

INDUCTION AND MENTORING:

A LIFELINE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF TEACHERS

by

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**A GRADUATING PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF**

MASTER OF EDUCATION

In

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Adult and Higher Education

Department of Educational Studies

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

July 2006

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ABSTRACT

Never has teaching been more important; yet never has it been more challenging. Teachers play a significant role in society; they can make a difference in the lives of children. To succeed in the important work of educating youth, both new and experienced teachers must remain positive and feel that the opportunities outweigh the day-to-day challenges of teaching; yet, the teaching profession has a dismal record when it comes to helping new teachers thrive and survive.

The “sink or swim” mentality that continues to characterize the entry of new teachers into the profession is of great concern. The teaching profession expects new teachers to take on the same responsibilities and duties as those of teachers ready to leave the profession. In Canada, as many as 20% of the new teachers leave the profession in their first five years of teaching. The reasons behind new teachers’ dissatisfaction are several, including ineffective induction and mentoring programs, inappropriate teaching assignments, and inadequate working conditions, salary, and administrative-leadership support.

The purpose of this study was to identify the factors and conditions that will enable the next generation of teachers to survive and thrive and to enable students to realize their full potential.

A conceptual approach to critical reflection was used in the study. My extensive background as a teacher and teacher educator enabled me to critically reflect on my experiences and interactions with numerous prospective, new, and experienced teachers.

The purposes of the study were achieved through my experiences and reflections as a teacher and teacher educator and through an analysis of relevant Canadian and American literature

from peer-reviewed journals, reports, and books, most of which have been published within the last three decades.

The study concludes that the most promising initiative for supporting new teachers is the development and implementation of a quality induction and mentoring program in which experienced teachers provide ongoing professional support to new teachers, thereby transmitting their collective wisdom to the new generation of teachers. An induction and mentoring program should be implemented in conjunction with related strategies for addressing needs identified by new teachers.

The findings presented in this paper should lead to the creation of conditions to better support the new generation of teachers so that they may survive and thrive, remain in the profession, and enable students to realize their full potential, thus realizing the goals of advancing teaching quality and improving student learning.

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DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to the next generation of teachers in British Columbia. It is my sincere hope that all teachers entering the profession in our province in the future will be supported by an induction program that includes orientation and mentoring. Those who choose teaching are entitled to the support they need to realize their potential as educators. I call on the teaching profession of British Columbia to join me in undertaking our collective responsibility to advocate for, and create a professional lifeline for, the next generation of teachers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this graduating paper was possible with the support of many. I thank my wife, Val, and our three children, Joey, Josh, and Lyndsay, for their unconditional support, encouragement, and love.

I thank the Executive Committee of the BC Teachers' Federation for giving me educational leave. I would have been unable to juggle the multiple challenges of my professional work, graduate work, and family responsibilities without the sabbatical. I also thank my BCTF colleagues who provided encouragement and ideas throughout my graduate program.

Advice and support from faculty at the University of British Columbia certainly helped me to complete my graduating paper. My advisor, Dr. Lesley Andres, was very supportive; she constantly provided constructive feedback and encouragement. Dr. Rob Tierney, Dean of Education, UBC, first encouraged me to undertake my graduate studies at UBC, and despite the demands of his job, he continued to be very supportive and encouraging throughout my graduate-program work.

I thank the members of my EDST 508 *Getting Your Research on the Road* course for their advice and ideas. Laila, Alan, Janine, Jay, Jamileh, Justine, Erin, and Annabelle, all helped keep me on track. I also thank Dr. Roger Boshier for his practical, no-nonsense advice.

Last, I thank friend and former colleague Debby Stagg for her tips and ideas regarding writing and editing.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: NEW TEACHERS CALL FOR SUPPORT

The Profession That Eats Its Young

Mark Halder was feeling on top of the world when he accepted his first teaching assignment, at Kidder Elementary School. Having just completed the five-year teacher-education program at a renowned university in the province, Mark was keen to begin his teaching career and to make a difference in the lives of students as a full-time member of the school staff.

However, after the first month of teaching his Grade 7 class, Mark felt tired and downhearted. During the first week of the school year, the principal had met with him for an orientation session. Mark was disappointed that the session was only an overview of basic school procedures. He had expected the orientation session to include information about school goals, lesson plans, learning resources, and the collegial support structure that would be available to him as a member of staff.

After four weeks of teaching, Mark was finding it daunting to prepare and plan for six different subjects. His class included students whom other, veteran, teachers had not wanted. Many of his 32 students had behaviour, learning, and attendance problems. Although his colleagues were friendly, they had not found the time to meet with him to discuss and address issues he faced in his classroom. He had looked forward to meeting with the other two Grade 7 teachers to talk about their teaching plans and their tips and ideas for classroom management. But he found that the conversations with those colleagues were mostly about administrative matters. Mark was also increasingly aware that he lacked the necessary array of teaching strategies and materials to foster sustained student learning.

Nothing in the teacher-education program and classroom practicums had prepared Mark for the challenges he encountered in his first month of teaching. As a new teacher on a temporary contract, Mark was worried that asking for assistance would signal weakness. He was having difficulty with classroom management, but instead of asking for help from the principal, Mark forged on and kept his classroom door shut. Mark wondered if his colleagues were aware of the challenges he faced and whether they shared his philosophy of teaching and learning.

Mark had done well in his teacher-education program. He had enjoyed student teaching with Ms. Jones. Why were things so different in his classroom? Would it ever get easier? Mark had worked hard in August to set up his classroom, putting up colourful posters and organizing the classroom as discussed in university sessions. Everyone—his professors, his friends and family, and the staff at Ms. Jones’s school—had assured him that he would be a great teacher.

As the school year wore on, Mark wore out. Teaching left him feeling disillusioned and unsuccessful; his idealism was shattered. By the end of the school year, Mark seriously considered leaving teaching.

Like Mark, far too many new teachers are expected to perform essentially the same tasks as seasoned veterans. The trial-by-fire method of casting new teachers into the classroom has been the traditional welcome to the profession (Lipton & Wellman, 2001). Entering the teaching profession presents challenges not experienced in other fields (Darling-Hammond, 2001). Those difficult challenges are highlighted in the following quote:

We expect brand new, just-out-of-the-wrapper teachers to assume the same responsibilities and duties as our most seasoned professionals, and we expect them to carry out those duties with the same level of expertise and within the same time constraints. We hold new teachers accountable for skills that they don’t yet have and that they can only gain through experience (Renard, 2003, p.63).

Entry into the teaching profession has been characterized as follows:

- the profession that eats its young (Halford, 1998)
- the profession that cannibalizes its young (Ingersoll, 2004)
- the boot-camp experience (Ingersoll, 2004)
- the sink-or-swim profession (Halford, 1998)
- trial-by-fire (Humbard, Lipton, & Wellman, 2001).

In my 30 years of work as a teacher and teacher educator, I have encountered too many stories similar to that of my fictitious teacher, Mark Halder. Over the coming decade, British Columbia has an opportunity to effect significant change in the way new teachers are inducted into the profession. We owe it to students and the next generation of teachers to create a more effective and responsible way to welcome new teachers into the profession. If we fail to do so, students will continue to suffer the consequences of inadequate support for new teachers. The teaching profession has a responsibility to advocate for, and to create a professional lifeline for, the next generation of teachers.

The Context

Never has teaching been more important than it is today. The success of society is tightly linked to the ability of students to learn. Students are supposed to read, write, compute, find and use resources, identify and solve problems, and continue to learn throughout their lives. Those who do not learn and succeed in schools have little chance of contributing to society (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996).

The *School Act* of British Columbia has the following preamble:

The purpose of the British Columbia school system is to enable all learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy, democratic, and pluralistic society and a prosperous and sustainable economy (Province of BC, 1996, p.7).

To realize the ambitious goal of the British Columbia school system and prepare youth to realize their potential, the teaching profession must persistently advocate for, and promote, the development of a comprehensive strategy for attracting, recruiting, preparing, supporting, and retaining teachers in our school system.

The teaching profession has a dismal record when it comes to easing the entry of new teachers into full-time teaching. The profession still expects new teachers to take on the same responsibilities and duties as those of teachers ready to retire. Too many of Canada's new teachers leave the profession in their first five years of teaching. The reasons behind new teachers' dissatisfaction are several, including the absence of induction and mentoring programs, inappropriate teaching assignments, inadequate salaries, poor working conditions, and lack of administrative support (Berg, Donaldson, & Johnson 2005; Connors-Krikorian, 2004).

There is a critical need for the teaching profession to pay careful attention to the needs and wants of new teachers. The profession has an important responsibility to advocate for, and to create, conditions to ensure that the next generation of teachers survives and thrives, remains in the profession, and enables students to realize their full potential, thus advancing teaching quality and improving student learning.

Significance of the Study

Teachers play a significant role in society: teachers can make a difference in the lives of children. What teachers know and do influences student learning (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). To succeed in the important work of educating youth, both new and experienced teachers must remain positive, and they must believe that teaching's opportunities outweigh its impediments. Up to now, the teaching profession has provided inadequate support for new teachers to address the day-to-day challenges of teaching—to survive and thrive (Wong, 2004).

The work of teachers is isolated and individualistic rather than collegial and collaborative (Hargreaves, 1999; Lortie, 1975). That cultural tradition has profoundly affected the careers of people teaching less than five years. Unfortunately for most new teachers, induction into the profession is still characterized as “sink or swim.” The education system has not managed to transform the culture of teaching from that of autonomy and individualism to that of collegiality and collaboration. The way most new teachers are inducted into teaching, the way Mark Halder was, should greatly concern the profession.

New teachers require support and assistance to make the transition from teacher education to classroom. By supporting new teachers in their beginning years and helping them develop their skills and knowledge, the teaching profession can help them find satisfaction in their chosen career and remain in teaching. Induction and mentoring programs can foster new teachers' confidence, help them improve their teaching practice, and help them grow into and stay in the profession (Ontario College of Teachers, 2002). New teachers benefit from programs that welcome and support them in the profession. Well-designed, carefully implemented, and soundly supported

induction and mentoring programs positively affect the retention of teachers (Berg, Donaldson, & Johnson, 2005).

Another significant factor that determines whether new teachers remain in the profession is their sense of efficacy (Birkeland & Johnson, 2002). To remain positive and optimistic about their work, teachers need to feel a sense of success. Success for teachers means that they are teaching effectively and their students are learning. Teachers also want to sense that they are making a difference with the students they teach (Connors-Krikorian, 2005). Achieving this sense of success has a great deal to do with the conditions and support that new teachers encounter in their schools. Factors such as relationships with colleagues, curricula and resources, working conditions, teaching assignments, and structures to support teaching and learning are significant in determining a sense of success for new teachers (Connor-Krikorian, 2005; Birkeland & Johnson, 2002; Kardos, 2002).

Demographic factors are another important consideration when discussing the teaching profession. More than 50% of the teaching population in British Columbia will retire within the next decade (BC Ministry of Education, 2005). The significance of this information increases when one considers that provinces in Canada are losing as many of as 20% of the new teachers in their first five years of teaching (Canadian Teachers' Federation, 2003).

The convergence of teacher-supply-and-demand data, information about new teacher retention, and successful strategies for supporting new teachers give the teaching profession of British Columbia a "tipping point" opportunity to renew and transform the culture of the profession. Over the next decade, the teacher population of British Columbia will change dramatically. By harnessing and focussing the collective energy of the educational community in our province, we can develop a comprehensive and integrated strategy for supporting a new generation of BC teachers. That strategy must attract talented candidates and give them the support

necessary to keep them once they enter the teaching profession. Most importantly, we have an opportunity to enhance student learning, by fostering the development of a true teaching profession, by transforming the culture of teaching from one of “rugged individualism to one of collaboration and collegiality” (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1999).

Now is the time for teacher organizations, teacher-education institutions, school districts, and the Ministry of Education to work together to develop a comprehensive strategy to help new teachers successfully undertake their responsibilities of enabling students to experience success and realize their potential. The teaching profession must embrace this historic opportunity to make a significant and lasting improvement in the quality of teaching and learning in our schools. By our moving forward, our new teachers will benefit greatly. The students of our province will benefit even more.

Purpose of the Study

In regard to the foregoing, this study sought to

- identify reasons new teachers leave the profession in their first five years of teaching;
- identify the most important factors and conditions that will enable the next generation of teachers to enter, grow in, and remain in the teaching profession;
- develop a mentoring and induction action plan for supporting new teachers in British Columbia.

Methodology

My extensive background as a teacher and teacher educator enabled me to critically reflect on my experiences and interactions with prospective, new, and experienced teachers. I have worked as an elementary school teacher for more than 15 years, and I have mentored student teachers as a

school-based sponsor teacher. Additionally, I have facilitated workshops on current educational issues with new and experienced teachers. As the director of the Professional and Social Issues Division of the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF), I have worked with deans of the eight teacher-education institutions in the province to improve the quality of teacher education programs. I have also helped develop the Federation's New Teacher Support Program, which includes the Handbook for New Teachers, the annual New Teacher Conference, the new teacher web site, and induction and mentoring projects with local teacher associations and school districts.

The purposes of the study were achieved through my experiences and reflections as teacher and teacher educator and through an analysis of recent and relevant Canadian and American literature from peer-reviewed journals, reports related to teacher education and new teachers, books, and web sites.

Overview of the Study

The five chapters of this report present the following information. Chapter One provides information about the purpose and significance of the study. The subsequent chapter provides an overview of the factors behind the career decision choices of new teachers. Chapter Three considers the various strategies for supporting new teachers. The next chapter proposes a framework for the development of an induction and mentoring program to support new teachers in British Columbia. The final chapter summarizes the findings of the study and discusses the positive impact of providing tangible support for new teachers as they are inducted into the profession.

CHAPTER TWO FACTORS AFFECTING NEW TEACHERS' CAREER DECISIONS

Introduction

In BC and other jurisdictions, policymakers and practitioners have developed strategies to provide support for new teachers and to reduce attrition rates. Many strategies have been developed without a clear understanding of new-teacher concerns about the profession and their schools (Johnson & Birkeland, 2002). What is attractive or unattractive about teaching? Why do some new teachers continue teaching, while others leave? What programs or conditions enable some school districts to retain new teachers and ensure that they do their best work, while others fail to keep their new teachers? This chapter explores the nature of teaching, stages of development for new teachers, teacher retention and attrition, the impact of collegial support, the role of school culture, and the impact of teaching and working conditions.

By understanding the factors that affect new teacher career decisions, it is possible to identify effective strategies, such as induction and mentoring, to address the issues.

The Nature of Teaching

Obstacles to becoming a teacher today are many of the same ones that teachers have encountered in public schools over time: low pay and prestige, inadequate resources, unreasonable working conditions, isolating work, limited career opportunities, and other issues. Those issues are even more important today, when prospective teachers have more career options, and teachers and educational systems are under increasing scrutiny (Birkeland & Johnson, 2002).

When compared with professions such as law and medicine, teaching in North America has been labelled a semi-profession (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Until the 1950s, teaching was considered short-term, temporary work taken up by men enroute to a “real” profession, and by women who taught for a short period before having a family (Lortie, 1969). Teaching was sometimes likened to childcare, regarded as the work of women (Hoffman, 1981). As Darling-Hammond (2001) observed, “The view of teaching as relatively simple, straightforward work, easily controlled by prescriptions of practice, is reinforced by the ‘apprenticeship of experience’ that adults have lived through during their years as students in schools” (p.761). This historical background helps to explain why teaching is not considered prestigious work by some members of the public. Other studies also suggest that for some youth, teaching is one of the only career options with which they are familiar (Andres & Krahn, 1999).

Most people enter teaching in search of intrinsic rewards (Berg, Donaldson, and Johnson, 2005; Ontario College of Teachers, 2004). At least three levels of motivation have been identified for choosing teaching as a profession—the strongest motivator being working with children or youth and making a difference in their lives, followed by having one’s own classroom and teaching subjects one enjoys, with other motivators focussed on career opportunities and compensation (Ontario College of Teachers, 2004).

Compensation is also a factor in attracting or detracting prospective teachers to the profession (Berg, Donaldson, & Johnson, 2005). How many prospective candidates never consider the profession because of its low pay potential? Although pay is not the major reason for teachers’ entering the profession, it can be one of their reasons for leaving (Goodlad, 1984). By itself, higher pay is unlikely to retain new teachers, especially if they find they cannot attain the intrinsic rewards for which they entered the profession (Birkeland & Johnson, 2002).

As one of the social professions, teaching offers many opportunities. Teachers receive intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. They experience the pleasure of working with students, of helping students learn, of teaching subject matter they love, of learning new skills themselves, and of receiving public recognition (Berg, Donaldson, & Johnson, 2005). Teachers want students to experience success. It is very frustrating when they are unable to meet the needs of their students.

For some students, teachers provide opportunities that might otherwise be missed. According to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1999), "teaching is the most important element of successful learning" (p12). The following words of a new teacher vividly describe her expectations for remaining in the profession, "I'll need a sense of success, not unqualified constant success, because I know that's completely unrealistic. But overall, you know, that I'm making more of a difference for kids and that they're learning from me"(Birkeland & Johnson, 2002, p.14).

The profession has an important responsibility to ensure that new teachers are given appropriate and sustained support to grow, learn, and remain in teaching.

New Teachers: Stages of Development

Understanding the stages through which new teachers pass can facilitate planning programs to support them. Although new teachers will have had a wide variety of previous experiences, most will go through several predictable stages in their first few years of teaching. Not all new teachers will go through the stages in the same order, nor will they spend the same amount of time in each stage. Studies suggest that new teachers go through the following stages as they begin their teaching (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, 2004; Moir, 1990):

- **Anticipation**, a feeling of excitement, occurs before new teachers begin teaching.
- **Survival** occurs as new teachers face the day-to-day challenges of teaching and experience problems and situations not previously encountered.
- **Disillusionment** is the stage where new teachers begin to question their ability to do the job.
- **Rejuvenation** occurs when new teachers recognize their strengths and begin to have a sense of accomplishment.
- **Reflection** occurs when new teachers reflect on their teaching experiences and identify events that were successful and those that were not.

Any strategy for supporting new teachers, including induction and mentoring, must take into account and address the stages that new teachers go through as they begin their career in the profession. By understanding those stages, we can understand their impact on new teacher retention and attrition.

New-Teacher Retention and Attrition

According to figures from the BC Ministry of Education, 20 to 40% of all teachers in British Columbia are in the 50 to 54 age range, and almost 40% are in the 50+ category. Table 1 shows the most common ages of teachers in British Columbia. The average retirement age for teachers in BC is now 59 (Schaefer, 1999). Assuming that the student population remains stable, that means a significant number of teachers will retire over the next decade (BC Ministry of Education, 2005). The demand for new teachers is both a challenge and an opportunity for the profession. While this is an opportunity to welcome many energetic new teachers into teaching, the

profession also has an important responsibility to ensure that they receive the support to succeed, grow, and remain in teaching.

Table 1: Most Common Age of Teachers in BC Public Schools (2006)

| Most common age | Teachers |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| Over 50 | 37% |
| Over 55 | 26% |
| Under 40 | 34% |
| Between 40 and 49 | 29% |

Source: BC Ministry of Education, March 2006

A related significant concern for the K–12 educational community is the number of new teachers who leave the profession during their first five years of teaching. All occupations experience some loss of new members, whether voluntarily because novices decide not to remain, or involuntarily because employers deem them unsuitable. However, teaching is a profession with high attrition, especially among new teachers (Berg, Donaldson, & Johnson, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Ingersoll, 2002).

A recent study, based on an analysis of the Statistics Canada National Graduate Survey, suggests Canada could be losing 15–20% of new teachers in their first five years of teaching (Canadian Teachers’ Federation, 2003). Another report, from Ontario, about transitions to teaching, reveals that up 20% of first and second-year teachers indicated they would no longer be teaching within five years (Ontario College of Teachers, 2004). Although specific retention rate figures are not available for BC, it is reasonable to assume that the percentages for our province are similar to other provinces’.

The retention rate for new teachers in Canada is better than that in the United States, where up to 40% of new teachers leave the profession during their first two years of teaching (Berg, Donaldson, & Johnson, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). An even more disturbing finding in the United States is that the best and brightest entering the profession are the most likely to leave (Chen, Geis, & Henke, 2000; Murnane, 1991).

The high attrition rate for new teachers should concern practising teachers, student teachers, teacher educators, educational administrators, and policy-makers. Gaining a better understanding of factors leading to attrition may guide the development of policies and strategies for reducing the attrition rate for new teachers. The literature refers to “leavers” as new teachers who voluntarily leave the profession seeking a career change because of overwhelming job demands, lack of professional support, belief they lack the tools to teach, or a desire for a better salary. “Stayers” are defined as new teachers in a school district who have been in the profession more than five years (Birkeland & Johnson, 2002). This information leads to the following questions: What factors influence the “stayers” as well as the “leavers”? What conditions foster the retention of new teachers?

The primary reasons for teachers’ decisions to leave the profession during their first five years of teaching include the inadequacy of induction and mentoring programs, unreasonable working and learning conditions, inadequate administrative support, challenging student behaviour, high class size, too much paperwork, and inadequate salary and benefits (Birkeland & Johnson, 2002; Connors-Krikorian, 2005; Ingersoll, 2001; Kardos, 2001; Weiss, 1999). Some of those factors more strongly influence why teachers exit the profession than others; however, all the factors need attention.

The anticipated dramatic shift in the teaching population because of teacher retirements and turnover gives the profession an opportunity to attract and recruit thousands of new teachers for BC's schools. A high percentage of those who will be teaching in the next 10 years will be hired during this decade.

The Impact of Collegial Support

The school staff and principal can play an important role in creating a supportive environment for new teachers. The ways that teachers interact with one another in a school has a great impact on the professional culture of the school (Birkeland & Johnson, 2002). New teachers look to their colleagues for advice and ideas to help them through the initial months of teaching. If new teachers can go to their colleagues for help and assistance with the daily challenges and realities of teaching, they are supported. When a school staff creates processes for exchanging information, sharing views, offering assistance, and developing new ideas, new teachers are more likely to feel supported and find success (Connors-Krikorian, 2005). New administrators also indicate that collegial support and assistance is critical to their success as beginning principals or vice-principals (Retelle, 2003). Such collegial support serves as a lifeline in the formative stage of a new teacher's career.

A positive and supportive school environment can contribute to new-teacher satisfaction and success. A professional environment where teachers support one another enhances collegiality, decreases the fear of isolation, and makes new teachers more comfortable in the school setting. The way colleagues relate to new teachers has a substantial impact on new teachers' beliefs about teaching and their development as teachers (Kardos, 2002).

The isolation of individual teachers within schools is one of the most frequently identified characteristics of the teaching profession (Berg, Donaldson, & Johnson, 2005, Kardos, 2002). The implications of such isolation, for both the new teacher and the system, are profound. Such isolation can limit access to new ideas, creative solutions, and collegial engagement. In a school where shared problem solving rarely occurs and teachers are expected to work things out alone, teacher interaction and growth will likely be limited. When teachers regularly interact to discuss and share new ideas, they are engaging in powerful learning, professional development, and team building (Ontario Royal Commission on Learning, 1994).

Well-planned and implemented induction and mentoring programs are a proven approach for providing collegial support for new teachers. Such programs can assist in the acculturation and socialization of new teachers into the profession (Gless & Moir, 2001).

The Role of School Culture

Any strategy to support new teachers must be based on an understanding of the role school culture plays in the profession. Since the early 1970s, the literature has described the work of teachers as isolated and individualistic (Cohen, Farr, & Powell, 1985; Hargreaves, 1999). In his landmark publication, *Schoolteacher*, Lortie (1975) reported that teachers valued the privacy of their classroom and routinely worked in isolation.

The isolationist mentality that continues to characterize entry into teaching is of great concern to the teaching profession (Halford, 1998; Renard, 2003). This self-socialization concerns the profession because the early experiences of a teacher have a significant impact on the long-term performance of that teacher in the classroom (Feiman-Nemser, 1983; McDonald, 1980; Rust, 1994).

The literature on new teachers cites their major concerns as assessment and evaluation, classroom management, student motivation, dealing with parents, and meeting students' needs (Berg, Donaldson, & Johnson, 2005; Britton, Paine & Ratzen, 1999; Kurtz, 1983). Those are the skills seasoned teachers have learned through experience; yet, as a teaching profession, we expect new teachers to take on the same responsibilities and duties as those of teachers who are ready to leave the profession.

As a profession, teachers must admonish their veteran colleagues to stop telling horror stories about how awful and overwhelming it was when they started teaching. Old stories about getting the worst teaching assignments and the worst classrooms do little to inspire new teachers to do their best. Experienced teachers must stop perpetuating the notion that because they suffered, all new teachers must suffer. Bragging about how veteran teachers survived the first few years of teaching does nothing to advance the profession. Local teacher unions and school administrators need to seek expansion of the reduced-teaching-assignments provisions for new teachers now in place in some locals' collective agreements (BC Teacher Collective Agreement, 2001). The time has come for BC's teachers to "step up to the plate" and advocate for adequate time and support for new teachers to thrive, learn, and grow into our profession..

The increasing importance that new teachers attach to collaboration and interaction with colleagues is an indicator of the challenges and developments in education (Connors-Krikorian, 2005). Teaching is too important to do alone. New teachers look to their colleagues for support, advice, and ideas to help them navigate the challenges of the beginning years. Because of the changing nature and complexity of schools, it is no longer possible for individual teachers simply to use their personal skills and knowledge to meet the needs of the students in their charge (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1999). This changing context, along with the needs of new teachers, creates the

motivation for creating a professional culture of collaboration and collegiality as the norm for the profession.

In the mid-1980s, prominent educational researchers recommended more collaboration among teachers, and the research community began to investigate whether teachers still preferred to work in isolation and whether collegiality and interaction could be expanded within schools. Sustained collaboration was seldom reported to be the norm in schools (Berg, Donaldson, & Johnson, 2005).

A professional culture can be described as “the formal and informal structures for professional practice; norms of behaviour and interaction among teachers; and institutional and individual values” (Kardos, 2002, p.21). The professional culture of a school guides how teachers approach and conduct their work. For teachers embarking on their careers, the professional culture of a school can play a significant role in shaping their attitudes about teaching, learning, and professional growth.

Research suggests that veterans as well as new teachers understand and appreciate the importance of collegiality and collaboration (Barth, 1991; Johnson, 1990). Professional norms, collegial interactions, and institutional beliefs can play a significant role in improving teaching and learning at the school level (McLaughlin & Talbert, 1996). Recent studies suggest that a relationship exists between the job satisfaction of new teachers and the professional culture in the school (Berg, Donaldson, & Johnson, 2005; Connors-Krikorian, 2005; Kardos, 2002).

The ways teachers interact with one another at school shape the professional culture of the school. A supportive collegial atmosphere, where teachers are regularly sharing ideas and advice and interacting with one another, has the potential to sustain a dialogue between new and experienced teachers. When teachers are interacting and communicating in a collaborative and

collegial manner on a regular basis, reflection, learning, and professional growth become the new norm of professional behaviour (Kardos, 2002; Schon, 1986). If we in the educational community can organize our schools to function as learning communities, the teaching profession can create schools where inquiry and collaboration are the norm. Teachers working in a collegial manner can build a community that not only works together to enhance student learning through the study of teaching and learning, but also seeks to create a nurturing and collaborative place of work for the teachers in the school (Kardos, 2002). School culture is also affected by teaching and working conditions in schools.

Teaching and Working Conditions

In addition to understanding the impact of collegial support and the role of school culture, it is important to understand the day-to-day challenges faced by new teachers in schools.

The work of the teacher has intensified significantly over the past decade, and that intensity shows no sign of abating (Naylor, 2001; Schaefer, 2003). The following challenges are typical for teachers in BC schools today: ESL students and students with special needs integrated into regular classrooms; education policy and program changes introduced without adequate planning; curriculum introduced without adequate implementation support; frequent changes to assessment, reporting, and accountability policies and procedures requiring increased teacher time; technological change without adequate funding and support; increasing expectations of parents and community, and social change and changing family structures (Schaefer, 2003). All those changes, as well as others, have intensified teachers' workload.

The challenges and opportunities of teaching in BC today are also highlighted in the following comments by new teachers in a focus-group session at the March 2006 BCTF New Teachers Conference. The focus group's question, "What do you like most about teaching?" prompted the following comments: "establishing rapport and building relationships with students," "making a difference in the lives of students," and "promoting student learning by engaging them." The question, "What are the greatest challenges you face as a teacher?" elicited the following responses: "developing effective teaching strategies," "meeting the diverse needs of students," "managing the stress of teaching," and "building relationships with colleagues" (Lombardi, 2006, p.2).

Desirable working conditions also contribute to new-teacher retention. According to Wise & Darling-Hamond (1998), positive working conditions are characterized by adequate learning resources, time for preparation and teaching, reasonable class size, opportunities to exercise professional judgment, utilizing commonly accepted standards, and opportunities to establish school policies and guidelines. Conversely, an undesirable working environment is evidenced by student and parent apathy, discipline problems, inadequate physical facilities, lack of collegial support, unsupportive leadership, and lack of involvement in school decisions (Connors-Krikorian, 2005). A positive working environment can increase a new teacher's chances for success and satisfaction, while a deficient workplace is likely to increase dissatisfaction and uncertainty. Teaching and working conditions are important determiners of new-teacher job satisfaction and career decisions.

School staffs can also work together to develop policies and procedures for creating a smoothly functioning school. Developing consistent school-wide approaches to issues such as student discipline and assessment and reporting can foster a shared responsibility for student

learning. When common expectations and policies are shared with new teachers, it eases their fears and enables them to focus on student success (Birkeland & Johnson, 2002).

Research shows that the teaching and working conditions of new teachers affect both their ability to teach well and the satisfaction they derive from their work. When the physical elements of their school—the equipment, facilities, and supplies—are inadequate, teachers report that their teaching options are limited and that they feel discouraged as professionals (Berg, Donaldson, & Johnson, 2005). Teachers also report feeling overwhelmed when they are assigned to teach courses or grades for which they are unprepared, when they have too many courses to plan for, or when they must deal with large numbers of students. New teachers are also discouraged when they lack appropriate curriculum materials to prepare and plan for the students in their charge (Connors-Krikorian, 2005).

Problems such as these, which result from inadequate working and teaching conditions, affect teacher satisfaction and retention by making the task of teaching more challenging than it needs to be. A related indirect effect of new teachers' working in less than adequate conditions may be that they are less likely to succeed with students, and thus less likely to realize the intrinsic rewards for which they entered the profession.

Summary

Many factors influence the career choices made by new teachers. Why do some stay in and some leave the profession? Career orientation and success in the classroom are big factors for new teachers who leave the profession within their first five years of teaching. The teaching profession must persevere in its efforts not only to recruit candidates into teaching, but also to support and thus retain them once they have joined the profession.

Acknowledging the novice status of new teachers, creating opportunities for collegial engagement, providing curricular resources and support, and establishing school-based structures that focus on student learning are important strategies for keeping new teachers in the profession.

The challenge of supporting and retaining new teachers requires a comprehensive strategy that addresses their issues and concerns. The strategy must be multifaceted, and it should ensure that new teachers have access to sustained programs of support such as induction and mentoring programs, where they can count on their colleagues for advice and support. To function effectively, new teachers also require appropriate teaching assignments, adequate working conditions, sufficient resources with which to teach, a stable and collaborative working environment, and supportive administrative leadership. With such support, new teachers will likely experience success, grow, and remain in the teaching profession.

CHAPTER THREE

PROMISING STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING NEW TEACHERS

Introduction

Some educational jurisdictions have provided system-wide induction and mentoring programs to support the entry of new teachers into the profession. This chapter examines the basics and benefits of induction and mentoring programs, successful programs in various countries, and identifies the characteristics of proven induction and mentoring programs. The chapter concludes with a discussion of additional strategies for helping new teachers grow, learn, and remain in the profession.

Basics and Benefits of Induction and Mentoring Programs

New teachers require support and assistance to make the transition from teacher education to classroom. By supporting new teachers in their beginning years and helping them develop their skills and knowledge, the teaching profession can help them find satisfaction in their chosen career and remain in teaching. Induction and mentoring programs foster new teachers' confidence, help them improve their teaching practice, and assist them to grow into and stay in the profession (Ontario College of Teachers, 2002). Well-designed, carefully implemented, and soundly supported induction and mentoring programs provide valuable support for new teachers and positively affect the retention of teachers (Berg, Donaldson, & Johnson, 2005).

Teacher Induction

Induction programs contribute to a culture for quality teaching. “Induction is comprehensive, coherent, and sustained professional support organized at the school district and school level to train and support new teachers to enter a pathway of career-long professional learning”(Ingersoll & Smith, 2004, p.33). Those programs give new teachers sustained support to enable them to adjust to the teaching environment quickly and comfortably.

Programs of induction can help new teachers refine their skills and knowledge related to teaching and learning. Induction programs also enable important collaborations between new teachers and their schools, school districts, and teacher organizations. Such programs also encourage school districts to review and refine their expectations for new teachers. In addition, induction programs assist schools and school districts to focus on the needs of new teachers.

An induction program typically includes pre-orientation, orientation, and mentoring (Northwest Territories Ministry of Education, Culture, and Employment, 2006; Wong, 2004). The pre-orientation and orientation stages take place in the first few months of employment and consist of teaching and learning resources, school policies and procedures, and related information that will enable a new teacher to function successfully in the school and the district. In the mentoring stage of an induction, a carefully selected and well-qualified experienced teacher provides personalized professional support to the new teacher. Release time is provided to enable the mentor and the new teacher to see each other teach, to engage in lesson planning and preparation, to discuss practical issues, and to participate in professional development activities.

Research indicates that induction programs in New Zealand, China, Japan, France, Korea, Australia, Japan, and Switzerland have been successful in supporting new teachers. The studies in those countries conclude that successful induction programs are collaborative, comprehensive, professional, rigorous, structured, and sustained (APEC Study of Teacher Induction, 1999; Britton, 2003). Induction programs also play an important role in assisting new teachers to experience and understand the importance and value of career-long professional development. Additionally, the collaborative nature of induction facilitates shared experiences and problem solving among colleagues, thereby contributing to the development of collegiality.

The entry of architects, psychologists, doctors, and engineers into their professions is generally characterized by participation in supervised internships or residencies (Cohen, Neville, & Sherman, 2005; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1999). Those induction programs prepare professionals for the demanding situations they will face when they enter their chosen careers. Induction programs that are regularly provided to entrants to those professions in Canada and America are not regularly provided in teaching. Even though induction programs have been found to improve the quality of teaching practice and to reduce new-teacher attrition, few new teachers in America have consistent access to formal and focussed induction programs (Cohen, Neville, & Sherman, 2005; Ingersoll & Smith, 2002). Similarly, few new teachers in Canada have systematic access to sustained induction programs (Ontario College of Teachers, 2004; Jackson & McPhie, 1994).

The evidence shows that planned and sustained support for new teachers through induction programs helps them during their transition from student to practising professional and are vital to keeping them in the profession (APEC Study on Teacher Induction, 1999; Ontario College of

Teachers, 2002). Induction programs help support new teachers to become effective professionals who are capable of enhancing student learning.

I now turn my attention to mentoring, a vital element in an effective induction program.

Mentoring Programs

Induction programs for new teachers that include formal mentoring are more effective than those that do not because they establish important habits and values in the formative years (Elementary Teachers; Federation of Ontario, 2002; Ontario College of Teachers, 20024). Such programs improve teaching behaviour and ultimately enhance student learning. They also increase job satisfaction and provide the support that new teachers require to remain in the profession.

Mentoring programs engage new teachers in collaborative learning and professional growth by providing them with a sustained support system. Mentoring typically pairs a new teacher and an experienced teacher in a non-evaluative and voluntary relationship built on trust and flexibility for the purpose of providing support (Elementary Federation of Teachers of Ontario, 2002; Jackson & McPhie, 1994; Ontario College of Teachers, 2002).

The implementation of a mentoring program can provide a powerful means for promoting, building, and sustaining a strong professional culture of collaboration in the teaching profession. Mentoring programs provide connections by bringing together new teachers and experienced teachers as collaborative and respectful team members. Such programs have the potential to create a norm of collaboration and collegiality, countering the culture of isolation.

Education commissions in both BC and Ontario recommended that the teaching profession implement mentoring programs to provide appropriate and sustained professional support to all first-year teachers to ease their entry into the teaching profession (Ontario Royal Commission on Learning, 1994; Royal Commission on Education in BC, 1988). According to studies, mentoring programs improve teaching quality (National Foundation for Improvement of Education, 1999), reduce new-teacher attrition rates (Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005), promote collaborative and collegial practice (Kardos, 2002), and improve teacher job satisfaction (Hirsch, 2001). A mentoring program is also important to growth and development in the teaching profession and to excellence in the education system.

Mentoring programs can also have a positive effect on student learning. The results of a recent study indicate that mentor-based induction programs are associated with positive gains in student learning. Student learning increased as a result of new-teacher participation in mentoring programs where mentors were carefully selected, received quality training, and engaged with new teachers on regular and sustained basis (New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz, 2006). The quality of teaching is the largest single variable in student learning. Effective mentoring programs foster new-teacher confidence and effectiveness, help new teachers improve their teaching practice, and thereby increase their ability to improve student learning (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1997; Ontario College of Teachers, 2002).

To be effective, mentoring programs require the careful identification and training of mentor teachers. Mentor teachers should have a high level of expertise and be respected by their colleagues in the profession. They need to be able to go beyond helping new teachers with the day-to-day issues of teaching to supporting them to develop and grow as professionals by expanding their analytical, reflective, and teaching skills. Mentors also need to be highly skilled in analyzing

the teaching process, demonstrating a variety of teaching methods, and assisting new teachers to develop methods of problem-solving (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 1997).

Duties of the mentor teacher may include advising about instructional content and strategies, demonstrating classroom instruction, observing the new teacher's teaching, consulting about lesson plans and objectives, advising about school and district resources, advising about student and parent relations, and informing the new teacher about the expectations of the school, the district, and the province (Elementary Federation of Teachers in Ontario, 2004; Ontario College of Teachers, 2002).

The selection of mentor teachers must be undertaken with great care. Veteran teachers should be encouraged and invited to apply for such important positions. Attention should be paid to the qualifications, expertise, and personalities of applicants. Table 2 summarizes the desirable skills and attributes of mentor teachers. The processes for selecting mentor teachers should be regulated through policy or through collective bargaining. In the New York Induction Program, the procedures for selecting mentors were negotiated in the collective agreement; in the New Brunswick New Teacher Program, the procedures were developed through a joint province/teacher union policy-development process. In both of those initiatives, all aspects of the programs, including mentor selection and appeal procedures, were developed through collaboration and negotiation.

Table 2: Skills and Attributes for Mentors

| • Skills | • Attributes |
|---|--|
| • strong interpersonal skills | • caring |
| • exemplary teaching practices | • willing to nurture a new teacher |
| • a variety of instructional strategies | • committed to positive working relationships |
| • organization | • confident |
| • good communication | • open-minded and willing to learn and grow professionally |
| • active listening | • patient and helpful |
| • observation strategies | • friendly and dedicated |
| • problem-solving strategies | • flexible |
| • coaching abilities | • non-judgmental and accepting |
| • knowledge about the profession and the education system | • trustworthy |

Source: Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, 2002

Successful mentoring programs also require adequate resources and training, including release time for both new teachers and mentor teachers. Providing time for the training of mentors is crucial for program success (Berg, Donaldson, & Johnson, 2005; Connors-Krikorian, 2005). Mentor teachers typically receive training in adult learning theory, mentoring roles, needs of new teachers, communication skills, skills of reflective practice, and coaching strategies (Feiman-Nemser, 1996). In addition to specific training, mentors should have opportunities to meet together regularly to discuss coaching strategies, share teaching resources, engage in problem solving, and plan additional ways to support new teachers.

Studies indicates that careful attention should also be given to matching mentors and new teachers, with special consideration of self-selection, personality compatibility, nature of school

assignment, gender and equity considerations, and opportunities for changing partners (Jackson & McPhie, 1994; Elementary Federation of Teachers in Ontario, 2002; Ingersoll, 2004).

Mentoring programs provide tremendous professional growth and development opportunities for the experienced teachers who serve as mentors. The following statements by mentor teachers indicate the joys and rewards of serving as a teacher mentor:

- Teachers learn from students and from each other. I find mentor work stimulating, and it keeps teaching interesting. More than anything else, I want to see teachers stay in the profession so they, too, can enjoy the same benefits without the feeling of being lost, or alone, as I did starting out. (Jonson, 2002, p. 168).

The importance of moving forward with the development of systematic and comprehensive mentoring programs for new teachers cannot be overstated. The Ontario College of Teachers (2002) stated that, “the involvement of a mentor is the most powerful and cost-effective intervention in an induction program. The roles, knowledge base, and skills associated with mentoring are documented in an array of program resources and research studies (p.10).”

The following quote eloquently captures the power of mentoring:

- The best mentoring programs provide connections because they are structured within learning communities where new and veteran teachers interact and treat each other with respect and are valued for their respective contributions. Teachers remain in teaching when they belong to professional learning communities that have, at their heart, high-quality interpersonal relationships founded on trust and respect. Thus collegial interchange, not isolation, must become the norm for teachers. (Wong, 2004, p.50)

All the partners within a formal mentorship program—the new teachers, the mentors, the school staff, and the school and district administrators—have responsibilities and contributions to

make to ensure the success of the program. Gains in student learning are connected to collaborative activities and collegiality among staff in a school, and teachers in the school system as a whole. (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, 2004; New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz, 2006; Ontario College of Teachers, 2002). Mentoring programs provide an opportunity for sustained professional growth, collegial interaction and collaboration, and the promotion of good teaching practice—a powerful support system for new teachers.

Induction and mentoring programs have the potential to foster new teachers' confidence, help them improve their teaching practice, and help them grow into and stay in the profession. New teachers benefit from induction and mentoring programs that welcome them into and support them in the profession. Effectively developed induction and mentoring programs can provide valuable support for new teachers, reduce teacher attrition, and improve teaching and student learning.

Success Stories: Supporting New Teachers Through Induction and Mentoring

A great deal can be learned from examining induction and mentoring programs in various educational jurisdictions. Following is information about successful induction and mentoring programs in countries in the Asia Pacific Region, with a special focus on programs in the United States of America and in Canada.

Countries in the Asia Pacific Region

In various countries, teacher induction programs have been utilized to give new teachers the support they need to manage the challenging transition from teacher preparation to actual

classroom teaching. Table 3 contains a summary of induction programs in various Asia Pacific countries.

Table 3: Summary of Successful Induction Programs in Asia Pacific Countries

| Country | Program Organization | Program Feature | Participation | Funding | Other |
|----------------------|---|---|--|---|---|
| Australia | Provincial and territorial | Mentoring and observation | Not mandated 75 % new teacher participation | Territorial | Focus is on new-teacher retention |
| Canada | Provincial and school district | Mentoring and classroom observation | Voluntary | Provincial School district | Some provinces are developing system-wide programs |
| Japan | Jointly run by ministry, boards and schools | Mentoring program | All teachers participate in mentoring | National and board funding | |
| Korea | Provincial | Seminars, meetings and classroom observations | Mandated program for all new teachers | Provincial government | Structured and focussed on supporting and inspiring teachers. Mentoring program in development stage. |
| New Zealand | School-run | Mentoring program | All new teachers participate | Teacher training institutions | Two-year program with a focus on classroom issues. |
| United States | State and school district | Mentoring | Varies from state to state | Varied funding: state, school district, and grants. | Induction programs are becoming recognized as an important professional support system. |

Source: APEC Teacher Induction Study, 1997

Some countries understand that the first year of teaching is challenging for new teachers. They also appreciate that the entry years of teaching are crucial to the development of a quality teaching force, as it is in the entry years that new teachers learn and hone their skills in practice and

that they are most likely to decide whether or not to remain in the profession. Programs to support new teachers continue to be of great interest to policy makers and educators in those countries. There is a significant variation in the features and focus of the various teacher induction programs, and the implemented programs continue to be refined based on experience and research. While different countries implement a variety of teacher induction strategies through various delivery systems, commitment and context are as important to success as are the particular systems or strategies used (APEC Teacher Induction Study, 1997).

United States of America

During the past two decades states and school districts in America have become more active in developing and implementing professional development programs to support new teachers. Many initiatives have arisen in response to national, state, and school district reports about the quality of education in America (Berg, Donaldson, & Johnson, 2005; Connors-Krikorian, 2005; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004).

One of the key recommendations arising from the report of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1999) is "create and fund mentoring programs for beginning teachers" (p.80). The report concludes that the beginning years of teaching present a steep learning challenge for new teachers. With the support of more senior colleagues and with opportunities for continuing their growth and development, new teachers can acquire the skills and knowledge to undertake their teaching responsibilities more effectively and efficiently. The research that was reviewed for the commission demonstrated that new teachers who have access to continuous support of a qualified mentor are more likely to remain in the profession and to get beyond

classroom management concerns, to focus on student learning (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Huling-Austin, 1986). The commission recommended strongly that all new teachers be assigned a skilled and qualified mentor.

In April 2006, a report about New York City's groundbreaking teacher induction initiative was released. The New York Induction Initiative has been characterized as "the largest, most aggressive overhaul of teacher induction in the country" (New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz, 2006, p.1). As a way of addressing high teacher attrition rates and the inability to staff city schools, the New York City Board of Education and the United Federation of Teachers joined with the New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz to implement a 36-million-dollar program to create a better system for supporting new teachers in the city. The goals of the program were "to improve new teacher retention rates, and also create a culture of learning that builds on the knowledge and skills of the system's most accomplished educators and transforms isolated teaching experiences into rich opportunities for collaboration and professional reflection" (New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz, 2006, p. 2). The initiative has brought together a large urban school district, school leaders, state agencies, teacher unions, and a university with the goal of developing a sustainable plan for supporting new teachers as they enter the profession.

The California New Teacher Project is a support system for the development of local induction programs to support new teachers in state schools. Created in 1997, California's Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment was established to provide beginning teachers with focused induction support. The goal of the support program is to make a difference in the performance, retention, and satisfaction of beginning teachers. The program is based on collaborative approach among local school districts, teacher unions, county offices of education,

and colleges and universities. The program has been successful in retaining teachers and lowering the attrition rate since its inception in 1997 (California Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program, 2006).

Connecticut's mentoring program is another good example of an effective program. The program provides mentors for all new teachers. The focus of program is connected to the curriculum goals of the state. Minnesota has also established a program where professional development schools are the sites for first-year teaching residencies for new teachers. In that program, the new teachers teach for 80% of the time under the supervision of mentor teachers and engage in professional development for the remainder of the teaching assignment time (National Commission for Teaching and America's Future, 1999).

Another successful program is in Toledo, Ohio. That model program is also now in use in Cincinnati, Columbus, San Diego, Rochester, Seattle, and Boston. Those peer-support programs have expert veteran teachers work intensively with new teachers in their teaching assignments. The veteran mentors are assigned to new teachers for up to two years. The goal of those programs is to establish a career-long approach to professional development. Another important feature of the programs is that they are funded by the state and school district and managed by a joint school district-teacher union committee (Teacher Union Reform Movement, 1996).

In all of those American initiatives, the programs provide sustained assistance and support for new teachers. That support for new teachers assists them to continue their growth, learning, and development as they are welcomed and inducted into the teaching profession.

Canada

In Canada, a few provinces are addressing how to best support the entry of new teachers into the profession. Ontario, New Brunswick, and the Northwest Territories have provided leadership in the development and identification of initiatives in support of new teachers.

The Ontario Ministry of Education has recently demonstrated what can be done to systematically support new teachers. During the 2005–06 school year, the ministry announced a unique professional support program for new teachers. By introducing the New Teacher Induction Program, Ontario has ushered in a new era of professional support for new teachers. The program includes on-the-job training in classroom management, effective parent/teacher communication skills, and teaching strategies; mentoring for new teachers by experienced teachers; and an orientation for all new teachers by the school and the school district (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006).

The Government of Ontario is investing \$15 million annually to support the province's approximately 10,000 new teachers each year. The program will be developed and implemented through a collaborative effort of teacher unions, school boards, universities, and the Ministry of Education. That investment will give teachers, as well as students and parents, the assurance that new teachers will receive the assistance they require to translate their teacher-education-program training and their commitment into success in the classroom (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005).

In New Brunswick, the Beginning Teacher Induction Program has been in place in all Anglophone school districts since September 1995. New Brunswick's program is a unique partnership among the Department of Education, and province's nine school districts, the New Brunswick Teachers' Association, and the University of New Brunswick (Betts & Gill, 2003). The

program pairs each new teacher with a mentor. The mentoring aspect of the induction process is important, as it enables the program to offer distinctive and tailored learning opportunities for new teachers. Opportunities include orienting new teachers to the profession, helping them gain greater subject-area and pedagogical confidence, and helping them develop good classroom management practices.

All the parties in the Beginning Teacher Induction Program in New Brunswick indicate that the program is successful. Research reports indicate that the program is decidedly positive, generating interest from other jurisdictions. More than 95% of new teachers and mentors support the continuation of the program, as do all the principals and district co-ordinators. The studies also indicate that the program has been very useful in helping new teachers get off to a good start in their teaching careers and for retaining new teachers in the profession (Betts & Gill, 2003; Mirchandani, & Scott, 2002).

The Northwest Territories teacher induction program helps new teachers to become effective professionals in the classroom and to gain an understanding of the culture of the local school and community. The main component of the program is a formalized partnership between an experienced Northern teacher and a teacher new to the profession or new to the territories, in which the experienced teacher is trained to guide and support the beginning teacher during the initial phase of teaching. The goals of program are to improve teacher performance, recruit and retain them in the profession, promote the personal and professional well-being of the new teachers to transmit the culture of the system to new teachers (Northwest Territories Ministry of Education, Culture, and Employment, 2006).

New teachers have indicated that this teacher induction program has benefited them in the following ways: accelerated success and effectiveness; greater self-confidence; increased job

satisfaction; improved personal and professional well-being; enhanced commitment to the students, school, and profession; and increased opportunities for building connections with the community (Northwest Territories Ministry of Education, Culture, and Employment, 2006).

In those three Canadian jurisdictions the induction and mentoring programs have given new teachers the necessary support to make the transition from student teacher to full-fledged teacher. The programs in those provinces have also provided valuable ideas for leaders in the other provinces to consider. By analyzing those successful programs, it is possible to identify the characteristics of effective induction and mentoring programs.

Characteristics of Successful Induction and Mentoring Programs

If induction and mentoring programs are to succeed, they must be designed in keeping with the characteristics of successful programs. This section explores and discusses the characteristics and essential components of induction and mentoring programs. Successful induction and mentoring programs have the following characteristics. They are goal focussed, have institutional commitment and support, include quality mentoring, have sustained and adequate resource support, focus on classroom-based teacher learning are grounded on principles of adult learning, and serve as a catalyst to change school culture.

Goal Focussed

Quality induction and mentoring programs must be guided by the goal of improved teaching and learning. Those programs must be dedicated to supporting every new teacher to achieve success for all students. It is crucial that induction and mentoring programs not perpetuate

the existing culture of isolation in schools. The goal for induction and mentoring programs must be to prepare new teachers to assume the attitude and demeanor of a successful teacher from the moment they enter the profession. By focussing on the goals of induction and mentoring programs, educators have the potential to create a powerful force for educational change and professional renewal in public education (Ontario College of Teachers, 2004; Wong, 2004).

Institutional Commitment and Support

To succeed, induction and mentoring programs must have the commitment and the political will of leaders in government, education agencies, school districts, teacher unions, administrators, and teacher-education institutions (Betts & Gill, 2003; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005; New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz, 2006). Successful programs such as the Ontario New Teacher Induction Program, the New Brunswick Beginning Teacher Program, and the New York Mentoring Initiative have the active leadership and engagement of the relevant policymakers and partners in the educational community.

When policy makers and leaders of all education partner groups make a priority the development and implementation of induction and mentoring programs for new teachers, it is more likely that the appropriate human and funding resources for careful program planning and administration will be available on a focussed and sustained basis. When all education partners hold new-teacher support as a high priority, they can work collaboratively to design appropriate policies and programs in the interests of new teachers. Commitment and political will of policy makers and educational leaders are essential to facilitate multidimensional across various program areas and organizations for the implementation of induction and mentoring programs in support of

new teachers (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2002). The political implications of a similar policy initiative in our province are addressed in section four of this report.

Quality Mentoring

In a high-quality induction and mentoring program, a knowledgeable and skillful veteran mentor teacher is the key to developing the capacity of a new teacher. The selection of the mentor teachers is of crucial importance to the success of a mentoring program (Berg, Donaldson and Johnson, 2005; Connors-Krikorian, 2005; Ontario College of Teachers, 2002). Supporting new teachers is complex and demanding work, and it involves knowledge and experience over and above what most classroom teachers possess.

The criteria for selecting mentor teachers should include evidence of excellent interpersonal relationship qualities, mastery of teaching and subject-matter skills, knowledge of professional development practices and experience in relating to adult learners, demonstrated commitment to personal and professional growth and learning, demonstrated skill in team building and group dynamics, willingness to engage in reflective conversations with new teachers to provide non-judgmental feedback, and demonstrated capacity to serve as a catalyst for implementing change in the classroom (Berg, Donaldson, & Johnson, 2005; Connors-Krikorian, 2005; Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, 2004, Ontario College of Teachers, 2002, Wong, 2004).

Sustained and Adequate Resource Support

Successful induction and mentoring programs require sustained and adequate resource support. Some of the following design elements are in most of the successful induction programs discussed in this study:

- sanctioned release time from regular teaching duties for mentor-new teacher interactions;
- intensive and specific guidance moving teaching practice forward, while also providing emotional and logistics support;
- ongoing professional development and training for mentor teachers;
- workable plan for documenting evidence of new teacher growth and development;
- a minimum of least two years of mentoring for all new teachers
- adequate administrative, funding, training, and research support for induction and mentoring programs;
- linkage between induction and mentoring programs and education agency and school district and school curriculum and policy expectations.(Berg, Donaldson, & Johnson, 2005; Connors-Krikorian, 2005; Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario,2004, Gless and Moir, 2006; New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz, 2006; Ontario College of Teachers, 2002, Wong, 2004).

Focus on Classroom-Based Teacher Learning

Induction and mentoring programs should be based on the realities of the classroom and the school. Those programs should provide for the growth and development of the new teacher based

on their daily experiences in response to the unique and diverse needs of their classroom situation. A well-prepared mentor will have a good knowledge of the community, the school site, and the classroom of the new teacher. That knowledge will enable the mentor to provide the support that is responsive to the individual needs of the new teacher.

In successful programs, ample time is provided for the mentor and the new teacher to engage in collaborative unit and lesson planning, model teaching, observation, feedback and reflection, observing student progress, goal-setting, and ongoing planning and discussion. A key aspect of this collegial interaction between the mentor and the new teacher is designing teaching and learning activities based on the assessed needs of each student (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, 2002; Wong 2004).

The mentor teacher assists the new teacher to understand not only how to plan to meet the needs of the students, but also how to understand and use the various curriculum materials, assessment tools, and commonly-held expectations that are an important aspect of the new teacher's context (Gless & Moir, 2006). Such support must be individualized; there is no one-size-fits-all model for supporting new teachers. In high-quality mentoring programs, mentors help new teachers, as on-the-job learners, learn to constantly question, inquire, and reflect on their teaching practice with a focus on student learning.

Effective induction and mentoring programs also provide opportunities for new teachers to meet with other beginning teachers to learn from one another and to discuss issues with those having similar experiences. Such strategies for working and learning together outside the school are recognized as important features of professional development (Gless and Moir, 2006; Wong, 2004). Such networking also helps new teachers understand the benefits of collegial and collaborative interaction.

Principles of Adult Learning Theory

Induction and mentoring program for new teachers involve the education of adults. This means that programs that are designed for them should be based on the principles of adult learning theory. When induction and mentoring programs for new teachers are being designed, the following characteristics of adult learners should be considered:

- adults are autonomous *and* self-directed;
- adults bring many life experiences *and* knowledge to learning situations;
- adults are goal-oriented;
- adults are relevancy-oriented;
- adults are practical and they need to be respected (Knowles, 1980).

Effective induction and mentoring programs based on principles of adult-learning theory will create an environment conducive to growth, development, and learning for new teachers.

Catalyst for Changing School Culture

Teacher induction and mentoring programs enable new teachers to experience and understand the importance of collegial and career-long professional development (Gless & Moir, 2006). Those programs are an important part of a professional continuum of teacher development that includes pre-service education, new teacher mentoring, mid-career development, and career-long professional learning (Darling-Hammond, 1997). By participating in sustained induction and

mentoring experiences at the beginning of their careers, new teachers begin their induction into the profession immersed in a culture of collegial and collaborative practice.

That way, induction and mentoring programs help transform the culture of teaching from isolation to collaboration. Those programs offer veteran teachers new professional roles that mine their accumulated experience and wisdom. Mentoring allows the veteran teacher to grow and learn by stepping out of the regular classroom role and interacting with, supporting, and observing many different new teachers. Such experience assists the mentor teachers to broaden their perspective about teaching and learning by enabling them to reflect on their own teaching practice.

Effective induction and mentoring programs act as a catalyst for changing the culture of the teaching profession. The collegial, collaborative, and reflective approach used in mentoring programs offers growth and development for mentors and new teachers as they engage in professional practices that are changing the nature of school culture. Such shared learning and collaboration is contagious, and it paves the way for a career-long approach to collegial engagement that will ultimately result in enhanced learning for students (Gless and Moir, 2006, Berg, Donaldson, and Johnson, 2005).

In conclusion, induction and mentoring programs have the potential to give new teachers the support they require to navigate the challenging transition from student teaching to actual classroom teaching. When those programs incorporate the characteristics of successful induction and mentoring programs, they are more likely to assist new teachers to succeed, grow, learn, and remain in the profession.

Additional Strategies for Supporting and Retaining New Teachers

The challenge of supporting and retaining new teachers requires a comprehensive strategy, one that addresses the full range of concerns and issues of new teachers. One key strategy for supporting and retaining new teachers is the development of well-planned and effective induction and mentoring programs. Other strategies for supporting new teachers include the following:

- reasonable teaching and working conditions
- competitive compensation
- access to adequate curriculum and learning resources
- access to adequate facilities, equipment, and supplies
- school-wide conditions that support student learning.
- opportunities to influence policy and exercise professional judgment
- collegial support for advice and assistance
- career-long professional development opportunities
- improved teacher-preparation programs

(Berg, Donaldson, and Johnson, 2005; Connors-Krikorian, 2005; Ingersoll & Smith, 2002).

To succeed, teachers must have reasonable teaching and working conditions. Studies have shown that the teaching and working conditions of new teachers affect both their ability to teach and the degree of satisfaction they derive from their work (Berg, Donaldson, & Johnson, 2005; Connors-Krikorian, 2005). Working conditions such as teaching assignment, preparation time, class size, and class composition are important for new teachers.

New teachers must have appropriate teaching assignments and a manageable workload (Birkeland & Johnson, 2005; Renard, 2003). Successful teaching is hard work for experienced teachers; a full teaching load can overwhelm new teachers, who are just getting a handle on classroom management, learning new curricula, and understanding the culture and policies of a school and district. Administrators and school staffs can offer practical assistance and support to new teachers by ensuring that their teaching assignments are carefully constructed and that they are sheltered from inordinately heavy workloads. Some teacher collective agreements ensure that new teachers are given carefully designed teaching assignments (BC Teacher Collective Agreement, 2005). Collective-agreement provisions and policy decisions can be useful tools for creating appropriate teaching and working conditions for both new and experienced teachers.

Compensation is also a factor in attracting and recruiting prospective teachers to the profession (Berg, Donaldson, & Johnson, 2005; Ingersoll & Smith, 2002). Although pay is not the major reason for teachers' entering the profession, it can be one of their reasons for leaving (Goodlad, 2004). If teacher compensation and benefit levels are competitive with other professions, it is likely that over time, stronger candidates could be drawn to teaching and more teachers might be retained (Berg, Donaldson, & Johnson, 2005). Coupled with reasonable teaching and working conditions, a competitive compensation and benefits package can be a useful tool for recruiting and retaining new teachers.

Access to adequate curriculum and learning resources affects the ability of new teachers to teach well and to derive satisfaction from their work. Up-to-date curricula and learning resources are central to teachers' work with students. Curriculum and learning resources provide new teachers with the capacity to facilitate quality learning with students. Education agencies and school districts have a responsibility to ensure that new and experienced teachers alike have access

to timely training and in-service opportunities so that they may fully utilize updated curriculum and learning resources to facilitate teaching and learning.

Studies demonstrate that the work of teachers is positively affected when the physical elements of their school—the facilities, equipment, and supplies—are in good order (Berg, Donaldson, & Johnson, 2005). It is vital that educational facilities be adequate and maintained lest those facilities negatively affect the health and safety of the students and staff who work there. It is also important that equipment and supplies such as science equipment or reliable photocopy machines be available and in good order so that new teachers can use those resources to facilitate teaching and learning. When new teachers continually encounter faulty equipment and supply shortages, they become discouraged and demoralized because they are prevented from doing their best work. Since teacher satisfaction can be affected by those factors, it is important to ensure that the facilities, equipment, and supplies are adequate and in good order. This will enable new teachers to better support teaching and learning in their classrooms.

Policies and procedures for creating a smoothly functioning school are also a great support for new teachers. When a school staff develops consistent policies and strategies for addressing school-wide issues such as student conduct and discipline, assessment and evaluation, and communications with parents, it fosters a shared responsibility for student learning. When common expectations and policies are developed by administration and the school staff and shared with new teachers, it eases their fears and enables them to focus on student success (Birkeland & Johnson, 2002). That approach also builds staff commitment to shared school goals and objectives.

Guided by education agency curriculum and policy frameworks, teachers are able to exercise considerable discretion in what and how they teach in the classroom. Professional autonomy acknowledges the importance of teaching experience, professional know-how, and

teacher preparation. Autonomy and ability to exercise professional judgement enable teachers to focus on the needs of the students. Recent developments in accountability and increasing reliance on testing and rankings of schools have increased attention on the role of the teacher (Berg, Donaldson, & Johnson, 2005; Kohn, 2004). When teachers are granted professional autonomy and responsibility for planning for teaching and learning, their lessons, activities, and assignments are generally more challenging and responsive to the needs and interests of their students (Apple & Junck, 1990; McNeil 2000). With teaching experience, professional development, and appropriate support and assistance from their colleagues, new teachers will develop the skills and knowledge to exercise appropriate professional judgement when planning for teaching and learning. Providing new teachers with collegial support is essential for their growth and success. The school staff and principal play an important role in establishing a supportive environment for new teachers. New teachers become aware of the importance of collegial support and interaction once they begin teaching in a school. A collegial and collaborative environment is an important indicator about the culture of a school (Birkeland & Johnson, 2002). New teachers look to their colleagues for advice and ideas to help them in the early stages of their career. If new teachers can go to their colleagues for help and assistance with the daily issues that arise from their teaching practice, they feel supported. When a school staff consciously creates processes for exchanging information, sharing views, offering assistance, and developing new ideas, new teachers are more likely to feel supported and find success (Connors-Krikorian, 2005). Such collegial support serves as a lifeline in the formative stage of a new teacher's career. A positive and supportive school culture can contribute to new teacher success and satisfaction.

Professional development, in-service education, and training are important for updating the skills and knowledge of both new and experienced teachers. Access to career-long professional

development opportunities contributes to new teacher growth, development, and success. It is important that new teachers have opportunities to participate in professional development experiences that are based on effective principles of adult learning. Professional development experiences that provide rich content, engage teachers in learning, connect to other development activities, and is sustained over time leads to improved teaching practice and student success (Berg, Donaldson, & Johnson, 2005, Guskey, 1989).

Teacher-preparation programs also play an important role in preparing new teachers to take on their initial teaching assignments. Those programs provide student teachers with course work related to subject matter content and pedagogy. It is important that teacher-education agencies continually assess the impact and effectiveness of their pre-service preparation programs. That assessment should be undertaken by consulting new teachers, teacher and administrator organizations, policy makers, and others involved in the delivery of teacher-education programs. It is essential that teacher education programs be continually reviewed and refined and improved. New teachers are prepared for entering the profession when teacher-education programs remain dynamic, current, and relevant.

Summary

The challenge of supporting and retaining new teachers requires a comprehensive strategy, one that addresses the full range of concerns and issues for new teachers. Policymakers, school and district administrators, teacher unions, and teacher-education institutions need to continue to work together to develop and implement policies that will make teaching attractive, satisfying, and rewarding. That comprehensive strategy should include the introduction and implementation of induction and mentoring programs, reasonable teaching and working conditions, competitive

compensation rates, access to adequate curriculum and learning resources, access to adequate facilities, equipment, and supplies, school-wide conditions that support student learning, opportunities to influence policy and exercise professional judgement, collegial support for advice and assistance, career-long professional development opportunities, and improved teacher-preparation programs. Many of those conditions can be addressed through collective bargaining; others can be addressed through advocacy, communications, lobbying, and professional influence.

There may be no time as important to a teacher's career as the first few years of teaching. A comprehensive strategy for supporting new teachers in those formative years will contribute to their growth and development, not merely their remaining in the profession.

CHAPTER FOUR

MOVING FORWARD TO SUPPORT NEW TEACHERS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Introduction

In previous chapters, I discussed the challenges and opportunities in teaching, the importance of giving new teachers appropriate support so that they can grow, learn, and remain in the profession, the factors affecting new teachers' career decisions, and an overview of mentoring and other successful strategies for supporting new teachers. This chapter explores the context, opportunities, and challenges for developing a support system for new teachers in British Columbia. I outline a collaborative framework for supporting development and implementation of province-wide induction and mentoring programs for new teachers.

The demographics of teacher supply and demand in British Columbia provide us with a “tipping point” opportunity to provide much-needed support for new teachers and to renew and transform the culture of teaching in our province. By developing and implementing a comprehensive province-wide induction and mentoring program, the educational community in BC can provide the support new teachers need once they enter the profession.

An Opportunity for Collaboration and Renewal in British Columbia

Support for new teachers is of interest to all the education partner organizations in BC. New teachers are entering the profession in BC in unprecedented numbers, and according to data from the BC Ministry of Education, student enrolment will remain relatively stable over the next decade (BC Ministry of Education, 2006). A consensus is emerging within the educational

community about the need to address that significant demographic shift in the teaching profession.

During the 1991–92 and 1992–93 school years, the BC Teacher and Supply and Demand Committee commissioned a report to document and analyze the effects of teacher induction programs in the province. Of the 52 school districts responding to the survey, 26 indicated that they provide some form of induction for new teachers. Nineteen districts said that in collaboration with the local teacher union, they had collective-agreement provisions for some form of support program to assist new teachers. The activities in those districts ranged through formal induction programs, reduced assignments for new teachers, mentoring initiatives, and informal start-of-the-year orientation activities (McPhie & Jackson, 1994).

With the negotiation of collective-agreement provisions through local bargaining in the 1980s, the number of districts offering induction programs increased steadily (BC Teachers' Federation, 2000; McPhie & Jackson, 1994). Since provincial bargaining began, in the early 1990s, no further collective-agreement provisions related to induction and mentoring have been negotiated. The BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF) and some local teacher unions and school districts continue to provide limited support for schools and districts interested in developing and/or sustaining induction and mentoring programs (BC Teachers' Federation, 2005). Unfortunately, after years of education-funding cutbacks, the previously established induction and mentoring programs have waned.

BCTF has a proud history of working with other professionals to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in BC schools by giving teachers relevant career-long professional learning opportunities. The Federation supports a continuum of quality teaching initiatives, including *Program for Quality Teaching* and *Peer Support Service*. Both programs offer ongoing

collaborative inquiry into teaching practice through supportive peer relationships. Processes used in both programs include learning-focussed conversations, peer mentoring, classroom observations, feedback, action research, and dialogue on research and practice. Both initiatives have been implemented with the support of school principals and school districts, and both programs have a positive reputation in the BC education community (BC Teachers' Federation, 2000, 2003, 2004, 2005).

In 2000, in a brief to the Government of British Columbia about teacher supply and demand, the Federation called on the provincial government to provide adequate and stable funding for the development and implementation of joint school-district/teacher-union provincial induction and mentoring programs to provide support for teachers entering the teaching profession. That recommendation was based on the success of local induction and mentoring programs, research reports, and studies (Royal Commission on Education in BC, 1988; Jackson & McPhie, 1994; Ontario Royal Commission on Learning, 1994). The Federation also called for new teachers to be given reduced teaching assignments to reflect their experience and training. In making that recommendation, the teaching profession was acknowledging that mentoring is one of the best strategies for successfully inducting teachers into the teaching profession (Kardos, 2002; Ingersoll, 2004; Connors-Krikorian, 2004). The recommendation called for the expansion of induction and mentoring programs so that such support would be available to all new teachers in the province. With that recommendation, the BCTF was proclaiming that the proper induction of new teachers is an important and fundamental responsibility of the teaching profession.

The vital importance of establishing a province-wide induction and mentoring program for novice educators is underscored by the following comments, made by new teachers in a focus-group session at the March 2006 BCTF New Teachers Conference: "Every new teacher should

have access to a variety of mentors with background in a variety of curriculum areas and with a variety of approaches to teaching,” “Mentoring should be initiated and embraced by the entire teaching profession, and “Opportunities for mentoring should be available to new teachers no matter where they teach in the province” (Lombardi, 2006, p.3).

In June 2006, the BC Teachers’ Federation and the BC Public Education Employers’ Association negotiated a 5-year collective agreement. This agreement will provide the educational community with an opportunity to forge ahead with the development of an induction and mentoring program to support new teachers to grow, learn, and remain in the profession. The stability of a five-year agreement will provide an unprecedented opportunity for the BC Teachers’ Federation, the BC School Trustees Association, the BC School Superintendents’ Association, the BC Principals and Vice-Principals’ Association, the Ministry of Education, and the Association of B.C. Deans of Education to work together to provide support and assistance for new teachers.

It is anticipated that the BCTF and the Ministry of Education will utilize the Learning Roundtable to discuss and to build a joint education-stakeholder approach for the provincial induction program. The objectives of the induction program are consistent with the goals of action research, ethical leadership, collaborative inquiry, and other student-learning initiatives being developed by the BC School Trustees Association, the BC School Superintendents’ Association, and the BC Principals and Vice-Principals’ Association. Any political barriers that may arise from discussions about the induction program (jurisdiction, funding and resources, professional autonomy, professional growth and evaluation, and organizational responsibility) will be addressed at the Learning Roundtable and through provincial, regional, and local collaborative advisory structures.

The teaching profession must move beyond a small number of isolated induction and mentoring programs in scattered regions of the province. All new teachers deserve an induction and mentoring program that will enable them not only to survive but to grow and thrive as professionals. By supporting teachers in their new environment and helping them enhance their knowledge and skills, the educational community can help them find satisfaction in teaching. The following statement reminds us of what is at stake: “Ultimately, students suffer the consequences of inadequate support for beginning teachers” (Halford, 1998, p.34). The ultimate goal of an induction and mentoring program is to improve the quality of teaching and to improve student learning.

Now is the time for the teaching profession in British Columbia to rise to the occasion, to plan and to advocate for provincial government funding to establish and implement a collaboratively developed province-wide ongoing induction and mentoring program for all new teachers.

A Framework for Induction and Mentoring in BC

This section of the paper outlines the framework of an induction and mentoring program for new teachers in BC. The framework is based on an understanding of the provincial context, lessons from successful induction and mentoring programs in BC school districts and elsewhere, and the characteristics of successful programs based on studies and research reports. The first section of this section describes the elements of a well-planned induction program. This is followed by the description of the proposed BC New Teacher Induction Program, and concludes with the discussion of an implementation strategy to support the province-wide program.

Elements of an Induction Program for British Columbia

A new-teacher induction program should be an integral part of the educational planning process at the provincial, district, and school level of our province. The comprehensive program should address the challenges that new teachers face as they enter the profession. The program needs to be a partnership among the BC education partners. That comprehensive and collaborative induction program should include pre-orientation, orientation, and mentorship.

Pre-orientation: Part One of the Induction Program

The purpose of the pre-orientation phase of the induction program is to give new teachers relevant information shortly after they are hired by the school district. Contact during the pre-orientation stage of the induction program will be undertaken by mail, phone, or e-mail. Potential pre-orientation materials include information about the teaching assignment; curriculum materials and learning resources; relevant historical and cultural information about the school, school district, and community; salary and benefits information; and contact names for the school principal, school district personnel, and the teacher union. New teachers should be encouraged to review the pre-orientation reading material prior to attending follow-up orientation sessions.

Orientation: Part Two of the Induction Program

A successful orientation program builds on the pre-orientation phase of the induction program and should help the new teacher make the transition from student teacher to beginning

teacher more productive and easier. The orientation program should include the following components:

1. School and classroom orientation. This should include a school tour; review of school growth plans and mission statement; procedures for accessing professional development, school routines, and resources; school policies and procedures (supervision, teacher-on-call procedures, etc.); administrative information; information about parent teacher meetings and reporting to parents; school calendar; prior-to-first-day teacher checklist; and sample course outlines from other teachers.

2. School board and district orientation. Included should be the mission statement and accountability plan, district curricula and resources, district resource persons, district policies and procedures, cultural awareness information, teacher/learning resources centre information, networking opportunities, district role in the mentoring program, electronic mail systems, district expectations, advice from experienced teachers in the district, personnel, and salary procedures.

3. Teacher union orientation. In this orientation, the organizational structure of teacher union, introduction to teacher-union leaders, overview of the teacher collective agreement, procedures for accessing local professional development, teacher evaluation procedures, induction to the local/BCTF, support services for new members, advocacy services, membership involvement, and teacher-union role in the mentorship program should be covered.

4. Community orientation. A community welcome for the new teachers, history of the community, community tour, community cultural orientation, introduction to community leaders, community organization should be provided (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, 2004; Jackson &

McPhie, 1994; Northwest Territories Teacher Induction Program, 2006; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006).

The information in the orientation stage of an induction program should be communicated to new teachers using a variety of approaches including print and A-V materials, information meetings, workshops, networking sessions, community activities, and school events. Wherever possible, joint teacher union, school district, community, and administrator personnel should facilitate orientation events. Orientation to the educational system is significant, because it builds a feeling of connection and belonging in the educational community for new teachers. Through a planned and co-ordinated orientation program, new teachers understand that they are part of an educational community that cares about them and wants them to grow and succeed.

Formal Mentorship: Part Three of the Induction Program

A formal mentorship program for new teachers is the most significant aspect of the new-teacher induction program. The mentor program provides benefits for the new teachers, mentor teachers, school staff, and school system. The mentorship program should be a formalized partnership between an experienced teacher and a teacher new to the profession in which the veteran teacher serves as a mentor to guide and support the new teacher during the first two years of her or his teaching career in the province (Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario, 2004; McPhie & Jackson, 1994). Table 5 summarizes the benefits of formal mentorship.

Table 5: Benefits of Formal Mentorship

Benefits of Formal Mentorship

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Benefits for New Teachers Guidance and moral support Better start to a teaching career Positive reinforcement Feedback and reflection opportunities Focus on continual growth and learning Increase in curriculum knowledge Expanded teaching strategies Specific assistance with difficulties Improved interpersonal relationships</p> | <p>Benefits for Mentor Teachers Professional growth Expansion of ideas and resources Gain in confidence Reflection on teaching practices Increased repertoire of skills New friendships Encouragement to show leadership Satisfaction in passing on skills and knowledge</p> |
| <p>Benefits for School Staff Increased collaboration and collegiality Enhanced collegiality Shared responsibility in welcoming a new professional Exposure to fresh ideas Opportunities to showcase expertise in specialties</p> | <p>Benefits for the School System Improved morale Greater retention of new teachers Support for a culture of collaboration Promotion of effective teaching strategies Enhanced student learning Improvement in the quality of teaching</p> |

Sources: Berg, Donaldson, & Johnson, 2005; Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario, 2004, Northwest Territories New Teacher Program, 2006.

The pre-orientation, orientation, and mentoring components form the foundation of a comprehensive induction program for new teachers.

Organizational Structure of the BC New Teacher Induction Program

To support and assist the new teachers of our province, it is proposed that the BC New Teacher Induction Program be established. As with successful induction programs in other jurisdictions, the BC program should be funded mainly by the provincial government through the BC Ministry of Education. The BC New Teacher Induction Program should be operated as a provincial agency that works in conjunction with induction advisory committees at the provincial,

district, and regional levels. To ensure consistency across all the nine regions of the province, the agency should oversee and administer all aspects of the mentoring program.

To build commitment and political will for the BC New Teacher Induction Program, the BC Teachers' Federation, the BC Ministry of Education, and the Association of BC Deans of Education should invite the BC School Trustees Association, BC Principals and Vice-Principals' Association, and the BC School Superintendents' Association to a provincial education summit meeting to discuss, plan, and establish a provincial agency to operate the induction program. That multilateral leadership support will communicate a powerful message about the significance and importance of the induction program.

Sufficient annual funding from the BC Ministry of Education should be provided to sustain all aspects of the New-Teacher Induction Program on an ongoing basis. As evidenced in the Ontario and New York City programs, stable funding for induction initiatives ensures program credibility and value. Research in other jurisdictions indicates that funding to support intensive mentoring programs for new teachers is a good financial investment. In a five-year study of a mentoring program in a mid-sized school district in California, a cost-benefit analysis using actual program cost information, data on student learning and teacher retention, and mentor evaluations, demonstrated increases in teacher effectiveness and student learning and greater savings in costs of teacher attrition (Strong & Villar, 2005). For the BC New Teacher Induction Program to operate effectively, it is necessary for the provincial government to provide new, sufficient, targeted, and sustained funding.

Each of the aforementioned partner groups should be represented on a BC New Teacher Induction Program Advisory Committee. The partnership should be based on a shared understanding about the values and goals of the induction program. All members of the provincial

advisory committee will be responsible for liaising with their constituents to bring recommendations and concerns to committee meetings. They will also be responsible for being communication links to ensure that everyone in the system is aware of decisions and plans that are developed. To avoid confusion and possible conflict during the implementation phases, it is essential that, at the onset of the program, the provincial advisory committee define roles and responsibilities for various tasks related to the implementation of the induction program. For each aspect of the program, the advisory committee needs to make decisions about implementation responsibilities, approval processes, consultation expectations, and communications.

Initial discussions of the advisory committee should focus on the benefits of the induction program and the contributions that each group can make to the program. Final decisions about the goals, structures, funding levels, and roles and responsibilities related to the BC New Teacher Induction Program should be discussed and negotiated among the partner groups represented on the advisory committee.

Because each region and school district of the province has its own history and culture, the formation of complementary induction advisory committees at the regional and district levels is recommended. Those committees should include the same partner groups that are represented on the provincial advisory committee and should be responsible for collaborating with the BC New Teacher Induction Program Agency. All members of the advisory committee are responsible for being communication links to ensure that everyone in the system is aware of the decisions and plans that are made. Those committees will play an important role in program promotion, refinement, and implementation. In some districts of the province, some elements of the induction program may already exist. In those districts the local advisory committee will assume

responsibility for integrating existing programs into the BC New Teacher Induction Program framework.

The education partner representatives on the committees ensure that induction program directions are implemented in a co-ordinated manner and ensure that the program is helpful and not overwhelming to new teachers. As well, in order for the induction program to be implemented in a systematic and consistent way, nine regional and 60 district induction co-ordinators should be identified to work with the provincial committee and agency to ensure overall co-ordination for the program within their jurisdictions.

All partner groups represented on provincial, regional, and district induction advisory committees have a responsibility to be involved and committed to the induction program. New teachers, mentors, school and district administrators, local associations, BCTF, teacher education institutions, and policy makers, including school trustees and the Ministry of Education, have an important role in a successful induction-program partnership. Representatives on those committees have an important responsibility to be advocates for funding, training, release time, resources, and other initiatives that may be necessary to reflect a system-wide commitment to ensuring equity for all new BC teachers. The active involvement of partner representatives at the provincial, regional, and local levels ensures that everyone understands the benefit and value of the program.

The teacher-education institutions will play a key role in the development and implementation of the BC New Teacher Induction Program. They will be represented on the provincial advisory committees by the Association of BC Deans of Education and by faculty on regional and local advisory committees. The skills and knowledge of teacher-education-institution faculty members will be utilized in the program-development, training, and research-and-evaluation phases of the induction program.

At the present time, teacher-education faculty and seconded staff are responsible for supervising student teachers during field experiences. The skills in observing, coaching, and collaborating with student teachers and school-based sponsor teachers are similar to the skills of mentor teachers. It is anticipated that teacher-education faculty and staff will play an important role in the design and delivery of the training program for mentor teachers within the BC New Teacher Induction Program. The mentoring component of the proposed induction program should reinforce the important professional skills learned by student teachers during their supervised practicums in schools. The mentoring programs should play a key role in strengthening and enhancing the pre-service education programs. Most important, the existence of a mentoring program will figure prominently in a career-long teacher professional development program that includes pre-service education, induction and mentoring, and mid-career growth and development.

A strong evaluation and research component is required to demonstrate the success of the induction initiative (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, 2004; Ontario College of Teachers, 2002). Careful study and documentation will assist in improving the effectiveness of the program and help to justify investment by policy makers and education partners. The teacher-education institutions will play an important role in the design and implementation of all aspects of evaluation and research related to the BC New Teacher Induction Program

The Mentoring Component of the BC New Teacher Induction Program

In the BC New Teacher Induction Program, mentor teachers are released from their teaching duties to work full time to provide intensive and sustained support to new teachers. Each mentor will work with up to 15 new teachers, matched by grade level and subject area whenever

possible. Mentors will be based at the regional level, working in multiple schools within each of the nine regions of the province.

The components of the model will include rigorous mentor selection, carefully tailored matching of mentors and new teachers, time for sustained and intensive collaboration, intensive professional development for mentors, and regionally based programs.

In the mentorship program, carefully selected and trained mentor teachers provide focussed and intensive support for an assigned cohort of new teachers. The regionally based mentor teachers will work in multiple schools within each of the school districts in one of the nine regions of the province. Each mentor teacher will work with each new teacher for two years. The 15:1 ratio and full-time release will give mentors adequate time to work with new teachers in a sustained and focussed manner (New Teacher Center at University of California, Santa Cruz, 2006).

The mentor teachers should be selected by a knowledgeable panel of education partners in each of the nine regions of the province. Each panel will select the top mentors from the pool of applicants for the positions based on a rigorous set of criteria, including (but not limited to) exemplary teaching; subject-area expertise; observation, feedback and coaching skills; understanding of diverse student populations; non-judgmental and accepting attitude; and advanced interpersonal skills. In addition to having those skills and attributes, prospective mentor teachers should be highly respected within the teaching profession (Ontario College of Teachers, 2002).

Mentors should receive intensive professional development training co-ordinated by the BC New Teacher Induction Program Agency. The training should include at least four three-day mentor training events and bi-weekly mentor forums. Training topics should include design and facilitation; teaching strategies and classroom management; reflective and collaborative practice; establishing collaborative relationships premised on trust, collegiality, and confidentiality;

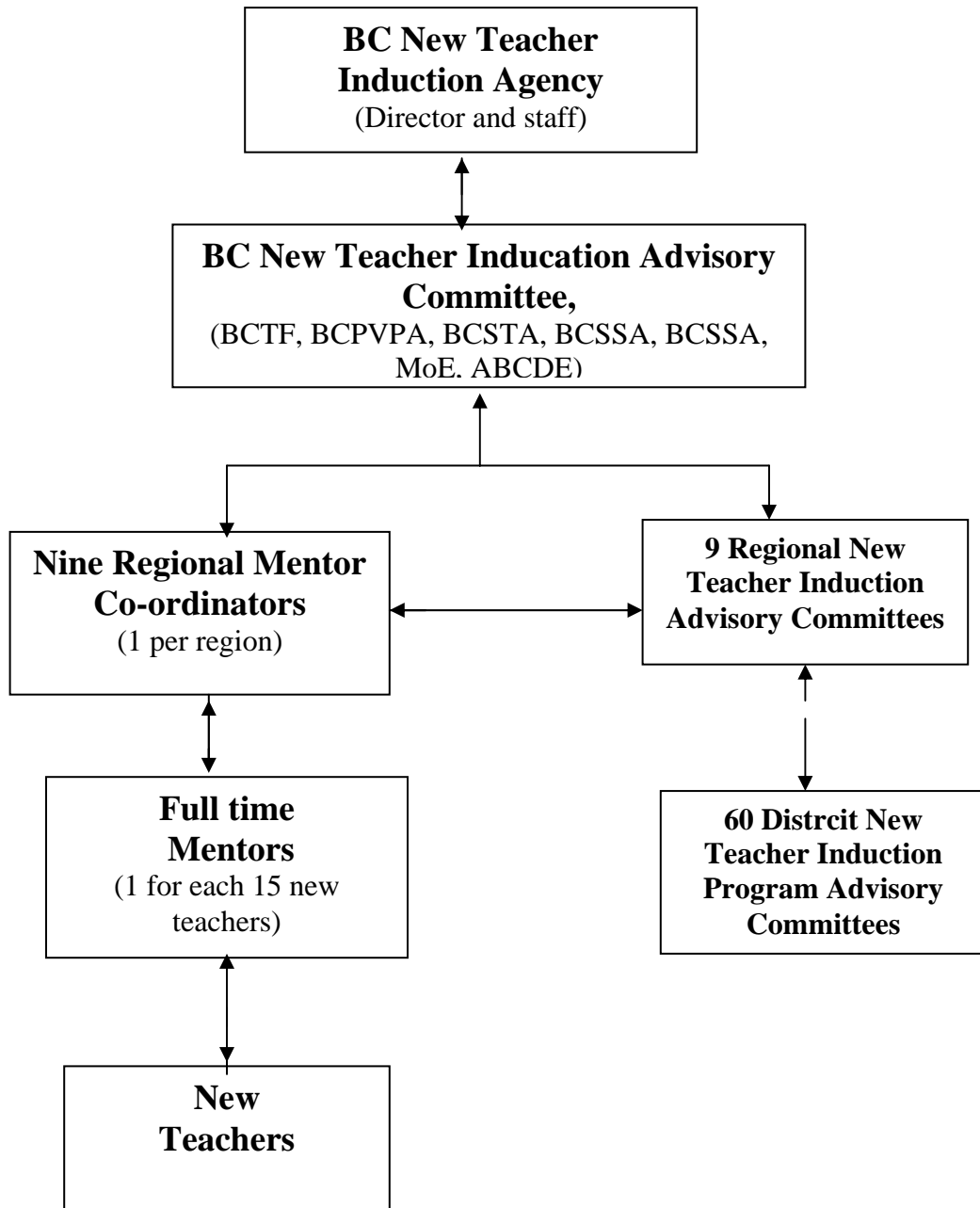
acquiring coaching expertise; developing classroom observation skills; providing appropriate feedback; and understanding the academic, professional, and social needs of new teachers. The training program will assist mentors to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attributes needed to work with new teachers in a way that improves and enhances teaching and learning (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, 2004).

Mentors should be based at the regional level, under the direction of the BC New Teacher Induction Agency. Mentors work with new teachers in multiple schools within each region and develop relationships with the administrators and school staff at each school site. They should be released from their teaching responsibilities for a period of two years to ensure that their number-one priority is to help new teachers succeed. Mentors' salaries should be based on the salary they would receive if they were teaching. As each mentor will be paired with up to 15 new teachers, mentors will be expected to meet weekly with each new teacher. Consideration should also be given to hiring well-qualified and carefully selected retired teachers on a part-time basis to bridge gaps in service when full-time-release mentors are unavailable.

The matching of mentors and new teachers is of critical importance. The regional advisory committee should consider the following factors when matching mentors with new teachers: grade level and subject area, personality compatibility, same or adjacent schools, similar timetables, gender and equity considerations, self selection of pairs, and opportunities for changing partners (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, 2004).

This comprehensive approach to induction will give new teachers a support system to enable them to grow into the teaching profession. Figure 1 summarizes the proposed organizational structure for the BC New-Teacher Induction Program

Figure 1: Organizational Structure of the BC New Teacher Induction Program



Sample Cycle of Induction Program Events

Table 5 provides an overview of a suggested two-year cycle for a cohort of new teachers in the BC New Teacher Induction Program.

Table 5: Sample Two-Year Cycle of Induction-Program Events for a Cohort of New Teachers in the BC New Teacher Induction Program

| Year One | Year Two |
|---|--|
| <p>July–September:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mailing of pre-orientation materials Review of pre-orientation materials by new teachers Training of mentors Matching of mentors and new teachers Orientation events and networking opportunities for new teachers | <p>July–September:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing orientation events Training of mentors Networking opportunities for new teachers |
| <p>September–December:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuation of orientation program activities for new teachers Ongoing mentor training and bi-weekly networking/sharing sessions. Intensive mentoring sessions for new teachers | <p>September–December</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing mentor training and bi-weekly networking/sharing sessions. Intensive mentoring sessions for new teachers |
| <p>January–April:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuation of orientation program activities for new teachers Ongoing mentor training and bi-weekly networking/sharing sessions. Intensive mentoring sessions for new teachers Selection of additional mentors, as required for the next year Problem-solving and networking sessions for mentors and new teachers | <p>January–April</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing mentor training and bi-weekly networking/sharing sessions Intensive mentoring and professional development opportunities for new teachers Problem-solving and networking sessions for mentors and new teachers |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>May–June: Assessment, evaluation, revision and planning for next year Adjustments to program, including any change to mentor assignments Celebration activities</p> | <p>May–June: Assessment and evaluation activities Transition planning for third year of teaching Graduation/celebration activities</p> |
|--|--|

The first year of the BC New Teacher Induction Program incorporates the pre-orientation, orientation, and formal mentorship components. In the second year of the program, the mentoring program continues with an increased focus on a deeper understanding of the art and science of teaching, as well as continuous, self-directed professional development that is based on the needs of the new teacher.

Summary

This chapter has explored the context, opportunities, and challenges for developing a support system for new teachers in British Columbia. Included in the chapter was a framework for the BC New-Teacher Induction Program. The program includes pre-orientation, orientation, and mentorship stages. The details for each stage of the program were outlined, as was a strategy for implementing the program.

By developing and implementing this comprehensive province-wide induction and mentoring program, the educational community in BC can provide the support that new teachers need once they enter the profession in our province.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Supporting New Teachers: A Fundamental Responsibility of the Teaching Profession

Even the best teacher-preparation programs do not fully prepare new teachers for the new professional responsibilities that come with full-time teaching. In British Columbia, Mark Halder and other new teachers continue to experience the emotional turbulence of entering the teaching profession, which begins in nervous anticipation and moves through stages of frustration, disappointment, survival, and, with luck and adequate support, rejuvenation and contemplation. For many new teachers, the first years are the most stressful of their career. With understanding and appropriate support structures for new teachers, all members of the teaching community, can help new teachers to survive and thrive through those challenging and possibly lonely times. As a profession, we have a collective responsibility to recruit an outstanding generation of new teachers for our schools. We also have a fundamental responsibility to the foster the professional growth of individual teachers, especially those new to the profession.

The work of teachers is mainly isolated and individualistic rather than collegial and collaborative. That cultural tradition has profoundly affected the careers of people teaching for less

than five years. The education system has not managed to transform the culture of teaching from that of autonomy and individualism to that of collegiality and collaboration.

To remain positive and optimistic about their work, teachers need to feel a sense of success. Success for teachers means that they are teaching effectively and their students are learning. Teachers also want to sense that they are making a difference with the students they teach. Achieving that sense of success has a great deal to do with the conditions and support new teachers encounter in their schools. Factors such as relationships with colleagues, curricula and resources, working conditions, teaching assignments, and structures to support teaching and learning are significant in determining a sense of success for new teachers.

This study sought to

- identify reasons new teachers leave the profession in their first five years of teaching.
- identify the most important factors and conditions that will enable the next generation of teachers to enter, grow in, and remain in the teaching profession.
- develop a mentoring and induction action plan for supporting new teachers in British Columbia.

The purposes of the study were achieved through my experience and reflections as teacher and teacher educator and through an analysis of recent and relevant Canadian and American literature—from peer-reviewed journals, reports related to teacher education and new teachers, books, and web sites.

As expected, the research suggests that many factors influence decisions of new teachers to leave the profession in their first five years of teaching. The primary reasons are professional isolation and lack of collegial support; unreasonable working and learning conditions; inappropriate teaching assignment; inadequate access to curriculum and learning resources; lack of success with students; lack of opportunities to influence school policy; inadequate facilities, equipment, and

supplies; too much paperwork; inadequate administrative support; and uncompetitive compensation.

The challenge of supporting the next generation of teachers to enter, grow in, and remain in the teaching profession requires a comprehensive strategy, one that address the full range of concerns and issues for new teachers. Policymakers, school and district administrators, teacher unions, and teacher-education institutions need to continue to work together to develop and implement policies that will make teaching attractive, satisfying, and rewarding for both new and experienced teachers.

The literature suggests that a comprehensive strategy for supporting new teachers should include the introduction and implementation of induction and mentoring programs; reasonable teaching and working conditions; competitive compensation rates; access to adequate curriculum and learning resources; access to adequate facilities, equipment, and supplies; school-wide conditions that support student learning; opportunities to influence policy and exercise professional judgement; collegial support for advice and assistance; career-long professional development opportunities; and improved teacher-preparation programs. Many of those conditions can be addressed in BC through collective bargaining; others can be addressed through policy development, advocacy, lobbying, and professional influence. A comprehensive strategy for supporting new teachers in their formative years will contribute to their growth and development, not merely to their remaining in the profession.

The study concludes that the central strategy for supporting new teachers in British Columbia is the development and implementation of the BC New-Teacher Induction Program. This initiative has the potential to significantly address the challenges that new teachers face as they enter the profession in our province. For the program to be successful and effective, the pre-

orientation, orientation, and mentorship stages of the program must be based on the following characteristics of effective induction programs: They are goal focussed, have institutional commitment and support, include quality mentoring, have sustained and adequate resource support, focus on classroom-based teacher learning, are grounded on principles of adult learning, and serve as a catalyst to change school culture.

The convergence of teacher-supply-and-demand data, information about new-teacher retention, and successful strategies for supporting new teachers gives the teaching profession of British Columbia a pivotal opportunity to renew and transform the culture of the profession. Over the next decade, the teacher population of British Columbia will change dramatically. By harnessing and focussing the collective energy of the educational community in our province, we can develop a comprehensive and integrated strategy for supporting a new generation of BC teachers. That strategy must attract talented candidates and give them the support necessary to keep them once they enter the teaching profession. Most important, we have an opportunity to enhance student learning by fostering the development of a true teaching profession, by transforming the culture of teaching from one of “rugged individualism to one of collaboration and collegiality” (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1999).

The educational community of BC has a choice between two futures. One choice is to continue our present course in the face of the significant convergence of contextual information about new teachers and public education in our province. That choice perpetuates the current unacceptable induction reality for new teachers in our province. Such a future continues the culture of isolationism in our schools and perpetuates the unacceptable attrition rates for new teachers. In the other future—the one that sees the establishment of a collaboratively based induction program to support new teachers as they enter the profession— teaching continues to grow as a profession.

Experienced teachers insist on the right to induct new teachers into the profession through effective induction programs that are based on collaborative governance, sustained funding, exemplary mentoring programs—where collaboration and collegiality replace the sink-or-swim closed-door classroom and school norm of the past.

Now is the time for teacher organizations, teacher-education institutions, school districts, and the Ministry of Education to work together to develop a comprehensive strategy to help new teachers successfully undertake their responsibilities of enabling students to experience success and realize their potential. The teaching profession must embrace this historic opportunity to make a significant and lasting improvement in the quality of teaching and learning in our schools. By our moving forward, our new teachers will benefit greatly, and the students of our province will benefit even more.

As many of us in the teaching profession near retirement age, we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to leave a significant legacy to the next generation of teachers. Imagine the feeling of leaving behind a legacy that provides every new teacher in the province with an induction and mentoring program in their first two years of teaching. Envision a school where new teachers and experienced teachers are working together in a professional culture of collaboration and collegiality. Envision a teaching environment where new teachers are provided with tailored teaching assignments that allow them to reflect, grow, and learn under the direction of a mentor. Envision a culture of teaching where collaboration, inquiry, reflection, and collegiality are the norm. Let's work together to turn the vision into reality!

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