discussion will allow BTs to ask questions and receive immediate feedback to improve their teaching skills and practices without fear of being scrutinized. It is also recommended that the district of study invite the current and prior Teacher of the Year winners and/or nominees or experienced career status teachers to speak on the panel to answer questions and give tips. Mentors and instructional coaches should also plan and facilitate mock parent conferences in professional development so BTs feel prepared and give parents a clear sense of their student's performance. Lastly, it is recommended that at the district level, the BTSP coordinator continue to find resources, ensure training is provided for mentors and BTs, and help identify the strengths and weaknesses of the program.

Research Question 3: What Are the Strengths and Weaknesses of the BTSP?

The BTSP displays many strengths and positive perceptions regarding the overall effectiveness. BTs feel supported at the district and school levels by lead mentors and administrators; however, when asked to reflect on professional development topics, half of the BTs remained neutral about topics covered at the district BT meetings. Although 62% of the BTs surveyed agreed that topics at the school site for monthly BT meetings were of interest, 37.9% of the BTs want to modify how school site monthly meetings are conducted. The other 44.8% did not agree or disapprove but were neutral about how school site monthly meetings are facilitated. This question was also addressed in the BT focus group session. Throughout the discussion, BTs expressed the need for more curriculum support as previously stated and the need to collaborate across the district

versus their assigned school to talk about curriculum standards. BTs are suggesting more support at their level of need. A BT stated,

BTs could use curriculum support by subject areas and across the district not necessarily at one grade level. Also, offer support based on the BT's need on their level. There needs to be a schedule in place for the additional support offered by the university's New Teacher Support Coach and all BTs should be aware of the available support.

Currently, lead mentors and administrators play an essential role in selecting topics. Unlike BTs, lead mentors and administrators are not interested in making any changes to the way meetings are conducted. Survey data show that lead mentors (66.7%) and administrators (100%) agree that monthly school meetings are beneficial for mentees. Also, lead mentors (66.7%) and administrators (100%) agreed that most of the meeting topics at school site meetings apply to mentees and their needs. In a survey response, an administrator stated,

Our school-based support for BTs is extensive and collaborative in nature. Our BTs receive strong support from the lead mentor and instructional coach. In addition to monthly BT meetings with the principal, the lead mentor provides support and frequent check-ins, and the instructional coach checks in with the teachers and provides individualized instructional support based on the needs of the BT. Ongoing support with classroom management, instruction, and communicating with parents is provided. We want our BTs to be successful.

One of the four administrators disagreed that they give input into the topics covered at the monthly school site meeting; therefore, it is recommended that the BT coordinator further

examine how administrators assess the needs of BT support and how they identify professional development topics provided for BTs. It is also recommended to review when and what type of professional development is being offered and how satisfied administrators are with the outcomes of the training. In the focus group session, a BT stated,

As a BT one, my need was structure, and I was blessed to have a good mentor. She did not teach us a lot of curriculum because she did not teach the same content area but she taught us structure. She taught us protocol like when you begin your classes.

Another BT indicated,

A lot of time is spent talking about things, talking about the planning, talking about professionalism. I need to see someone going through the process of planning, I need to see interaction, not just talk about it, I need to see it.

BTs felt that collaborating with mentors would help them better understand the district of study expectations. The quantitative data collected show that 86.2% of the BTs agreed that they have a say in what is discussed during meetings with their mentor, 3.4% (one BT) disagreed, and 10.3% were neutral. Only one of 12 BTs shared that she did not know her mentor until this study. If she had known earlier, she felt her start of the year would have been a smoother transition. She needs guidance in setting expectations, establishing structure in her classroom, and lesson planning.

Principals did express the need for mentors to be trained on how to have those tough conversations related to the instructional practices of BTs. In addition, mentors need training in skills prior to their BT assignment. Finally, it is essential to assign BTs

with mentors with a similar background and/or content area to build relationships.

Administrators agreed 100% that it is important to match BTs and mentors based on their teaching assignment, personalities, and location in the building and classroom proximity. Mentoring is an integral part of the BTSP, and it would be beneficial for the study district to review the mentor selection process. It is recommended that the study district seek alternatives to professional development opportunities beyond the current self-paced 10-hour virtual options for lead mentors. The study district should also better develop a plan to complete the training through professional learning communities to discuss and reflect on mentor training or plan a face-to-face training with the BT regional education facilitator who monitors and guides LEAs throughout the induction programs. Also, the study district should seek additional training opportunities that will better guide and coach mentors through the induction and then follow-up with monthly check-ins with the BTSP coordinator.

Overall, based on the findings from surveys and focus group data, mentors need professional development opportunities to enhance mentoring strategies and support and more time to communicate, collaborate, plan, observe, and meet with other teachers, which leads to Research Question 4 regarding support.

Research Question 4: To What Extent Are BTs Supported by Administrators and Mentors?

Time spent with mentors is beneficial as 25 of the 29 BTs who completed the survey indicated that only one BT (3.45%) would like to change mentors. The data also show that 89.7% of the BTs reported communicating well with their mentors. Thirteen (44.8%) of the BTs have not had an opportunity to observe their mentor teaching, and 11

of the 29 BTs surveyed have not had the opportunity to observe any other teacher.

It is recommended that the district of study discover more effective ways to devote time, resources, and training to make mentoring more effective. The study district should begin by assessing its current mentoring program. The district must ensure that mentors understand their role and put structures in place to support their success. Mentors should be identified early to allow time for BTs and mentors to build relationships, to meet during the orientation to establish goals, understand the needs of BTs, and allow time prior to all staff returning for the upcoming academic school year. These practices should be ongoing with additional expectations, such as establishing time for BTs to observe teacher leaders or mentors. Another recommendation is to allow BTs and their mentors time to reflect on teaching practices. When mentors observe BTs, mentors should give timely feedback and support in lesson planning. During focus group discussions, BTs, mentors, and administrators all stressed that the lack of time is a challenge. It is recommended that the district consider recording BT lessons and allow mentors and/or principals to critique the lesson and offer feedback. The district of study could record mentors and/or veteran teachers teaching lessons to allow BTs an opportunity to review procedures, gain classroom management strategies, and teach skills that will help BTs grow in the profession. Also, the district should consider adding mentors at the middle school and high school.

Quality mentoring programs have been shown to increase teacher retention and effectiveness. In 2012, Cook discovered that the more structured and consistent mentoring practices, such as BTs assigned to more experienced teachers in the same content area, worked in the same building, and were formally trained, were all considered

more effective mentoring practices. In addition, he advised that BT mentors be included in the evaluation process, which is parallel to the practice in the study district.

Administrators described BTs as inquisitive. They like to ask questions; they are eager and open to feedback. Ultimately, administrators want to improve instruction; when trusting relationships are formed, mentors can give helpful, constructive feedback and make suggestions to improve practice. Trust is vital in the interaction between the mentor and the mentee. According to Cook (2012), the district of study could offer additional training opportunities for mentors to strengthen skills to provide constructive feedback, provide additional training, and follow up on the standards and elements of the evaluation system. Administrators reported that this could be accomplished if more training is provided to cultivate professional growth among colleagues and foster collaboration. Also, due to vast backgrounds, administrators suggested that more information is needed regarding the backgrounds of BTs hired to better support and guided new teachers through a new age of teaching and learning. As previously indicated, a large percentage of the BT participants are formally entering the classroom with little to no experience in the education profession. Over half, 75%, become fully licensed after completing an educator preparation program.

Summarized List of Recommendations

In light of the collected data from the research study participants, the following list is a compilation of recommendations for the BTSP in a small rural district in North Carolina for BTs, mentors, school administrators, and district administration to help improve BT retention:

1. Conduct a needs assessment to better identify, comprehend, and prioritize

what BTs already know and/or need.

2. In order to support continuous improvement and professional growth, administrators should use walkthroughs, observations, short evaluations, PLCs, and interest surveys to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their BTs.
3. After reviewing the needs assessments, the district of study should enhance the types of professional development available to BTs and how the professional development is facilitated.
4. The study district should plan meetings with breakout sessions led by teacher leaders, instructional coaches, and/or administrators to allow BTs to discuss and/or learn more about subjects of need, such as structured classrooms, classroom management, instructional and curriculum support, and other identified areas of need.
5. BT meetings should include panel discussions on topics selected by the BTs and time for questions and immediate feedback to help improve their teaching skills and practices without fear of being judged. The district of study should invite current and past Teacher of the Year winners and experienced, career status teachers to appear on the panel to answer questions.
6. Mentors and instructional coaches should plan and facilitate mock parent conferences during professional development training so BTs feel prepared and confident when communicating with parents.
7. At the district level, the BTSP coordinator should continue to seek out resources, provide mentor and BT training, and assist in identifying the

program's strengths and weaknesses. Also, the coordinators should continue to review monthly mentoring logs and keep track of the allocation of high-needs children in BT classrooms.

8. The BT coordinator should examine how administrators identify what professional development is provided for BTs, how administrators identify the professional development needs of their BTs, what kind of professional development is offered, and how satisfied they are with the results.
9. The study district should seek alternatives to lead mentors' current 10-hour self-paced virtual training options.
10. The study district should continue to implement mentor training through professional learning communities, discuss and reflect on the training received, and/or arrange a face-to-face session with the BT regional education facilitator who monitors and guides LEAs during the induction programs.
11. In addition to providing mentors with additional training opportunities, the study district should follow up with monthly check-ins with the BTSP coordinator.
12. The study district should evaluate its current mentoring programs and ensure mentors understand their roles. Mentors should be identified early so BTs and mentors can meet during orientation to establish goals, understand BT needs, and allow time before all staff return for the new academic year.
13. BTs and their mentors should be given time to reflect on their teaching practices. Mentors should provide timely feedback to BTs when observed and given ample time to help BTs develop lesson planning skills.

14. The study district might consider recording BT lessons and allowing mentors and/or principals to review them. Mentors and/or veteran teachers could also be recorded teaching lessons to give BTs the chance to review procedures, learn classroom management strategies, and teach skills that will help them succeed in their classroom.
15. Lastly, the district should consider adding an additional mentor to middle school and high school.

Limitations

Some limitations were present in this study. First is the number of lead mentor participants. Only three of the six lead mentors participated in the survey, even after sending reminder emails and some agreed to participate. The three participants were three elementary lead mentors, which limited important data. In addition, four of six school administrators participated in the online surveys and focus group sessions. All participants were at the elementary level. One secondary administrator agreed to participate but did not complete the survey and was not available on the day of the focus group session. There were few leadership perceptions given from the secondary level where many BTs are hired.

Online respondents were asked to respond on a Likert scale with response options of strongly agree, slightly agree, neutral, somewhat disagree, and strongly disagree. For several questions, BTs remained neutral when responding. The areas of concern included 27.5% were neutral when expressing if the BT orientation was helpful or not at the start of the academic school year; 24.1% did not respond to agree or disagree when addressing if district BT meeting topics are of interest; 51.2% did not respond to giving input in the

district BT meeting topic; 41.38% did not agree or disagree that they have received guidance and assistance through the induction provided by the district; and lastly, 44.8% remained neutral in wanting to change the way school site BT meetings are conducted. Neutral responses left me to wonder if the BTs would have disagreed if there was not a neutral option there, if BTs were afraid to answer, or if BTs genuinely did not have a perception.

In March 2020, the pandemic forced educators to make many changes rapidly. COVID-19 disrupted teacher preparation. Many BTs experienced a disruption in student teaching placements and missed the opportunity to experience the training and support under the guidance of experienced teachers. Several BTs were hired during the pandemic. Due to restrictions, BTs did not have the opportunity to establish an ongoing support structure with their administrator and mentor early on. There were limited opportunities for mentors and administrators to guide new teachers into routines, model what effective classroom management looks like, demonstrate student engagement, and produce high-quality lesson planning for instruction. COVID put professional development on hold, and many were left to work independently to complete online modules or virtual workshops at their own pace and time. The shift to virtual learning added additional struggles as many students and staff in this small rural school district did not have reliable internet access for distance learning. BTs had to create virtual platforms for students and artifacts for the students who did have the resources to participate online. According to the data, BTs were competent in implementing technology in their instruction and were at ease with technology tools.

Finally, focus group discussions included only female novice teachers. While this

study does not explicitly focus on the gender of BTs, further investigation may be conducted to identify if male newcomers to the education profession have the same needs as their female counterparts.

Conclusions

A program evaluation of the BTSP was conducted in a rural school district in North Carolina to ascertain if the program meets the needs of BTs and if it impacts retention. In addition, I explored the perceptions, strengths and weaknesses, support, and needs of BTs through the experiences of BTs, mentors, and administrators. For example, many BTs feel unprepared in lesson planning, addressing students' individual needs, classroom management, student discipline issues, collaboration with their peers, and conferencing with parents.

The quantitative and qualitative data collected through BT surveys and interview questions within the study district and lead mentors and school administrators reported that the induction program components are practical and beneficial. With BT attrition, a concern in education, this school district intentionally designed a BTSP to promote effective leadership, develop quality teachers, offer constructive feedback and suggestions, and provide adequate resources and a supportive climate throughout a professional development model.

Several BTs find it stressful to transition from being a student or switching to a whole new career, taking courses, studying for assessments, and preparing to face the challenges of new teachers. Although the educational background and prior preparation varied, BTs expressed satisfaction with their current position and placement. BTs need a support system at the school and district levels. If possible, the support system should

offer collaborative planning with colleagues in the same content and grade level.

Administrators must establish the expectations and communicate the expectations while holding all stakeholders accountable.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research on the BTSP is possible, and identified needs for new support systems and resources for BTs have been highlighted throughout this study. The data collected from the study could help improve the BTSP. Future research might include a more diverse sample of new teacher perspectives from all grade levels, subject areas, and gender, as well as diverse school settings and performance levels.

The BTSP could incorporate more opportunities for focus group discussions. The district should continue to hold focus group sessions to provide opportunities for BTs, mentors, and administrators to share their opinions and perceptions of the BTSP program. In addition, BT focus group sessions could be extended to mentors and administrators. In the study, BTs mentioned terms, such as “modeling” or “show me.” Future qualitative research should involve BTs, mentors, and administrators in a cumulative discussion to discuss and examine their perceptions of support and what level of ongoing support is needed. Also, in focus group sessions, allow non-traditional BTs and all who work with BTs to take a closer look at licensure requirements and share and seek resources and study tips.

Lastly, future research may include a more in-depth look at the NTSP, a university-based induction program used to supplement the district program, to determine BT perceptions on the support, professional development, and resources provided by the NTSP. The district should seek additional funding or grants to increase the number of

BTs directly served by the NTSP.

References

- Alliance for Excellent Education. (2014, July). *On the path to equity: Improving the effectiveness of beginning teachers*. <https://all4ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/PathToEquity.pdf>
- Aragon, S. (2016). *Teacher shortages: What we know*. Education Commission of the States. <https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/Teacher-Shortages-What-We-Know.pdf>
- Barth, P., Dillion, N., Hull, J., & Higgins, B. (2016). *Fix the holds in the teacher pipeline: an overview of teacher shortages* [White paper]. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED608871.pdf>
- Bastian, K. C., & Marks, J. T. (2017). Connecting teacher preparation to teacher induction. *American Educational Research Journal*, 54(2), 360-394. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831217690517>
- Boogren, T. (2015). *Supporting beginning teachers*. Victoria, Hawker Brownlow Education.
- Bowling, A., & Ball, A. (2018). Alternative certification: A solution or an alternative problem? *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 59(2), 109–122. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1185689.pdf>
- Boyd, D., Grossman, P., Ing, M., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2011). The influence of school administrators on teacher retention decisions. *American Educational Research Journal*, 48(2):303-333. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831210380788>

- Burke, W., Marx, G., & Lowenstein, E. (2012). Leading, leadership, and learning: Exploring new contexts for leadership development in emerging school environment. *Planning and Changing*, 43(1/2).
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ977550.pdf>
- California County Superintendents Educational Services Association. (2016, June). *Best practices in teacher and administrator induction programs*. <http://ccsesa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Best-Practices-in-Teacher-and-Administrator-Induction-Programs.pdf>
- Carr, M., Holmes, W., & Flynn, K. (2017). Using mentoring, coaching, and self-mentoring to support public school educators. *The Clearing House*, 90(4), 116–124. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00098655.2017.1316624>
- Carver-Thomas, D., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). *Teacher turnover: Why it matters and what we can do about it*. Learning Policy Institute.
- Carver-Thomas, D., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2019). The trouble with teacher turnover: How teacher attrition affects students and schools. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 27(36) <https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.27.3699>
- Chen, M. (2016). *If students' learning conditions are teachers' working conditions, these students are in trouble*. <https://www.thenation.com/article/ifstudents-learning-conditions-are-teachers-working-conditions-these-students-arein-trouble/>
- Clark, S., & Byrnes, D. (2012). Through the eyes of the novice teacher: Perceptions of mentoring support. *Teacher Development*, 16(1).
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13664530.2012.666935>

Cochran-Smith, M., McQuillan, P., Mitchell, K., Terrell, D. G., Barnatt, J., D'Souza, L.,

Jong, C., Shakman, K., Lam, K., & Gleeson, A. M. (2012). A longitudinal study of teaching practice and early career decisions: A cautionary tale. *American Educational Research Journal*, 49(5), 844–880.

<https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831211431006>

Colorado Department of Education. (2019). *Interactive dashboard enables analysis of educator preparation programs*.

<https://www.cde.state.co.us/educatortalent/edprepprogram-report>

Cook, J. (2012). Examining the mentoring experience of teachers. *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation*, 7(1), 1-10.

<http://cnx.org/content/m42021/1.2/>

Cowan, J., Goldhaber, D., Hayes, K., & Theobald, R. (2016). Missing elements in the discussion of teacher shortages. *Educational Researcher*, 45(8), 460-462.

Cowan, J., Goldhaber, D., & Theobald, R. (2017, May). *Massachusetts educator preparation and licensure*. American Institutes for Research.

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/domains/improvement/tps-1st-year-report.pdf>

Creswell, J. (2014). *Research design qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods* (4th ed.). Sage.

Darling-Hammond, L., & Podolsky, A. (2019). Breaking the cycle of teacher shortages: What kind of policies can make a difference? *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 27, 34. <https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.27.4633>

- Darling-Hammond, L., & Rothman, R. (2011). Teacher and leader effectiveness in high-performing education systems. *Alliance for Excellent Education and Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education*, 1–10.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/234763642_Teacher_and_Leader_Effectiveness_in_High-Performing_Education_Systems
- Darling-Hammond, L., Sutchter, L., & Carver-Thomas, D. (2017, November 13). *Why addressing teacher turnover matters*. Learning Policy Institute.
<https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/blog/why-addressing-teacher-turnover-matters>
- DeAngelis, K. J., & Presley, J. B. (2011). Toward a more nuanced understanding of new teacher attrition. *Education and Urban Society*, 43(5), 598-626.
- DeMonte, J. (2013). *High-quality professional development for teachers*.
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED561095.pdf>
- Desimone, L. M. (2011). A primer on effective professional development. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 92(6), 68-71. <https://doi.org/10.1177/003172171109200616>
- Dumler, C. M. (2010). *Principal behaviors that support first-year teacher retention* (Publication No. 3403263) [Doctoral dissertation, The University of Arizona]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global: The Humanities and Social Sciences Collection.
- Education Northwest. (2014, August 20). *Turning around schools through collaboration and coaching*. <https://educationnorthwest.org/news/turning-around-schools-through-collaboration-and-coaching>

- Espinoza, D., Saunders, R., Kini, T., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2018). *Taking the long view: State efforts to solve teacher shortages by strengthening the profession*. Learning Policy Institute. <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/long-view-report>
- Feiman-Nemser, S., & Carver, C. L. (2012). Creating conditions for serious mentoring: Implications for induction policy. *Teachers College Record (1970)*, 114(14), 342-364. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811211401406>
- Fensterwald, J. (2015). Half of the new teachers quit the profession in 5 years? Not true, a new study says. <https://edsource.org/2015/half-of-new-teachers-quit-profession-in-5-years-not-true-new-study-says/83054>
- FindLaw Staff. (2020, January 1). *North Carolina General Statutes Chapter 115C. Elementary and Secondary Education § 115C-83.15. School achievement, growth, performance scores, and grades*. <https://codes.findlaw.com/nc/chapter-115c-elementary-and-secondary-education/nc-gen-st-sect-115c-83-15.html>
- Garcia, E., & Weiss, E. (2019, March). *The teacher shortage is real, large and growing, and worse than we thought*. <https://www.epi.org/publication/the-teacher-shortage-is-real-large-and-growing-and-worse-than-we-thought-the-first-report-in-the-perfect-storm-in-the-teacher-labor-market-series/>
- Gordon, E., & Lowrey, K. A. (2017). The mentoring web: Coming together to make a difference. *Improving Schools*, 20(2), 178-190. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1365480216650310>

Greenberg, J., McKee, A., & Walsh, K. (2014). *Teacher prep review 2014 report*.

National Council on Teacher Quality. [https://www.nctq.org/publications/Teacher-Prep-Review-2014-](https://www.nctq.org/publications/Teacher-Prep-Review-2014-Report#:~:text=Teacher%20Prep%20Review%202014%20is,are%20beginning%20to%20make%20changes)

[Report#:~:text=Teacher%20Prep%20Review%202014%20is,are%20beginning%20to%20make%20changes](https://www.nctq.org/publications/Teacher-Prep-Review-2014-Report#:~:text=Teacher%20Prep%20Review%202014%20is,are%20beginning%20to%20make%20changes)

Guha, R., Hyler, M. E., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2016). *The teacher residency: An innovative model for preparing teachers*.

<https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/teacher-residency>

Harris, W. D. (2015, Aug.). *Changing the lens: Mentors and their effect on novice teacher attitudes towards student achievement*. California State University, Northridge.

<https://scholarworks.csun.edu/bitstream/handle/10211.3/145267/Harris-William-thesis-2015.pdf?sequence=1>

Hinds, M., & Berger, M. (2010). The impact of professional development on beginning teachers' practices in one secondary school. *Brock Education*, 19(2), 1.

<https://doi.org/10.26522/brocked.v19i2.135>

Ingersoll, R. M. (2012). Beginning teacher induction: What the data tell us. *The Phi Delta Kappan*, 93(8), 47-51. <https://doi.org/10.1177/003172171209300811>

Ingersoll, R., Merrill, L., & May, H. (2012). Retaining teachers: How preparation matters. *Educational Leadership*, 69(8), 30-34.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283857143_Retaining_Teachers_How_Preparation_Matters

- Johnson, S. M., Kraft, M. A., Papay, J. P. (2012). *How context matters in high-need schools: The effects of teachers' working conditions on their professional satisfaction and their students' achievement*. Teachers College Record.
<https://scholar.harvard.edu/mkraft/publications/how-context-matters-high-need-schools-effects-teachers%E2%80%99-working-conditions-their>
- Kan, L. (2014). *How does teacher attrition compare to other professions?* Education Next. <https://www.educationnext.org/teacher-attrition-compare-professions/>
- Karlberg, M., & Bezzina, C. (2020). The professional development needs of beginning and experienced teachers in four municipalities in Sweden. *Professional Development in Education*, 1–19.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2020.1712451>
- Kini, T., & Podolsky, A. (2016). Does teaching experience increase teacher effectiveness? A review of the research. *Learning Policy Institute*.
<https://doi.org/10.54300/625.642>
- Linek, W. M., Sampson, M. B., Haas, L., Sadler, D., Moore, L., & Nylan, M. C. (2012). The impact of teacher preparation: A study of alternative certification and traditionally prepared teachers in their first year of teaching. *Teacher Education*, 21(2), 67-82
- Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS). (2015, July). *Conditions for success in teacher induction*. American Institutes for Research.
<https://lincs.ed.gov/publications/te/conditions.pdf>

- Manna, P., & Ryan, L. (2011). Competitive grants and educational federalism: President Obama's race to the top program in theory and practice. *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, 41(3), 522–546. <https://doi.org/10.1093/publius/pjr021>
- Martin, K. L., Buelow, S. M., & Hoffman, J. T. (2016). New teacher induction: Support that impacts beginning middle-level educators. *Middle School Journal*, 47(1), 4-12.
- Matsko, K. K., Coca, V., & Easton, J. Q. (2007). *Keeping new teachers: A first look at the influences of induction in the Chicago public schools*. Consortium on Chicago School Research.
- McGeehan, A. (2019). *A study of new teachers' perceptions of their induction programs*. Seton Hall University Dissertations and Theses (ETDs). 2609. <https://scholarship.shu.edu/dissertations/2609/>
- McKinnon, M. (2016). Teachers are leaving the profession – here's how to make them stay. <https://www.anu.edu.au/news/all-news/teachers-are-leaving-the-profession-%E2%80%93-heres-how-to-make-them-stay>
- Melnick, S. A., & Meister, D. G. (2008). A comparison of beginning and experienced teachers' concerns. *Educational Research Quarterly*, 31(3), 39.
- Menon, M. E. (2012). Do beginning teachers receive adequate support from their headquarters? *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 40(2), 217-231.

- Mingo, A. L. W. (2012). *Evaluating the impact of the beginning teacher induction program on the retention rate of beginning teachers*. Education Dissertations and Projects 67. https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/education_etd/67?utm_source=digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu%2Feducation_etd%2F67&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages
- National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. (2015). *The High Cost of Teacher Turnover*. Policy brief. <https://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/NCTAFCostofTeacherTurnoverpolicybrief.pdf>
- New Teacher Center. (2016). Role of the principal in beginning teacher induction. <https://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/Teacher-and-Leader-Effectiveness/Documents/Induction%20Documents/FY%2020/Role%20of%20the%20Principal%20in%20Beginning%20Teacher%20Induction%20NTC.pdf>
- Ni, Y, & Rorrer, A. K. (2018). *Why do teachers choose teaching and remain teaching: Initial results from the educator career and pathway survey (ECAPS) for teachers*. Utah Education Policy Center: Salt Lake City, UT. https://daqy2hvnfszx3.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/04/19110358/ECAPS_for_Teachers_report_Feb2018_Final.pdf
- North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (n.d.). *Alternative preparation pathways*. <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/educators/educator-preparation/alternative-preparation-pathways>

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (2017, February). *2015-2016 State of the teaching profession in North Carolina.*

<https://www.dpi.nc.gov/media/379/download>

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (2018, February). *2016-2017 State of the teaching profession in North Carolina.*

<https://www.dpi.nc.gov/media/380/download>

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (2019, February). *2017-2018 State of the teaching profession in North Carolina.*

<https://www.dpi.nc.gov/media/381/download>

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (2020a, February). *2018-2019 State of the teaching profession in North Carolina.* [https://files.nc.gov/dpi/state-of-](https://files.nc.gov/dpi/state-of-teaching-profession_20200310.pdf)

[teaching-profession_20200310.pdf](https://files.nc.gov/dpi/state-of-teaching-profession_20200310.pdf)

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (2020b). Educator's licensure.

<https://www.dpi.nc.gov/educators/educators-licensure>

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (2021, December). *2019-2020 State of the teaching profession in North Carolina.*

<https://www.dpi.nc.gov/media/10536/download>

North Carolina Science, Mathematics, and Technology Education Center. (2013).

Strategies that engage minds. [https://www.ncstemcenter.org/wp-](https://www.ncstemcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/NCSTEMScorecard.pdf)

[content/uploads/2014/03/NCSTEMScorecard.pdf](https://www.ncstemcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/NCSTEMScorecard.pdf)

North Carolina State Board of Education. (2020, Sept. 3). *Policy TCED-016: Beginning teacher support program*.

<https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Policy/ViewPolicy.aspx?S=10399&revid=yMsIsh0oCzF1JmHZsnMn9Q2zw%3d%3d&ptid=amIgTZiB9plushNjl6WXhfiOQ%3d%3d&secid=rN1rk9wifRtPN8VSRcplusNnw%3d%3d>

Opper, I. M. (2019). Does helping john help sue? evidence of spillovers in education. *The American Economic Review*, 109(3), 1080-1115.

<https://search.proquest.com/docview/2186792152>

Papay, J., Bacher-Hicks, A., Page, L. C., & Marinell, W. (2017). The challenge of teacher retention in urban schools: Evidence of variation from a cross-site analysis. *Educational Researcher*, 46(8), 434-448.

<https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X17735812>

Papay, J., & Kraft, M. (2015). Developing workplaces where teachers stay, improve, and succeed. <http://www.shankerinstitute.org/blog/developingworkplaces-where-teachers-stay-improve-and-succeed>

Partelow, L. (2019). *What to make of declining enrollment in teacher preparation programs*. The Center of American Progress.

<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/make-declining-enrollment-teacher-preparation-programs/>

Pierson, R. (2013, May). *Every kid needs a champion* [Video]. TED Conferences.

https://www.ted.com/talks/rita_pierson_every_kid_needs_a_champion?language=en

- Podolsky, A., Kini, T., Bishop, J., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2016). *Solving the teacher shortage: How to attract and retain excellent educators*. Learning Policy Institute.
<https://doi.org/10.54300/262.960>
- Powell, L. T. (2016). *Providing for the needs of new teachers: A study of new teacher induction in a rural school district in central North Carolina*. Education Dissertations and Projects. 178. https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/education_etd/178/
- Pratt, D. M. (2010). *The role of the principal in new teacher development under the California beginning teacher support & assessment program* (Publication No. 3434501) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Southern California]. ProQuest Central; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global: The Humanities and Social Sciences Collection.
- Public Schools First NC. (2016). Quick facts: NC's teacher pipeline.
<https://www.publicschoolsfirstnc.org/resources/fact-sheets/quick-facts-teacher-pipeline/>
- Quinn, R. J., & Andrews, B. D. (2004). The struggles of first-year teachers: Investigating support mechanisms. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, 77(4), 164-168. <https://doi.org/10.3200/TCHS.77.4.164-168>
- Redding, C., & Henry, G. T. (2018). New evidence on the frequency of teacher turnover. Accounting for within-year turnover. *Educational Researcher*, 47(9), 577-593.
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X18814450>

- Redding, C., & Henry, G. T. (2019). Leaving school early: An examination of novice teachers' within- and end-of-year turnover. *American Educational Research Journal*, 56(1), 204-236. <https://doi.org/10.3102/000283121879054>
- Reeder, H. S. (2013). *Teacher induction programs in North Carolina: Factors relating to job satisfaction and the intent to remain in the profession* Social Science Premium Collection. <https://dc.etsu.edu/etd/1144/>
- Reeves, D. B. (2010). *Transforming professional development into student results*. ASCD.
- Reilly, K. (2017). Observing peers develops practice, changes culture. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 98(6), 13–18. <https://kappanonline.org/reilly-peer-observations-observing-peers-develops-practice-changes-culture/>
- Riggs, L. (2013, October 18). *Why do teachers quit? And why do they stay?* The Atlantic. <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2013/10/why-do-teachers-quit/280699/>
- Ronfeldt, M., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2013). How teacher turnover harms student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*, 50(1), 4-36.
- Ronfeldt, M., & McQueen, K. (2017). Does new teacher induction really improve retention? *Journal of Teacher Education*, 68(4), 394-410. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487117702583>
- Scherer, M. (2012). The challenges of supporting new teachers. *Educational Leadership*, 69(8), 18–23. <http://pi-34.pbworks.com/w/file/fetch/56517230/The%20Challenges%20of%20Supporting%20New%20Teachers.pdf>

- Shockley, R., Watlington, E., & Felsher, R. (2013). Out on a limb. *NASSP Bulletin*, 97(4), 350-377.
- Simon, N., & Johnson, S. M. (2015). Teacher turnover in high-poverty schools: What we know and can do. *Teachers College Record* (1970), 117(3), 1-36.
- Strong, M. (2006). Does new teacher support affect student achievement. *New Teacher Center*, 06–01. https://www.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/files/content/docs/nclb/Kitty_Dixon--ResearchBrief.06-01.finalrv.pdf
- Sutcher, L. Darling-Hammond, L. & Carver-Thomas, D. (2016). *A coming crisis in teaching? Teacher supply, demand, and shortages in the U.S.* <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/coming-crisis-teaching>
- Sweeny, B. (2008). *Leading the teacher induction and mentoring program*. Corwin Press.
- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2013, May). *The condition of education 2013* (NCES 2013–037). NCES. <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2013/2013037.pdf>
- Warren, C. A. (2016). *A comparison of perceived professional development needs of beginning teachers in West Virginia schools* (Publication No. 10116722) [Doctoral dissertation, Marshall University]. ProQuest Central; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global: The Humanities and Social Sciences Collection.
- Zhang, G., & Zeller, N. (2016). A longitudinal investigation of the relationship between teacher preparation and teacher retention. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 43(2), 73-92.

Appendix A

Email Requesting Permission to Use Survey Questions

Your message to [REDACTED]

1 message

do-not-reply <do-not-reply@edlio.com>

Sun, Jun 6, 2021 at 12:09 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Here is a copy of your email:

From: [REDACTED]

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Permission to Use Survey Question

Good Evening,

I am a doctoral candidate at Gardner Webb University writing my dissertation on the Beginning Teacher Support Program in a Small Rural District. I am still working on the actual title. My chair is [REDACTED] gave me some direction on how to locate you.

I would like your permission to use your surveys for the three groups of participants, BTs, mentors, and administrators. I would also like to use your interview questions. I will use the survey questions only for my research study and not sell or seek compensation. I will include a copyright statement on all copies of the instrument and will send you a copy of my completed research study upon completion.

If these are acceptable terms and conditions and you grant permission for me to use all questions, please indicate so by replying to me via email: [REDACTED]

If you need to speak with me, you can reach me at 360-221-2222, or need additional information, please let me know. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Doctoral Candidate

This email was automatically sent by IP address 75.165.170.211 (computer id: 0.9119739604032175) on Sunday, June 6, 2021 at 12:09 PM US/Eastern timezone.

This user has been authenticated with the following credentials from google: display name: Nicole McGhee; email:

[REDACTED] ID: undefined.

Appendix B
Permission Granted

Dissertation

[REDACTED]

Mon 6/7/2021 7:52 AM

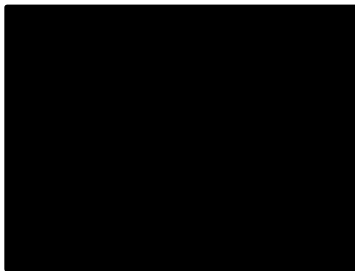
To: [REDACTED]

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Gardner-Webb.edu domain. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify that the links and/or attachments are safe.

You are welcome to use my interview and survey questions. Any friend of Dr. Laws is a friend of mine :)

If you need anything further, just let me know. Good luck!

--



The information contained in this electronic mail may contain legally privileged and confidential information intended only for the use of the individual or entity to which it is addressed. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any dissemination, distribution, or copying of this message is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please delete it and notify us immediately. Thank you.

Appendix C

Introduction Letter/Email – Beginning Teacher Survey

Introduction Letter/Email – Survey

Dear Beginning Teacher,

I am a doctoral student at Gardner-Webb University and I invite you to participate in a program evaluation. The title of this study is “A Program Evaluation of a Beginning Teacher Support Program in a Small Rural District in North Carolina.” The purpose of this research is to understand how beginning teachers perceive a Beginning Teacher Support Program in a small rural school district in North Carolina and determine if their perception has any impact on teacher retention.

Your participation in this study will involve completing a brief and anonymous online survey by following the link near the bottom of this page. This survey should only take about 30 minutes of your time. I am gathering data from beginning teachers, mentors, and administrators in your district to see if the Beginning Teacher Support Program meets the needs of beginning teachers, and if so, to what extent. I am also interested in the perceptions of beginning teachers, mentors, and administrators regarding the needs of beginning teachers.

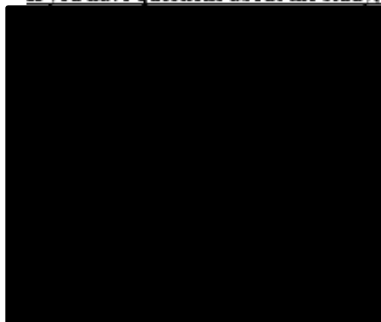
The survey data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics and the findings will be shared with the district superintendent. Your participation and feedback will assist the school district in identifying strengths and weaknesses to improve the Beginning Teacher Support Program and teacher retention.

At the end of the survey, you will be provided with a link to indicate whether you are interested in participating in a focus group to discuss the Beginning Teacher Support Program with others in your same role. This external link will not be connected to the survey data so that your survey responses will remain anonymous.

You have the right to withdraw from the research study at any time without penalty. You also have the right to refuse to answer any question(s) for any reason without penalty. The information that you give in the study will be handled confidentially. Your data will be anonymous which means that your name will not be collected or linked to the data. There are no anticipated risks in this study. You will receive no payment for participating in the study. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty by exiting the survey. Data from this study will not be used or distributed for future research studies.

Thank you for your time and willingness to assist me. Thank you once again for your assistance with my research and for supplying data to help me assess the effectiveness of your district's induction program.

If you have questions about the study, contact:



Click the link below to continue on to the survey indicates your consent to participate in the study:

(Link to the online survey questions will be here).

Appendix D

Introduction Letter/Email – Mentor Survey

Introduction Letter/Email – Survey

Dear Mentor,

I am a doctoral student at Gardner-Webb University and I invite you to participate in a program evaluation. The title of this study is "A Program Evaluation of a Beginning Teacher Support Program in a Small Rural District in North Carolina." The purpose of this research is to understand how beginning teachers perceive a Beginning Teacher Support Program in a small rural school district in North Carolina and determine if their perception has any impact on teacher retention.

Your participation in this study will involve completing a brief and anonymous online survey by following the link near the bottom of this page. This survey should only take about 30 minutes of your time. I am gathering data from beginning teachers, mentors, and administrators in your district to see if the Beginning Teacher Support Program meets the needs of beginning teachers, and if so, to what extent. I am also interested in the perceptions of beginning teachers, mentors, and administrators regarding the needs of beginning teachers.

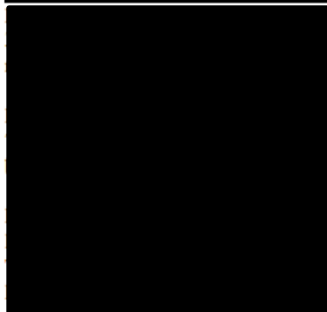
The survey data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics and the findings will be shared with the district superintendent. Your participation and feedback will assist the school district in identifying strengths and weaknesses to improve the Beginning Teacher Support Program and teacher retention.

At the end of the survey, you will be provided with a link to indicate whether you are interested in participating in a focus group to discuss the Beginning Teacher Support Program with others in your same role. This external link will not be connected to the survey data so that your survey responses will remain anonymous.

You have the right to withdraw from the research study at any time without penalty. You also have the right to refuse to answer any question(s) for any reason without penalty. The information that you give in the study will be handled confidentially. Your data will be anonymous which means that your name will not be collected or linked to the data. There are no anticipated risks in this study. You will receive no payment for participating in the study. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty by exiting the survey. Data from this study will not be used or distributed for future research studies.

Thank you for your time and willingness to assist me. Thank you once again for your assistance with my research and for supplying data to help me assess the effectiveness of your district's induction program.

If you have questions about the study, contact:



Click the link below to continue on to the survey indicates your consent to participate in the study:

(Link to the online survey questions will be here).

Appendix E

Introduction Letter/Email –Administrator Survey

Introduction Letter/Email – Survey

Dear Administrator,

I am a doctoral student at Gardner-Webb University and I invite you to participate in a program evaluation. The title of this study is “A Program Evaluation of a Beginning Teacher Support Program in a Small Rural District in North Carolina.” The purpose of this research is to understand how beginning teachers perceive a Beginning Teacher Support Program in a small rural school district in North Carolina and determine if their perception has any impact on teacher retention.

Your participation in this study will involve completing a brief and anonymous online survey by following the link near the bottom of this page. This survey should only take about 30 minutes of your time. I am gathering data from beginning teachers, mentors, and administrators in your district to see if the Beginning Teacher Support Program meets the needs of beginning teachers, and if so, to what extent. I am also interested in whether the perceptions of beginning teachers, mentors, and administrators regarding the needs of beginning teachers.

The survey data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics and the findings will be shared with the district superintendent. Your participation and feedback will assist the school district in identifying strengths and weaknesses to improve the Beginning Teacher Support Program and teacher retention.

At the end of the survey, you will be provided with a link to indicate whether you are interested in participating in a focus group to discuss the Beginning Teacher Support Program with others in your same role. This external link will not be connected to the survey data so that your survey responses will remain anonymous.

You have the right to withdraw from the research study at any time without penalty. You also have the right to refuse to answer any question(s) for any reason without penalty. The information that you give in the study will be handled confidentially. Your data will be anonymous which means that your name will not be collected or linked to the data. There are no anticipated risks in this study. You will receive no payment for participating in the study. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty by exiting the survey. Data from this study will not be used or distributed for future research studies.

Thank you for your time and willingness to assist me. Thank you once again for your assistance with my research and for supplying data to help me assess the effectiveness of your district's induction program.

If you have questions about the study, contact:



Click the link below to continue on to the survey indicates your consent to participate in the study:

(Link to the online survey questions will be here).

Appendix F
Beginning Teacher Survey

Beginning Teacher Survey

1. What is your gender?

☐ Female

☐ Male

2. How many years have you been teaching?

☐ Less than one year

☐ One year

☐ Two years

☐ Three years

☐ Four years

☐ More than four years

3. What is your current teaching assignment?

☐ Elementary grades

☐ Middle grades

☐ High school

☐ I serve multiple grades

4. Are you lateral entry, residency licensed, or did you graduated from a traditional teacher education program?

☐ Lateral entry

☐ Residency license

☐ Traditional teacher education program

5. Choose a statement that best describes your residency in North Carolina.

☐ I am brand new to North Carolina and have live here a year or less.

☐ I am new to North Carolina, I moved here within the last three years.

☐ I have resided in North Carolina for over three years.

☐ I am established in North Carolina and have lived her most or all of my life.

6. The following questions relate to: Mentors

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral/No Opinion	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The time spent with my mentor is beneficial for me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The meetings with my mentor are planned.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a say in what we will discuss during meetings with my mentor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I have a problem, my mentor is available to help me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I pose a problem to my mentor, he/she gives me advice or answers that are helpful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My mentor and I have trouble communicating.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My mentor is aware of my strengths.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My mentor is aware of my weaknesses.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would have struggled without the assistance of my mentor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to change mentors.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. The following questions relate to: Self-Assessment/Needs

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral/No Opinion	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I sometimes have trouble with assessing student knowledge.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I sometime have trouble with classroom management.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I sometime have trouble communicating with parents.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I sometimes have trouble differentiating instruction to address the needs of students who struggle with content.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I sometimes have trouble differentiating instruction to challenge students who master content quickly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I sometimes have trouble integrating or using technology effectively.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. The following questions relate to: Administration

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral/No Opinion	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My school site administrator(s) support me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My school site administrator(s) understand my weaknesses and make efforts to get me help.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My school site administrators are aware of my strengths.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am comfortable approaching my school site administrators with questions and problems.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am confident that my school site administrators want me to succeed as an educator.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. The following questions relate to: School Site BT Meetings

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral/No Opinion	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The school site monthly BT meetings are helpful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most of the topics addresses at the school site monthly BT meetings are of interest to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have input into the topics covered at our monthly school site BT meetings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to change the way that our school site monthly BT meetings are conducted.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. The following questions relate to: District Level BT Meetings

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral/No Opinion	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
BT orientation at the start of the school year was helpful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The district BT meetings are a locations easily accessible to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The district BT meetings are well planned and organized.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most of the topics addressed at the district BT meetings are of interest to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to have input into the topics covered at our districts BT meetings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have received support and guidance through the BT Induction program provided by our school district.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. The following questions relate to: Teacher Job Satisfaction

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral/No Opinion	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am happy in my current teaching assignment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to continue teaching, but would be interested in moving to another school (same grade level).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to continue teaching, but would be interested in moving into another grade level.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to continue teaching, but would be interested in moving to another school district.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am actively seeking other careers outside education.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with my current income from teaching.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have concerns about the overall culture and climate of our school district.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like a contributing member of my school faculty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that my thoughts and ideas are welcome at school and district PLC meetings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have an opportunities to observe other teachers (not just my mentor).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have opportunities to observe my mentor teaching.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am encouraged to observe other teachers (any teachers).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. Is there anything else you would like to share about BT induction and new teacher support?



Appendix G
Mentor Survey

Mentor Survey

1. What is your gender?

☐ Female

☐ Male

2. How many years have you been teaching?

☐ 5 or less years

☐ 21-25 years

☐ 6-10 years

☐ 26-30 years

☐ 11-15 years

☐ Over 30 years

☐ 16-20 years

3. What is your current teaching assignment?

☐ Elementary grades

☐ Middle grades

☐ High school

☐ I serve multiple grades

4. Are you lateral entry, residency licensed, or did you graduated from a traditional teacher education program?

☐ Lateral entry

☐ Traditional teacher education program

5. The following questions relate to: Mentees

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral/No Opinion	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The time spent with my mentee is beneficial for my own professional growth	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The meetings with my mentee are planned.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am available to help my mentee when he/she has a problem.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When my mentee has a problem, I give him/her the information or support to address the issue.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My mentee and I have trouble communicating at times.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am aware of my mentee's strengths.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am aware of my mentee's weaknesses.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not feel my mentee would be successful without the guidance and support of a mentor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to change mentees.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. The following questions relate to: Administration

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral/No Opinion	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My school site administrators support my mentee.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The school site administrators understand my mentee's weaknesses and make efforts to get him/her help.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The school site administrators are aware of my mentee's strengths.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My mentee is comfortable approaching our school site administrators with questions and problems.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am confident that the school site administrators want my mentee to succeed as an educator.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. The following questions relate to: School Site BT Meetings

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral/No Opinion	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The school site monthly BT meetings are beneficial to my mentee.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most of the topics addressed at the school site monthly BT meetings are applicable to my mentee and his/her needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have input into the topics covered at our monthly school site BT meetings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to change the way that our school site monthly BT meetings are conducted.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. The following questions relate to: Assessment of Mentee's Needs

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral/No Opinion	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My mentee sometimes has trouble with assessing student knowledge.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My mentee sometimes has trouble with classroom management.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My mentee sometimes has trouble communicating with parents.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My mentee sometimes has trouble creating engaging activities and/or lesson plans.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My mentee sometimes has trouble differentiating instruction to address the needs of students who struggle with the content.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My mentee sometimes has trouble differentiating instructions to challenge students who master content quickly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. The following questions relate to: District Level Mentor Training & Program Effectiveness

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral/No Opinion	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I received training to be a mentor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Based on the mentor training I received, I feel capable of guiding and supporting my mentee effectively.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to have training to be a better mentor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel confident in helping my mentee with implementation and use of technology.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our school district's BT Induction Program (including mentoring) is effective in supporting new teachers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Is there anything else you would like to share about BT induction, mentoring, or new teacher support?

Appendix H
Administrator Survey

Administrator Survey

1. What is your gender?

- ☐ Female
☐ Male

2. How many years have you been teaching?

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 5 or less years | <input type="radio"/> 21-25 years |
| <input type="radio"/> 6-10 years | <input type="radio"/> 26-30 years |
| <input type="radio"/> 11-15 years | <input type="radio"/> Over 30 years |
| <input type="radio"/> 16-20 years | |

3. Of your years in education, how many have been in administration?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 0-5 years | <input type="radio"/> 16-20 years |
| <input type="radio"/> 6-10 years | <input type="radio"/> Over 20 years |
| <input type="radio"/> 11-15 years | |

4. What is your current administrative assignment?

- ☐ Elementary grades
☐ Middle grades
☐ High school
☐ I serve multiple grades

5. The following questions relate to: Matching BTs and Mentors

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral/No Opinion	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have input when matching our newly hired BTs with a mentor from our school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is important to match BTs and mentors based on their teaching assignment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is important to match BTs and mentors based on their personalities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is important to match BTs and mentors based on their location in building classrooms are close in proximity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When there is a problem with a BT, the Mentor should discuss the issue with Lead Mentor first, before asking me to intervene.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The relationship between a BT and his/her mentor is critical to the success of the BT.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mentors grow as educators and as educational leaders when effective mentoring occurs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Without careful matching of BTs and mentors, the BTs early teaching experience can suffer.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I trust our schools lead mentor to match BTs and mentors.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At my school site, I do not have enough highly qualified mentors to properly match BTs with mentors.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. The following questions relate to: Assessment of Mentee's Needs

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral/No Opinion	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
BTs. sometime have trouble with assessing student knowledge.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
BTs sometimes have trouble with classroom management.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
BTs sometimes have trouble communicating with parents.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
BTs sometimes have trouble creating engaging activities and/or lesson plans.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
BTs sometimes have trouble differentiating instruction to address the needs of students who struggle with the content.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
BTs sometimes have trouble differentiating instruction to challenge students who master content quickly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. The following questions relate to: School Site BT Meetings

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral/No Opinion	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The school site monthly BT meetings are beneficial to my mentee.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most of the topics addressed at the school site monthly BT meetings are applicable to my mentee and his/her needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have input into the topics covered at our monthly school site BT meetings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to change the way that our school site monthly BT meetings are conducted.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. The following questions relate to: District Level Training * Program Effectiveness

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral/No Opinion	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I received training to be a mentor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel capable of guiding and supporting beginning teachers effectively.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to have more training to better support beginning teachers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel confident in helping new teachers with implementation and use of technology.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our school district's BT Induction Program (including mentoring) is effective in supporting new teachers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. The following questions relate to: Administrative Support

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral/No Opinion	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I feel that the administrative team at my school adequately supports new teachers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The school site administrators understand the weaknesses of BTs and make efforts to get them help.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The school site administrators are aware of BT strengths.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
BTs are comfortable approaching our school site administrators.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I try not to assign any additional duties or responsibilities to BTs during the first year.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Is there anything else you would like to share about BT Induction, mentoring, or new teacher support?

Appendix I

Introduction Letter/Email – Beginning Teacher Focus Group

Introduction Letter/Email – BT Focus Group

Dear Beginning Teacher,

I am a doctoral student at Gardner-Webb University. You recently received a survey regarding the study I am conducting in this school district regarding the Beginning Teacher Support Program.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in virtual Focus Group Interviews. You will attend a 30-45 minute session along with other beginning teachers in their second, third, or fourth year of teaching on (day, date) from (start time) to (end time) via Google Meet. There are approximately five to six questions.

Your responses to the questions will be confidential and will be reported in the final dissertation and shared with the district's superintendent. In addition, focus group discussions will be recorded and responses will be transcribed. However, your name will not be publicly identified in the study results.

Your participation and feedback will assist the school district in identifying strengths and weaknesses to improve the Beginning Teacher Support Program and teacher retention and reduce teacher turnover.

Thank you for your time and willingness to assist me. Thank you once again for your assistance with my research and for supplying data to help me assess the effectiveness of your district's induction program.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.

Graduate Student

Gardner-Webb University

Appendix J**Introduction Letter/Email – Mentor Focus Group**

Introduction Letter/Email – Mentor Focus Group

Dear Mentor,

I am a doctoral student at Gardner-Webb University. You recently received a survey regarding the study I am conducting in this school district regarding the Beginning Teacher Support Program.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in virtual Focus Group Interviews. You will attend a 30-45 minute session along with other beginning teachers in their second, third, or fourth year of teaching on (day, date) from (start time) to (end time) via Google Meet. There are approximately five to six questions.

Your responses to the questions will be confidential and will be reported in the final dissertation and shared with the district's superintendent. In addition, focus group discussions will be recorded and responses will be transcribed. However, your name will not be publicly identified in the study results.

Your participation and feedback will assist the school district in identifying strengths and weaknesses to improve the Beginning Teacher Support Program and teacher retention and reduce teacher turnover.

Thank you for your time and willingness to assist me. Thank you once again for your assistance with my research and for supplying data to help me assess the effectiveness of your district's induction program.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the graduate student.

Graduate Student

Gardner-Webb University

Appendix K

Introduction Letter/Email – Administrator Focus Group

Introduction Letter/Email – Administrator Focus Group

Dear Administrator,

I am a doctoral student at Gardner-Webb University. You recently received a survey regarding the study I am conducting in this school district regarding the Beginning Teacher Support Program.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in virtual Focus Group Interviews. You will attend a 30-45 minute session along with other beginning teachers in their second, third, or fourth year of teaching on (day, date) from (start time) to (end time) via Google Meet. There are approximately five to six questions.

Your responses to the questions will be confidential and will be reported in the final dissertation and shared with the district's superintendent. In addition, focus group discussions will be recorded and responses will be transcribed. However, your name will not be publicly identified in the study results.

Your participation and feedback will assist the school district in identifying strengths and weaknesses to improve the Beginning Teacher Support Program and teacher retention and reduce teacher turnover.

Thank you for your time and willingness to assist me. Thank you once again for your assistance with my research and for supplying data to help me assess the effectiveness of your district's induction program.

Sincerely,

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of the sender.

Graduate Student

Gardner-Webb University

Appendix L

Beginning Teacher Focus Group Interview Questions

Beginning Teacher Interview Questions

1. What are the top 2 needs you have as a BT? Explain.
2. Explain how the BT Induction Program of this district could better meet your needs.
3. What have you found to be your greatest area of strength as a new teacher?
4. How would you rate your job satisfaction on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being “not satisfied at all” and 5 being “completely satisfied?”
5. Tell me about your mentor and that relationship.
6. Do you have a mentor outside of the district or who serves and support informally? Explain.

Is there anything else you would like to share with me?

Appendix M

Mentor Focus Group Interview Questions

Mentor Interview Questions:

1. What are the top 2 areas of need for your BT?
2. Explain how the BT Induction Program of this district could better meet the needs of BTs. Of mentors?
3. What is the greatest area of strength for the BT(s) that you mentor?
4. Would you say that being a mentor is rewarding? Explain.
5. Tell me about your relationship with the BT(s) you work with.

*Is there anything else you would like to share with me?

Appendix N

Administrator Focus Group Interview Questions

Administrator Interview Questions:

1. What are the top 2 areas of need for the BTs at your school?

2. Explain how the BT Induction Program of this district could better meet the needs of BTs. Of mentors? Of administrators working with BTs?

3. What is the greatest area of strength for the BTs at your school?

4. Do you feel you are prepared and supported to work with BTs at your school? Explain.

5. Tell me about how you match BTs and mentors at your school site.

*Is there anything else you would like to share with me?

Appendix O
Proxy Request

10/21/2021

To:

From:

Doctoral Candidate

Re: Request to Serve as Proxy

I am currently enrolled in the Doctoral Program at Gardner-Webb University and working toward completing my dissertation. My study is entitled "A Program Evaluation of a Beginning Teacher Support Program in a Small Rural School District in North Carolina." The purpose of this study is to understand how beginning teachers perceive a Beginning Teacher Support Program in a small district and determine if their perception has any bearing on teacher retention. We will also identify strengths and weaknesses to improve the Beginning Teacher Support Program.

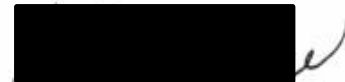
Participants of this study will be asked to voluntarily complete an online survey questionnaire and participate in a focus group interview. Participants will include beginning teachers, mentors, and administrators. The information provided in this study will be handled confidentially. Names will not be collected or linked to the data.

In this small school district, I serve in a dual role. I am the Director of Human Resources, who coordinates and facilitates the Beginning Teacher Support Program in the school district research site. To avoid any potential conflicts of interest, I am asking you to serve as the proxy for the focus group interviews.

As the proxy, you will organize the focus groups and contact the participants to schedule the focus group interviews as a proxy. There will be approximately five different sessions scheduled for focus group interviews, up to three for beginning teachers, one for mentors, and one for administrators. Once the date and times are confirmed with the participants, the proxy will send a calendar invite and a link for the virtual meet. The proxy will ask the provided questions during the specified virtual focus group interview. In addition, the proxy may ask follow up questions for clarity or for additional information. Each of the focus group interview sessions will be recorded.

If you agree to serve as the proxy and will adhere to all facilitating each of the virtual focus group interviews, please send me a letter or email giving your consent.

Respectfully,



Nicole McGhee

Appendix P
Proxy Consent

10/26/2021

To: Nicole
Doctor

From: Dr. Sh
Princi

Re: Request to Serve as Proxy

I agree to serve as proxy for the focus group interviews for Nicole McGhee's study which is titled, "A Program Evaluation of a Beginning Teacher Support Program in a Small Rural School District in North Carolina." I understand and agree that, as proxy, I will organize the focus groups and contact the participants to schedule the focus group interviews: up to three sessions for Beginning Teachers, one for Mentors and one for Administrators. There will be a total of four to five different sessions scheduled for focus group interviews. Once the dates and times are confirmed, I will send a calendar invite and a link for each virtual meet. As the proxy, I may ask follow up questions for clarity or for additional information. Each of the focus group interview sessions will be recorded. I agree to serve as the proxy and will adhere to facilitating each of the virtual focus group interviews.

Respectfully,



Dr.

Appendix Q
Permission to Conduct Research Study

9/23/2021

To:

From:

Re: Permission to Conduct Research Study

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study in your school district. I am currently enrolled in the Doctoral Program at Gardner-Webb University and working toward completing my dissertation. My study is entitled "A Program Evaluation of a Beginning Teacher Support Program in a Small Rural School District in North Carolina."

The purpose of this study is to understand how beginning teachers perceive a Beginning Teacher Support Program in a small rural school district in North Carolina and determine if their perception has any bearing on teacher retention.

If approval is granted, participants (beginning teachers, mentors, and administrators) will be asked to voluntarily complete an online survey questionnaire and participate in focus group interviews. The information provided in this study will be handled confidentially. Names will not be collected or linked to the data. Therefore, there are no anticipated risks in this study.

Participation and feedback from this study will assist the school district in identifying strengths and weaknesses to improve the Beginning Teacher Support Program and teacher retention.

Your approval of this study will be greatly appreciated. If approved, please sign below.

Sincerely,

[Redacted]

Approved by:

[Redacted]

Print

[Redacted]

Signature/Title/Date