


2014

# A Mixed Methods Evaluation of New Teacher Support Systems at an Urban Elementary

Dracaena Mosley  
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Dracaena Mosley

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Walden University  
2014

Abstract

A Mixed Methods Evaluation of New Teacher Support Systems at an Urban Elementary

School

by

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M.A., Mercy College, 2004

B.A. Marymount College, 2000

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

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## Abstract

An urban elementary school in the northeast was lacking formal methods to evaluate its support systems for teachers. This formative evaluation of the school's support systems for new teachers and staff was conducted using a mixed methods design to address the problem. The purpose of this evaluation was to determine the indicators of progress or need of improvement of effectively supporting teachers through mentoring, professional development, and collaboration. The theoretical framework for the study was Kirkpatrick's 4 levels of evaluation: reaction, learning, behavior, and results. The evaluation was also guided by questions about the extent, perceived effectiveness, strengths, and weaknesses of the support systems. Data were collected using surveys from 33 teacher participants and interviews with 10 teacher participants. Qualitative data analysis involved emergent coding for themes and sub-themes. Inconsistent support emerged as a support weakness and a comforting school community emerged as a support strength. Frequencies and ratios of survey items were calculated and reported. Key findings were that 60% of the participants perceived the support systems to be adequate and 79% perceived the mentor and new teacher meetings to be effective. However, 36% of respondents reported that all support systems needed some improvements. A full report including recommendations was prepared for the stakeholders at the school and district levels. Implications for positive social change include higher retention and enhanced performance of beginning teachers, which may help to improve learning outcomes for students.

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## Dedication

This work is dedicated to my parents, husband, and daughter. Pat, John, and Hancy thank you for your words of encouragement, patience, and love. Jade, thank you for giving me the motivation to finish this dissertation.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to recognize the people who helped me through this journey of completing this dissertation. I would like to thank my dissertation committee, Ann Jablonski, and with special thanks to my Chair, Dr. Paul Englesberg.

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## Section 1: The Problem

### **Introduction**

Hiring, supporting, and retaining great teachers in inner-city schools has been a major focus of New York City school administrators. According to New York City's Children's First Reform, classroom teaching and teachers are the gateways to improve student achievement (New York City Board Of Education, 2011). "Many of the reforms have specifically addressed the recruitment, assignment, development, and evaluation of teachers in an effort to improve teaching quality"(Goertz, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2011, p.2). Administrators have been providing more support systems for beginning teachers to maintain the guidelines of the reform. Although support systems are provided, not all schools periodically evaluate the effectiveness of their beginning teacher support systems to assess whether or not the needs of beginning teachers are being meet. I evaluated the support systems that target the improvement of new teachers in a New York City elementary school.

By evaluating the effectiveness of existing support systems for beginning teachers and staff at this inner city, high-poverty school, it is hoped that the school will be able to improve the support systems for beginning teachers and staff. Evaluating the support systems may improve their performance, retain them, and improve student achievement. School administrators are also required to retain good teachers in order to maintain guidelines of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB; 2001). It is imperative for New York City school administrators to follow the accountability guidelines by improving the quality of beginning teachers. It is also imperative that

administrators retain beginning teachers as opposed to competing with their departure to suburban settings or exiting the teaching profession altogether.

Nearly 44% of elementary teachers in the lowest-performing schools in New York City left the profession within 2 years (Boyd et al., 2009; Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013). There are many reasons why beginning teachers leave the profession, one including inadequate or ineffective support systems from their schools. Teachers are leaving their classrooms because employment issues, working conditions, personal issues, inadequate support, student issues, and factors such as retirement or a better jobs (Boyd et al., 2009). This evaluation may help New York City Eastside School by reviewing the needs of new teachers that are working there and determining if their support systems are adequate for growth in the profession and the school.

### **Definition of the Problem**

The local problem that prompted this study is that beginning teacher support systems at Eastside School are lacking a formal evaluation specific to achieving goals of effectively supporting beginning teachers, by focusing on peer mentoring, professional development, and collaboration. The outcome of a needs assessment evaluation determined if new teachers and staff are receiving what is essential for success in the profession. The current systems include peer mentoring, professional development, and collaboration. The lack of a formative evaluation prohibits administrators from determining which components of their support systems are successful, which elements are effective, and which components are in need of modification.

Most beginning teachers entering the school have had little experience in classrooms. In 2008, 27% of the school's teachers had teaching experience less than three years (New York State School Report Card, 2009). Some of the novice teachers have gone through a student teaching program at their university or college that allowed them to experience the minimum requirements in their educational programs. Some beginners have gone through an accelerated teaching program that did not allow them to spend a great deal of time student teaching before entering the classroom. "In traditional credentialing programs, student teachers spend most of their time taking education courses and seminars. The time they spend in classrooms, teaching students is relatively brief-often just two weeks" (Caruso, 2007, p.1). Many of them could have chances and opportunities to work with other experienced teachers because of their willingness to ask for help.

Researchers on this topic has suggested that in any professional career, newcomers need someone who can help them fit their new work environments. An expert can help a new entrant understand the norms and develop in that work community (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000). Several new teachers from this school have decided to move on to another school in another area or have left the profession completely. This problem was noticed, and a possible solution was to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's current support systems to possibly rectify the some of these negative situations.

Evaluations of new teacher support systems may lead to highly qualified teachers. A support systems evaluation will provide vital information for school administrators. Researchers agreed that administrators must show evidence of effective educational

programs, policies, and practices (Chatterji, 2008; Slavin, 2009). By finding that evidence, administrators will be able to improve what is lacking in the program.

The school administrators have identified areas of weakness among the beginning teacher population based upon informal and formal evaluations. The support system goals are produced after individual beginning teacher evaluations and are based on administrator checklists that were created and modified from a published framework (Danielson, 2009). New York City and the school's district also require school administrators to follow guidelines on beginning teacher support systems based on The Principals' Guide for Teacher Development (2011). A program-specific evaluation was not developed to assess whether the program worked or how it could be improved.

### **Rationale**

#### **Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level**

I chose this problem to determine the indicators of progress or need of improvement of the Eastside School beginning teacher support systems. The intent of this study was to evaluate the current support systems for beginning teachers for their effectiveness in achieving goals of successfully supporting beginning teacher by focusing on peer mentoring, professional development, and collaboration. Such an evaluation may provide results that could explore the effectiveness of the systems that are already in place and enhance the current program for future novice teachers by effectively supporting beginning teachers.



## **Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature**

It is important to evaluate beginning teacher support systems because the results of this evaluation can document the program's effectiveness and examine its strengths and opportunities for growth. The data may additionally be used for program enhancement and accountability. Without a program specific evaluation, administrators will not be informed on what parts of their support systems for beginning teachers are successful, and which aspects are in need of improvement. The school may find difficulty growing and producing successfully performing teachers. According to Villani (2001), the evaluation process should be ongoing and should include surveys that emphasize on instructional needs of novice teachers.

### **Definitions**

*Teacher support systems:* Support systems are a continuum of guidance that ranges from emotional supports to specific related problem supports that a beginning teacher would need. For example, mentoring from peers to new teachers, professional development/workshops and collaboration are just some ways to facilitate and complement their learning process (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000).

*Mentor teacher:* A mentor will plan, view their classroom practices, conference, and reflect on their teaching practices of beginning teachers (New York City Department of Education, 2011).

*Veteran teacher:* Veteran teachers are holders of Provisional Certificates, teaching experience 3 or more years (New York City Department of Education, 2011).

*Beginning teacher:* Beginning teachers are holders of the Initial and Conditional

Initial certificate in a public school district, teaching experience 1-3 years (New York City Department of Education, 2011).

### **Significance**

This evaluation could be useful to Eastside School administrators in terms of data for improvement with regards to school. The evaluation identified discrepancies in the systems for new teachers and set priorities for action. Eastside School administrators will have access to a core set of effective support characteristics that could be built into any future support system or program for new teachers at the site school. The results of the evaluation could also, be used by Eastside School mentor teachers and coaches to evaluate the types of support needed by all beginning teachers and staff. This evaluation could open a dialogue with their mentees to facilitate understanding of specific and unique needs. This evaluation could allow Eastside School educators to understand what is needed to help new teachers become effective learners and producers of effective learners.

Eastside School administrators may share this evaluation locally, within the school district, to improve teacher support systems for beginning teachers or all teachers in general. This evaluation could also be shared with local universities and colleges, specifically their teacher preparation programs to help guide and train new teachers before they even reach the classroom. This evaluation may provide further research in the fields of professional development in schools, in depth beginning teacher support and evaluations of general programs in schools.

### **Guiding Research Questions**

A formative, goal-based evaluation examined perspectives from beginning teachers and experienced teachers. I examined key components of the systems for beginning teachers including the program's goals of effectively supporting beginning teacher, focusing on peer mentoring, professional development, and collaboration. The goals of effectively supporting beginning teachers at the school are to provide peer mentoring, professional development, and collaboration with other teachers.

Below are guiding questions that directed this evaluation project on the support systems for beginning teachers:

1. To what extent are the support systems for beginning teachers and staff being implemented?
2. What are the perceptions of beginning and experienced teachers regarding the effectiveness of new teacher support systems?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the support systems for beginning teachers and staff, specifically in achieving goals of effectively supporting beginning teachers?

Examining these intermediate indicators of the program in the evaluation report (Appendix D) would allow administrators to assess issues relative to sustainability and to improve the structure and features of the school's support systems towards greater overall effectiveness of the support systems.. This mixed-method evaluation combined qualitative data from interviews with beginning teachers and experienced teachers (see Appendices B and C) and quantitative data from a survey (Appendix D). The goal was to

identify strengths and weaknesses and opportunities for growth, ultimately identifying ways to improve the support system.

### **Review of the Literature**

The literature review is organized into six sections that summarize the literature relevant to this evaluation. The first section is an examination of Kegan's (1982, 1994, 2000) constructive developmental theory, an adult development theory that relates to beginning teachers and how they learn from being supported through systems in a school environment. The second section is a review of the importance of effective support systems for beginning teachers. The third section is focused on effective mentoring, one of the three types of support systems given to beginning teachers at the school. The next section is focused on effective professional development. The following section focuses on effective collaboration. The final section is an explanation of why an evaluation of support systems for new teachers is important.

The sources for the review of literature were found in databases at the Walden University Library and include both peer-reviewed journals and professional journals. Other sources were found using Google Scholar, which provides access to professional journals, articles and texts. Key words and/or phrases used during the search included: *adult developmental theories, adult learning, constructive developmental theory, teacher supports, effective teacher support systems, new teacher supports, teacher guidance, teacher mentors, effective teacher mentoring, effective teacher professional development, and effective teacher collaboration*. Texts that addressed the different types of support systems were also used in the review.

## **Theoretical Foundation**

This program evaluation expands on an adult development theory that relates to beginning teachers and how they learn from being supported through systems at in a school environment. In Kegan's (1982, 1994, 2000) constructive developmental theory, the complexity of one's thinking has the possibility to intensify over the course of one's life through five progressive stages. As a person advances, he or she will increasingly exhibit a greater ability to make sense of the world at a more complex stage. Constructive development theory proposes growth throughout one's life span, which allows the ability to comprehend themselves and their world based on surroundings. An individual can progress from one stage to the next with increasing ability for making sense of the increasing difficulties of one's life. While passing through stages people grow and change over the course of their adult lives using others to support them. One can have a more sophisticated understanding of learning based his or her experiences (Kegan & Lahey, 2010). Kegan's theory involves transforming to different stages of understanding on how to fit into one's world, by learning new information to pass to the next stage (Hasegawa, Hammerman, & Kegan 2007). As new teachers settle into their new surroundings, they may experience this developmental movement by passing from one stage to the next as they continually learn professionally.

The constructive developmental theory promotes how understanding and attending to adults' different ways of knowing can enable educators to build schools that serve as rich and dynamic contexts that support adult growth. This theory is a challenge

for all teachers whether novice or expert in their field to support each other's growth. Drago-Severson (2011) explained that the constructive-developmental theory provides administrators with information about how "different developmental orientations require different forms of support and challenge to maximize growth opportunities" (p. 87). In relation to this evaluation, this theory may help experienced teachers, leaders and other colleagues find ways to become an effective mentor of the beginning teachers.

This program evaluation also expands on a framework that is more specific to teacher development. Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) created a model, which includes the five stages of professional development. The model of skill acquisition has been very influential in the world of education and teacher development (Andrews, 2007; Cooper, 2002; Eraut, 1994; Kinchin & Cabot, 2010). The model shows the professional growth of an individual in a career as that individual passes through each stage from a novice to an expert, e.g. teacher development. This particular model focuses on a professional growing and passes to the next stage through experiences (Kinchin & Cabot, 2010). The stages of the model are novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient and expert. As a teacher, an individual begins as a novice that follows rigid rules and procedures, but as that teacher gains experience, they become an expert that has an intuitive grasp of knowledge based on career demands.

Kegan's theory and the Dreyfus model both involve a professional to pass through or transform from one stage or level to another to gain knowledge about their profession through experience. In relation to this evaluation, beginning teachers can successfully pass through and transform from stage to stage, becoming an experienced expert

(Kinchin & Cabot, 2010). By participating in effective support systems, a novice teacher can become an expert who is competent and proficient (Villani, 2002). Both theories can also help beginning teachers realize that utilizing the support systems given by the school will assist them in growing in the profession and will be on-going to leading them to becoming successful educators (Chakraborty & Ferguson, 2010). The two thoughts discussed above was a catalyst to guide this evaluation project.

### **Importance of Effective Support Systems**

Some administrators and educational leaders have recognized some of the problems that beginning teachers face. They are recognizing that the novice teacher is asked to do the same things that veteran teachers are asked to do while transitioning from student to teacher (Syed, 2008). During this transition process, new teachers do not yet have the skill to accomplish all tasks asked of them (Ferguson & Johnson, 2010). Sometimes, beginning teachers are left by themselves to succeed or fail within the limits of their classrooms (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Kauffman et al., 2002). This type of abandonment can cause early burnout for new teachers and can also lead to deteriorating their pledge to stay in the profession, as they are unable to deal with the pressures of being a teacher (Gold, 1996; Kelley, 2004).

New teachers are still learners. A beginning teacher needs support, encouragement, and nurturing along with other skills to equip them for the classroom (Warren, 2013). As Villani (2002) explained, beginning teachers need a structured system to support and guide their entry into the teaching profession and it has moved from the fringes of the policy landscape to the center (p.2). According to Lortie (1975),

historically, the teaching profession has not had the kind of structured systems and initiation processes similar to many of the traditional professions such as law and medicine. In order for beginning teachers have ease into their profession with skill and expertise; they need a series of support systems to guide those (Ferguson & Johnson, 2010). New teachers need opportunities to collaborate with other teachers, be mentored by expert teachers, participate in ongoing professional development with other colleagues, and, analyze their own practice (Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996; Huling-Austin, 1992). In order for administrators to improve the quality of new teachers there should be an effective support system. Chakraborty and Ferguson (2010) stated that to attract, retain, and advance the professional growth of effective teachers, educational leaders and teacher preparation institutions should promote for strategic and efficient practices that deal with the need to create supportive environments for all teachers.

### **Effective Mentoring**

Mentoring is one type of support system that the school uses to guide beginning teachers. In a mentoring support system or program that is effective and efficient, new teachers get one-on-one training that can help them shape as a teacher. An effective mentor allows beginning teachers to identify problems that hail from management and instruction, guides beginning teachers through analysis of student thinking and work, provides detailed feedback, finds time to discuss problems and questions, and models good teaching (Danielson, 1999; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Wang & Odell, 2002). A complex mentor holds multiple mentor roles. Mentors not only guide beginning teachers to with socioemotional and socialization issues, but must be knowledgeable in that



beginning teachers content area. (Achinstein & Davis, 2014) Effective mentors are a critical part of an effective mentoring program or support system.

Mentoring beginning teachers can not only help new teachers, but also can create a constant cycle of review for veteran teachers. According to Moir and Bloom (2003), effective mentoring offers veteran teachers professional replenishment and contributes to the retention of new teachers. Arnold-Rogers, Arnett, and Harris (2008), found the majority of mentors and mentees agreed that mentoring helps new teachers deal with professional goals and it also, offers positive benefits for both the mentor and mentee. Mentors shape and guide beginning teachers by showing them multiple strategies that may make their classroom routines easier. An effective mentoring program should include mentors that communicate well, are organized, share teaching philosophies, share management strategies, and provide constructive feedback (Suk-Hyang et al., 2006).

Through their words and actions, mentors convey to novices what it means to teach and learn to teach in a particular context (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009). For example, in an effective program a beginning teacher may learn the school community norms, classroom strategies, and ways to adjust to students as well as multiple teaching strategies, which may cause a beginning teacher to remain at a school for several years. Kapadia et al. (2007) evaluated mentoring programs in Chicago public schools. They found that beginning teachers who received effective mentoring confirmed that the mentoring positively influenced their intentions to stay at the same school.

Although there are opposing views on mentoring, the majority of researchers see that an effective mentor program is important for new teachers, schools, and students

(Fletcher & Brundrett, 2005; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000; Portner, 2005). Mentors who are equipped to coach new teachers through tough decisions help guide and influence them to stay in the profession of teaching (McCann & Johannessen, 2008). Smith and Ingersoll (2004) indicated that beginning teachers who were provided with mentors from the same grade and who participated planning with other teachers were less likely to move to other schools after their first year of teaching. Jonson (2008) stated that mentoring requires commitment to the program and the mentee, and this can be reached when the mentor has a clear definition of the roles and responsibilities asked of themselves.

### **Effective Professional Development**

Another support system for beginning teachers is professional development. In a professional development program that is effective and efficient, new teachers are receiving continual professional or staff development. All teachers should have continual professional or staff development because it constitutes continually learning for beginning and veteran teachers.

We know a good deal about the characteristics of successful professional development: It focuses on concrete classroom applications of general ideas; it exposes teachers to actual practice rather than to descriptions of practice; it involves opportunities for observation, critique, and reflection; it involves opportunities for group support and collaboration; and it involves deliberate evaluation and feedback by skilled practitioners with expertise about good teaching. But while we know a good deal about the characteristics of good

professional development, we know a good deal less about how to organize successful professional development so as to influence practice in large numbers of schools and classrooms. (Elmore, 1997, p.2)

Knowing the characteristics of professional development is crucial for a school, but making sure that is organized and effective for all teachers is vital also (Elmore, 1997).

As teachers pass through the five constructive developmental stages and the five professional development stages, professional development as a support system will incessantly revitalize good teaching practices (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986; Kegan, 1982). Other professions such as law, medicine, and business all require continual professional development to rejuvenate and keep practitioners up to date in their fields (Hashem, 2007). Professional development is vital if beginning teachers are to respond efficiently to the rapidly changing needs of students in classrooms (Syed, 2008).

Effective professional development provides teachers with new practices that can cause teachers to change to benefit their students. According to the findings of a study conducted by Klein and Riordan (2009), a professional development program is effective when meetings are regularly scheduled, meetings are geared to teacher needs or school needs, time is set aside to analyze student work, and professional developers provide materials and handouts for future reference. Observations also provide feedback to new teachers and also provide a guide for administrators to create individual or group professional development (Hill & Grossman, 2013). With that knowledge in mind, administrators provide novice teachers with ongoing teacher development to ensure a year of success.

It is pertinent that new teachers are provided with useful professional development at the school site (Kardos & Johnson, 2002). In New York City schools, many newly hired teachers come from alternative certification programs. Many alternative programs do not provide the rich teacher development that would be beneficial for a successful first year. In order to remedy this problem, Kardos and Johnson (2000) suggested that new teachers need ongoing professional development in order to feel confident and prepared to teach students properly. Schools that provide professional development to both new teachers and veteran teachers serve all teachers well, therefore enabling teachers to serve all their students well (Kardos & Johnson, 2000).

Teacher development is essential in helping teachers continue their education while developing new practices or honing older ones. Norman, Golian, and Hooker (2005) explained that all teachers need continual support and professional development in order to attend to the growing needs of diverse student populations. Unfortunately, as Cole and Knowles (2000) suggested that professional development in some schools are often directed to teachers by outsiders while the true professional development of collegial interaction, reflection, and creativity is being overlooked. This type of professional development leaves many teachers out of the process of controlling their own professional learning communities. Professional development should be measured for effectiveness with concrete research or evaluations. Desimone (2009) explained that there are avenues that administrators can take in order to identify if the professional development at the school is effective or not. It will be beneficial to evaluate professional

development as a teacher support at the school, because administrators will be able to better support new teachers and staff.

### **Effective Collaboration**

The school also uses collaboration as an additional support system. In a collaboration system that is effective and efficient, new teachers and veteran teachers bring forth new knowledge and become leaders in their school together. Researchers have praised the benefits of teacher collaboration and see it a positive path to teacher learning (Butler, Novak Lauscher, Jarvis-Selinger, & Beckingham, 2004; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Lohman, 2005). One type of collaboration labeled ‘sharing’ is a commonly used type of collaboration that allows teachers share materials, ideas, and planning methods to make teaching practices available to other teachers (Little, 1990). Collaboration allows teacher leaders in a school to share information based on experience with novice teachers. Teachers can form teams or groups to observe and reflect ways to increase student learning and achievement. Fletcher and Brundrett (2005) explained that administrators must allow their staff to help develop and push their school to the next level by delegating, responsibilities where everyone has some opportunity to demonstrate leadership and develop leadership skills. With that idea in mind, teachers can take charge of certain tasks for the overall well-being of their students and school community.

Collaboration can take many forms such as team teaching, planning, coaching, mentoring relationships, and collaborative research (Herrenkohl, Kawasaki, & DeWater, 2010). While working in professional groups, beginning teachers are able to feel an assurance that they are not only just taking direction from a leader, but also contributing

in creating new ideas to better teaching. Collaboration is a continuous swapping of information between new and veteran teachers and should be seen as a “collaborative enterprise, where a space for learning through mutual exchange, dialogue, and constant challenge is created” (Musanti & Pence, 2010, p.87). The process of working together in a group or grade gives new teachers a chance to feel as if they are learning with a group of other learners.

The model of collaboration has been studied and has shown that collaboration can improve schools, guide new teachers, and promote the growth of teacher leaders. The Center for Teaching Quality (CTQ), in partnership with the Teachers Network Collaboration reported that collaboration among colleagues promotes effectual teaching, improves results for the students, and the retains proficient teachers in some schools (Berry, Daughtrey, Wieder, & Center for Teaching, 2009). Kardos (2003) suggested schools that invite teachers to share in responsibilities for the school and its students show new teachers that the environment is conducive to collectively striving towards success for everyone that is involved at the school. Lee (2010) suggested that by designing these opportunities for beginning teachers and experienced teachers, both types of teachers collaboratively share, plan, create and learn from each other.

### **Importance of Program Evaluations**

Evaluations of educational programs have changed significantly over the past 50 years. Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 implemented a mandate for evaluation (McLaughlin, 1975). According to McLaughlin (1975), the evaluation requirement was stated but gave the state and local school systems

room for interpretation and judgment on how to implement it. As a result, there were a number of various points of view regarding the purposes of the evaluation requirement. Although there were several viewpoints about evaluations, there was an agreement that evaluations would produce unbiased and reliable reports that would be used as the foundation of improvement. In recent years educational evaluation requirements and guidelines strengthened and changed. Over 50 years later, guidelines and requirements of evaluations of teacher quality and accountability are stated in No Child Left Behind (2001). Conducting an evaluation on beginning teacher support systems is imperative because of high-stakes accountability generated by the NCLB. NCLB impacts on school reform by demanding schools to use research-based evaluations to establish the effectiveness of their programs (Overbay et al., 2006; Rudd & Johnson, 2008; Slavin, 2008).

Developers of teacher mentor programs are aiming for evaluations that explore beyond the reactions of the participants and examine what they have learned and how they are applying that information since participating in the program (Portner, 2005). In order for the proper types of support systems for new teachers to be supplied to staff, administrators can research and review data about their teachers' needs. Platt (2000) explained school leaders should use several sources of data to find out if a school is in need of improvement or are the support systems in need of improvement. Administrators can use surveys, questionnaires, question and answer sessions, and results from team meetings, observations, and discussions with teacher leaders and coaches, to evaluate the effectiveness of the support systems for new teachers based on their needs. After

administrators have reviewed data and focused the needs of improvement, then realistic, attainable goals and strategies can be created (Platt, 2000). Dufour (2009) explained that if principals want their schools to be seen as effective, they must show evidence of their success. Evaluations of certain systems in a school can streamline its resources to focus on “what works” for program participants and improve outcomes. Ultimately, this process would help teachers grow professionally.

### **Summary of Literature Review**

After examining the literature, it can be seen that there are many views on what is considered effective mentoring, professional development, and collaboration. Most views explain that beginning teachers need effective support systems to help guide them into becoming high performing teacher. The literature has also shown that evaluations can help to identify if support systems are working or are in need of improvements.

Beginning teachers are entering schools daily and are in need of the proper supports. By providing quality support systems and periodically evaluating their practices, school administrators will reach the goal of raising teacher performance. Based on research, novice teachers have more confidence in their classroom when they are well supported in all areas. Evaluations are important because they provide researched data and provide a vehicle for improvement on the program level and the teacher level.

### **Implications**

This study will allow administrators at the school to analyze the results from the evaluation of their current support systems for new teachers. After the results are analyzed, then the administrators at the school will be able to improve the weaker areas



of the school's support systems for beginning teachers. By focusing on data, the administrators of Eastside School will be able to create modified and improved supports for beginning teachers focusing on peer mentoring, professional development, and collaboration. With the evaluation of the school's support systems, improvements can be made, strengths can be recognized and new teachers can transition into classrooms easier and the goal of effectively supporting beginning teachers may be reached.

The evaluation may be able to bring awareness to the school and supporters of the school. For example, Eastside School is partnered with a local college that has a teacher preparation program/student teaching service. Some of the findings from the evaluation may be shared with the college in order to better prepare student teachers graduating. This evaluation project also added to the research on evaluating new teacher support systems and may act as a model for other schools' evaluation processes in the district or city.

### **Summary**

Effective support systems are important for the teachers, students, and the school. An effective support system or program may improve new teacher performance by focusing on peer mentoring, professional development, and collaboration. Currently, the administrators at the school have not conducted a formal evaluation of new teacher supports. By evaluating the effectiveness of existing support systems for beginning teachers at this inner city, high-poverty school, it is hoped that the school will be able to improve the support systems for beginning teachers, which may improve their

performance and retain them. The evaluation of the school's teacher supports showed evidence of the perceptions of new teachers on the supports for its effectiveness.

## Section 2: The Methodology

### **Introduction**

The support systems peer mentoring, professional development, and collaboration for beginning teachers were evaluated at a small school in New York City. The formative, goals-based program evaluation examined the perspectives from beginning teachers and experienced teachers, by exposing the effectiveness of key components of the systems. It focused on achieving the program goals of effectively supporting beginning teachers and staff, peer mentoring, professional development, and collaboration. The guiding questions that drove this evaluation project on the support systems for beginning teachers at the school are as follows.

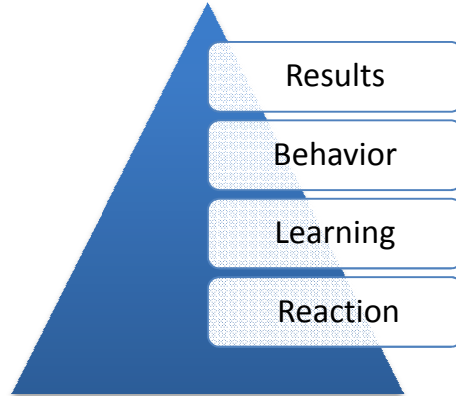
1. To what extent are the support systems for beginning teachers and staff being implemented?
2. What are the perceptions of beginning and experienced teachers regarding the effectiveness of new teacher support systems?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the support systems for beginning teachers and staff, specifically in achieving goals of effectively supporting beginning teachers?

This evaluation was a mixed method, using both qualitative and quantitative components. The majority of the study was qualitative, but the quantitative component added value and strength to the study. The findings were supported, by using a triangulating quantitative data from teacher surveys and qualitative data from teacher interviews. All participants who agreed to participate completed an anonymous survey

regarding their perspectives of the support systems strengths and weaknesses. Data from teacher surveys and teacher interviews were collected and analyzed concurrently. The data were triangulated in order to generate a series of findings. These findings lead to recommendations for school leaders to use in order to improve the support systems for new teachers at the school.

### **Evaluation Model**

For the purposes of this goal based program evaluation, Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Evaluation Model was selected as a guide. It aided in creating the evaluation survey and interview questions (Appendices B, C, and D) with some modifications. Kirkpatrick (2006) created a four-step approach or four levels approach to evaluations. Level 1 is Reaction. This level measures how the participants have reacted to the program they have participated in. At this level, the participants completed a survey based on the support systems given to beginning teachers at the school. Level 2 is Learning, this level measures what the participants have learned from the program. At this level, the participants identified what they have learned in interviews. Level 3 is Behavior. This level focuses on the extent the trainee's job behavior has changed as a result of the training. At this level, the participants focused on the quality of beginning teachers based on the support systems during surveys and interviews. Level 4 is Results. The final level and measures whether the application of training is achieving results. Results were analyzed by reviewing the survey and interview questions based on the perceptions of quality support systems at the school.



*Figure 1.* Kirkpatrick's Levels of Evaluation

Many evaluation authorities agreed that mixed-methods are a more accountable approach than just one approach alone, especially in program evaluations (Caracelli, 2006; Creswell, 2007; Green, 2007; Patton, 2008). Although there are several functions of a mixed-methods approach, for the purpose of this evaluation, triangulation increased the validity and also complement results from quantitative and qualitative data. Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007) explained triangulation.

Triangulation refers to the designed use of multiple methods, with offsetting or counteracting biases, in investigations of the same phenomenon in order to strengthen the validity of inquiry results. The core premise of triangulation as a design strategy is that all methods have inherent biases and limitations, so use of only one method to assess a given phenomenon will inevitably yield biased and limited results. However, when two or more methods that have offsetting biases are used to assess a given phenomenon, and the results of these methods converge

or corroborate one another, then the validity of inquiry findings is enhanced.

(p.123)

Triangulating data could produce insights that neither quantitative nor qualitative approaches could generate on its own (Rao & Woolcock, 2003). Rao and Woolcock (2003) explained that using a quantitative approach alone will provide stakeholders with numerical data on their program, and allows generalizations to be made about the program. Using a qualitative approach alone to program evaluations will provide stakeholders with more detailed, personal perceptions based experiences of participants in the program. The evaluation explored the support systems for new teachers to discover the participants' perceptions of the systems by using both qualitative data from interviews and quantitative descriptive survey data.

The program evaluation was based on Kirkpatrick's four levels of evaluation model (Kirkpatrick, 2001). This formative evaluation was based on the effectiveness of three support systems the school uses to guide new teachers: (a) peer mentoring, (b) professional development, and (c) collaboration. Based on the data from teacher surveys and teacher interviews, a concurrent triangulation strategy used to assess the effectiveness of the support systems. By using a concurrent data collection method, I was able to report the findings to administrators, for planning and possible modifications to the systems.

### **Setting and Sample**

The study took place at a small, urban elementary school in the northeast. The school houses 50 faculty members and about 300 students. The procedure for gaining access to the participants was convenient because I am a member of the school's faculty.

The school's principal or gatekeeper agreed to allow this study to take place at the site and allowed full access to any faculty members who agreed to participate in my study. At the site, I conducted data collection by administering a survey and interviews. The entities of interest for this evaluation were teachers who have participated as mentors or mentees in the school's support systems for beginning teachers, along with other veteran teachers and faculty.

The school's current support systems for new teachers are informal and include mentoring, professional development and collaboration. These support systems help to guide beginning teachers through their first few years of teaching. The school presently has about 13 beginning teachers working in classrooms from pre-kindergarten to fifth grade, out of a population of 50 teachers in classrooms from pre-kindergarten to fifth grade. The school has three mentors/professional developers that help to guide beginning teachers into their careers at the school. Beginning teachers are encouraged to participate in mentoring with peers and coaches, professional development and collaboration with colleagues on the grade. Other participants for the study were veteran teachers that also act as professional developers that participate in the school's support systems for new teachers. Veteran teachers also act as mentors, professional development leaders and grade facilitators. I invited all teachers and faculty to be participants by e-mailing out a survey, and only those who volunteer to return them will participate. Administrators were excluded from participating in the evaluation. As a researcher, I was also excluded from participating.

Although there are many different types of teachers working at the school, only teachers who have previously participated or are currently participating in the support systems were invited for interviews. Teachers ranged in class grade levels, and years of teaching. Ten teachers were invited for interviews based upon specified criteria to ensure at least two participants are signified from each type of teacher relevant for this evaluation: veteran/mentor teacher, beginning teacher and transfer teacher. I collected and analyzed data concurrently by completing the following timeline: First, I e-mailed an introductory invitation letter about the anonymous survey to beginning and veteran teachers that participate in any of the support systems for new teachers, to generate participant perspectives of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's support systems. Next, I began interviewing veteran teachers who act as mentors and professional developers as well as beginning teachers that have teaching for 1-3 years. Then I triangulated data from the collection to formulate findings and recommendations for local school use. The results of the evaluation were presented to school leaders.

### **Quantitative Context and Concurrent Strategy Data Collection**

The purpose of this evaluation (see Appendix C) was to explore the perceptions of the program by its participants, the effectiveness of the components of the support systems, and to determine if the program was equally effective. The survey was Internet-based, which is believed to be to be faster, easier, and more efficient to conduct than more traditional methods by means of phone or mail because it is done electronically (Schonlau, Fricker, & Elliott, 2002). Survey Monkey was used for the development of an



online survey and destination of collected data. Survey Monkey, an online survey web site, provides a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for the survey.

I decided to use an anonymous survey to collect quantitative data. By using an anonymous survey design, I gained a greater understanding of the participant's perceptions of systems effectiveness. Anonymity allows the subjects to give responses with higher accuracy (Durant et al., 2002). An anonymous survey also allowed the participants to generate honest answers about the support systems for beginning teachers. Respondents were assigned a random number between one and fifty to preserve the anonymity of the participants. The first page of the Survey Monkey survey provided the full consent form to participants. Included in the survey was a statement that verified that the completion of the survey indicates the participant's consent.

A survey instrument was modified and designed to collect data for this evaluation based on a similar study (Martin, Andrew, & Gilbert, 2009). Because some of the same items were used for this survey, permission was granted from the authors. The instrument was a web, self-administered survey that is cross-sectional. Section 1 allowed the respondent to provide background information, such as number of teaching years and grade position. Section 2 required the respondent to complete a checklist of occurrences of beginning teacher support systems. Section 3 of the survey required the respondent to review the beginning teacher support systems and to show the extent to which they agree if the supports are effective on a Likert-format scale from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. Section 4 allowed the respondents to explain and provide any comments or experiences they have had with the supports systems and to list up to four support

systems that show are effective, not effective, and any suggestions to better beginning teacher supports.

A pilot study was conducted to ensure content validity. Five teachers at a school located in the same building were asked to pilot the survey. All pilot participants were assured that the survey data would be anonymous, destroyed after my review, and would not be included in the final data analysis to protect participant rights. The pilot allowed me to notice any adjustments or modifications that will need to be made to the survey based on content and appropriate readability. No adjustments or modifications were made.

Data collection for the quantitative section took place at the Eastside School, in the library. After a faculty meeting, I briefly explained the purpose of the survey. I was clear in explaining that the individuals could voluntarily take the survey once the introductory letter (Appendix D) was been e-mailed to them. 50 participants received an introductory letter via e-mail explaining the purpose of the survey; it provided participants consent to publish findings, as well as the completion date for the survey via the web-based survey software, Survey Monkey. The program allowed for the tracking of respondents and for follow-up reminders to those non-respondents. Two weeks following the initial request for participation, a reminder letter to complete the survey was e-mailed to the faculty population. Each of the 33 participants was sent a confirmation that acknowledged their information was received and thanked them for participating in the study. Two weeks later, survey collection ended in order to commence analysis.

### **Qualitative Context and Concurrent Strategy Data Collection**

As an interviewer, I explained to each participant, that participants would not be rewarded or punished based on the answers to the questions. It was also explained to the interviewee that confidentiality would be ensured. Each teacher volunteered to participate in the interviews. Teacher interviews elicited teacher perceptions of the effectiveness of the school's beginning teacher and staff support systems. The interviews included a total of ten participants. The participants included the views of mentor teachers, transfer teachers, as well as beginning teachers that have taught for 1-3 years. Interviews were conducted with selected teachers and two different question guides were used (Appendices B & C).

The data collection for the qualitative section took place at the Eastside School, inside my classroom after school. The interviews lasted between 20 to 40 minutes each. A tape recorder was used as a form of recording the data. The participants were informed that all of their responses would be confidential to put participants at ease while respecting their privacy (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004). The interviews were conducted by following an interview guide (Appendices B & C). The interview guide also kept interviews focused and geared to a successful collection of data from all participants. The 10 participants were asked to give information about their experiences while participating in the support systems for beginning teachers and staff. The interview and follow up questions were focused on the support systems. The responses to questions provided

insight on the effectiveness of the support systems, strengths and weaknesses, and suggestions for improvements from the interviewee.

### **Role of Researcher**

For this evaluation, I interviewed and analyzed data based on the surveys and experiences of the participating teachers in the school's current support systems. I am currently a classroom teacher and an informal mentor to novice teachers at the site. Suvedi and Morford (2003) suggested that based on the type of the evaluation and nature of the evaluation questions to be answered; the evaluation can be conducted internally with existing staff members. I designed this evaluation and acted as collector of all data on site with the help of a field notebook that contained reflective and descriptive notes to accompany data that are audio recorded. I also analyzed surveys, interviews, and gathered findings and recommendations for local school use.

Because of my role at the school, I was not supportive or critical during any parts of my research. To protect the validity in data collection and analysis all data were triangulated and member checked. Because of professional and personal relationships with some participants, I used the same interview questions with every participant. I assured my professional role, as the researcher that all shared information will strictly serve for this evaluation. As researcher, I hold the responsibility of remaining impartial and reporting findings honestly.

### **Data Analysis and Validation Procedures**

All survey and interview data were collected, organized, and prepared for analysis (Creswell, 2003). Data from teacher surveys were analyzed to determine teacher

perceptions of the effectiveness of beginning teacher support systems. I designed to target the specific indicators of the evaluation from which frequency statistics was used to determine how teachers perceived beginning teacher support system components. Frequency statistics revealed the number and proportion of teacher responses to each question. All survey data were recorded into Survey Monkey. I analyzed the open-ended questions from the survey by reading the responses to identify themes. Next, codes were assigned to each theme. The codes were then tabulated as survey responses.

Weft QDA software were used to assist in the analysis of textual data such as interview transcripts. Each line of text from teacher interviews was coded via the code tree. Hatch (2002) explained coding allows, “organizing and interrogating data in ways that allow researchers to see patterns, identify themes, discover relationships, develop explanations, make interpretations, mount critiques, or generate theories” (p. 148). Interview transcripts and other information were ordered chronologically (Bogdan & Biklin, 1998). Initial coding was conducted by creating category codes and noting relationships noticed, along with keywords that respondents used numerously. Focused coding was conducted to remove and join coding categories to look for repeating ideas and larger themes that connect codes. The list was developed with coding categories, abbreviations and description. Once coding is complete, the data were examined for patterns relative to the project goals as a means of answering the guiding questions for the formative evaluation. Once the data were transcribed and coded, surveys and interview data were then merged to triangulate findings.

I merged teacher surveys and interviews to generate triangulated findings.

During data transformation, each frequency statistic was examined and generalized. Generalizations were labeled as either strengths or area for improvement. This process continued for all survey statistics. With the survey data transformed into qualitative data, the next step in data analysis was data triangulation. Using Weft QDA software, single-code searches will be conducted. I linked codes to strengths, improvements, and suggestions. Data were copied onto a spreadsheet and organized to generate patterns for findings. Comments were added, and the spreadsheet was used during the finding stage.

Several steps were taken to ensure the validity of the evaluation survey instrument. University experts reviewed and modified the survey. Content validity of the survey questions was based on couple of factors. One factor was the administrators' goals in providing peer mentoring, professional development, and collaboration to support beginning teachers. Another factor was that the survey was modified based on a similar study (Martin, Andrew, & Gilbert, 2009). Member checking was used to assure validity in interview data. Member checking involves confirming the research findings by seeking feedback from the research participants so they can verify accuracy and reliability of the findings (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Padgett, 2008). During the interviews, I restated or summarized information and then asked the participant to determine accuracy. After the completion of interviews participants were asked to review their own individual statements to confirm the context of their statements, and if the statements are not accurate, each participant had the option to modify their response.

### **Protection of Participant Rights**

To protect the participants' rights, I sought the approval of the University Review Board. I also provided the gatekeeper with an entry letter and the participants with a written and electronic consent form. In the consent form, the participants understood the purpose of the evaluation and the procedures. The consent form stated that information about participants would be only used for the study. The participants were informed that the data collected from the interviews would help to improve and monitor for the effectiveness of the school's current support systems for new teachers. By informing the interviewees of this information, they were open and honest with their answers. I also informed the interviewees that by masking their identities, I would protect the confidentiality their responses. Participants were assigned a specific number so that I could organize responses and the participants could still maintain their anonymity. The participants were aware that they could withdraw from participating at any time. Throughout the evaluation, all interview and survey materials were available for individual participants to review their own responses. Participants were aware that there are no right or wrong answers and that there would be no punishments or consequences given to them based on their answers. They were also able to ask any questions that they had about the process at any time.

### **Delimitations and Limitations**

The program evaluation was delimited by the geographical location or setting of the project. The program was only designed to examine one particular school at this one particular time. The program evaluation survey was only given to all teachers, but not to

administration. The interviews were conducted with a small sample of participants. The small sample could affect the generalizability of the project for the district and state.

The evaluation was limited because participation was purely voluntary. The limit on the number of participants may arise, which can be a problem because a small number of participants may lead to a limited amount of data. Every effort was made to get enough participants to volunteer. Another possible limitation could be that participants did not give the answers that might put them in a difficult position. Although they are protected, some participants may still find it better to keep silent or answer untruthfully. In addition, because I am a teacher and informal mentor at the school, it is recognized that having a shared experience with the participants could affect the analysis of the research findings. As a result, I hold the responsibility of remaining impartial and reporting findings honestly.

### **Findings**

Survey and interview data were analyzed after following the procedures described in the data collections and analysis sections. Quantitative surveys were distributed and results were collected by email in electric format through the Survey Monkey website, [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com). Survey Monkey's web-based survey software tracked and analyzed respondent's results. Frequency statistics was generated to determine the perceptions of teachers about beginning teacher support systems at the school. Qualitative interviews were scheduled with volunteer mentor, veteran and beginning teachers.

Concurrently, interviews were conducted; data were organized and, transcribed. Interview data was also coded to identify themes among interview results. Then, survey



and interview results were triangulated to find common themes to help answer the guiding questions.

### **Quantitative Findings**

The following section provides a quantitative analysis of the data obtained. The program evaluation aims at exploring the school's support systems for new teachers by evaluating the program's effectiveness and identifying methods for improvement. All the quantitative survey data were collected and analyzed using the Survey Monkey program.

#### **Quantitative Findings Regarding Teaching Background**

The first step in conducting the survey was to identify background information of the participants. The participants gave information about their teaching experience in terms of years and grade levels. It was important to identify the background information of the participants to establish the rate of change and extent of support systems for beginning and veteran teachers.

According to Table 1, the highest number of respondents taught for approximately four to six years. A little over a third of the respondents have taught nine years or more. Interestingly, this shows that there are a large number of teachers who have just crossed the threshold from being considered a beginning teacher to becoming a more experienced teacher and have encountered several support systems from the school. It also shows that there are a large number of teachers who have taught for many years, are experienced and are considered veteran teachers. This table also shows that less than a third of the teachers had worked at the school for three years or less.

*Table 1.**Years Taught at Eastside School*

Years Taught	Response Rate ( <i>n</i> =33)	Response Percentage
1	3	9.1%
2	4	12.1%
3	2	6.1%
4-6	11	33.3%
7-8	6	18.2%
9 or more	7	21.2%

The survey results revealed the number of years a teacher taught at Eastside School and in their teaching careers. Slightly more than 40% of respondents had taught for more than three years and had worked at the school for their entire career. About 30% of respondents had taught for over three years but were new to this school due to transfers from other schools. About 30% of respondents were new to the school and new to teaching. The majority of the participants were new to the school, the program and its support systems.

The background of the respondents also included the grade level at which they taught. Over 60% reported that they taught Grades 3 to 5, about 20% reported teaching in grades one and two and 20% reported teaching in preschool or kindergarten. The majority of respondents taught the older students and the majority of those respondents were veteran teachers.

## **Mentoring**

The participants identified the extent of mentoring as a support system at the school. About one-third of the respondents had mentored a new teacher; whereas a little over two-thirds had never taken part in mentoring a teacher. The data show, that most of the teachers were new and had not been involved in peer mentoring. One-third of the mentoring teachers worked with more than one new teacher and the reasons for this are unclear.

It was also important to establish whether respondents had been mentored while teaching at the school. Almost 40% of the teachers have had a mentor teacher or had a mentor in the past while teaching at the school. Five of the 12 teachers who responded having a mentor were beginning teachers. There are nine beginning teachers currently working at the school. The data display that there were few beginning teachers who actual had a mentor. Seventy-five percent of the teachers surveyed indicated that they had not had a mentor at the school. Peer mentoring is a one of the foundations of the school's support system, and according to the data not many teachers have had experience with this support, but the majority of the 9 beginning teachers have experienced this support. The reasons why the other four beginning teachers did not experience mentoring are unknown.

The survey results also show whether the participant had or had not personally experienced certain components of mentoring (see Table 2). More than half of the respondents claimed that they had not had personal experience actively meeting at least three times in a week with a mentor. Although some of the respondents had mentors,

many were not able to spend a lot of time with their mentor. The lack of available time for meeting with their mentors may be contributing to the small percentage of mentors on the staff.

When a mentor and beginning teachers meet, they are asked to talk about student work, curriculum, behavior management strategies and classroom environment. About 46% of beginning teachers claimed that they had not had personal experience in this area. Even though about 46% of the beginning teachers spent little time with their mentors, it is likely their collaboration helped them to acquire knowledge in many required areas. More than half of beginning teachers indicated that mentor teachers provided useful feedback to beginning teachers. The data show that although there was likely insufficient time spent with mentors.

*Table 2*

*Participation in Mentoring Activities*

Mentor Support	Response Count (n=33)	Teachers Experienced Support	New Teacher (n=9)	Veteran Teacher (n=24)
Participated an orientation	12	38.7%	1	11
Had an assigned mentor	12	38.7%	5	7
Participated as a mentor	10	32.3%	0	10
Met with mentor weekly	11	37.9%	3	8
Mentor related important matters	13	46.4%	2	11
Received feedback from mentor	17	58.6%	5	12

The survey also indicated what teachers thought was effective about mentoring as a support system. Over 60% of all teachers felt that mentor teacher and new teacher

meetings are effective. About half of the total respondents felt that the guidelines and resources provided to beginning teachers from mentor teachers concerning student work, analysis of school curriculum, behavior management strategies, and classroom environment strategies were effective, which include over half of the beginning teachers. The data show that the majority of the staff thought that new teachers were benefiting from the mentor resources. About 65% of the total respondents felt that partnerships between mentor teachers and beginning teachers at this school were effective. It appears that mentoring is somewhat effective support system at the school, but could benefit from some improvements because not all of the beginning teachers are experiencing the support.

### **Collaboration**

Both beginning and veteran teachers identified the extent of collaboration as a support system at the school. In order to identify the extent of time available for staff to interact and plan with other teachers, the survey asked how much time teachers were officially allocated by their schools to plan and collaborate with other teachers, and provided four options. About 45% (4 of whom were beginning teachers) reported that being allocated between 1 and 2 hours per week, about 33% reported that the time was between 3 and 4 hours, and about 21% reported between 5 and 6 hours. Teachers with more time allocated than 6 hours may be available for professional development roles as well.

*Table 3**Time Allocated for Planning*

Hours Per Week	Response Count ( <i>n</i> =33)	Response Percentage
1-2 hours	15	45.45%
3-4 hours	11	33.33%
5-6 hours	7	21.21%

In reviewing the results, 79% of the total respondents had experienced collaborating with veteran and beginning teachers to share ideas about analysis of student work, school curriculum, behavior management strategies, and classroom environment strategies. Six out of the nine who experienced this support were beginning teachers. It is interesting to note that a large number of respondents gained information and knowledge from each other while collaborating, which included beginning teachers and veteran teachers. 70% of the total respondents claimed they had personal experience observing veteran teachers and being observed by veteran teachers. Of the nine beginning teachers at the school only five reported that they had observed or had been observed another teacher. The results indicate a lack of consistency in support systems across the staff as a whole, and specifically among beginning teachers at the school. About 20% of the respondents claimed that they had beneficial personal experiences with collaborating about classroom procedures with veteran teachers. Nearly all teachers surveyed indicated that they had reviewed and discussed publications and resources provided by the school. The results show that beginning and veteran teachers collaborated in large and small

groups to view printed information pertaining to teaching more often than they spent in reviewing personal classroom teaching techniques.

*Table 4*

*Experience With Collaboration*

Collaboration Support (Collab)	Response Count (n=33)	Teachers that Experienced Support	New Teacher (n=9)	Veteran Teacher (n=24)
Collab/Co-planning time	21	70.0%	6	15
Collab/ Important matters	23	79.3%	6	17
Collab/Observation	21	70.0%	5	16
Collab/Feedback	21	70.0%	5	16
Collab/Materials	15	50.0%	3	12

The survey responses above provided some insight about teachers' views of collaboration as a means of support. Other data from the survey showed that fewer than half of the teachers felt that planning time provided for collaborating between experienced teachers and beginning teachers was adequate. Over half of the teachers felt that special publications (handbooks, guides, lessons, handouts, other materials) provided to collaborating teachers, and beginning teachers were effective. Approximately 40% of teachers felt that observing fellow collaborating teachers execute lessons as professional development was effective.

## **Professional Development**

The participants identified the extent of professional development as a support system at the school. The survey also considered the extent and significance of professional development instruction for the purpose of enhancing effectiveness and proficiency of teachers especially the new ones. The majority (85%) of beginning teachers indicated that they were allocated 1 to 2 hours a week. Only two first-year teachers received between 4 and 6 hours of professional development per week. Twelve participants did not appear in any of the categories because some teachers are cluster or elective teachers and do not receive professional development. Also, some teachers were allocated either more than 6 hours or less than 1 hour in a week. Some teachers had less or more time based on their years of experience, and others were unsure of the amount of time or did not receive time at all. Survey results indicated that the majority of the respondents had been allocated time for professional development, but the majority of teachers only received between 1 and 2 hours of professional development a week.

Approximately 53% felt that they received professional development based on their needs. Six respondents were beginning teachers, seven respondents who had taught for 4-6 years, and eight respondents who had taught for more than 7 years.



Table 5

*Experience with Professional Development*

Professional Development Support (PD)	Response Count (n=33)	Teachers Who Experienced Support	New Teacher (n=9)	Veteran Teacher (n=24)
Received PD	21	70.0%	6	15
Predetermined PD	13	46.4%	3	10
PD Based on Needs	15	53.6%	3	12
School Based PD	19	65.5%	5	14
Outside PD	20	66.7%	7	13

Nearly two-thirds of the total respondents felt that the professional development provided for teachers was effective. Approximately three-quarters of the total respondents indicated that professional development conducted by other teachers employed at the school was effective. About 80% of the total respondents felt that the professional development conducted by professionals outside of the school was effective.

**Overall Rating of Support Systems and Strengths and Weaknesses**

The quality of the support that beginning teachers and staff were receiving at school was evaluated, by looking at the overall rating and the strengths and weaknesses of the teacher support systems. The survey provided an opportunity for the respondents to rate the systems and to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the specific supports. The survey asked respondents to rate the strategies by indicating if the support systems were *very weak*, *weak*, *adequate*, and *very strong*.

*Table 6**Teacher Overall Rating of Support Systems*

Rating	Response Count (n = 33)	Teachers Who Experienced Support	New Teacher (n = 9)	Veteran Teacher (n = 24)
Very weak	0	0.0%	0	0
Weak	11	36.67%	4	7
Adequate	18	60.00%	4	14
Very strong	2	6.67%	1	1

Even though 60% of the respondents indicated that they felt the supports were adequate, there was sufficient evidence to suggest room for improvement. The results also show a discrepancy in the perceptions of the respondents. The majority of veteran teachers felt the supports were adequate while fewer new teachers perceived the supports as adequate. This phenomenon is also discussed in depth in the qualitative section.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses**

The respondents completed an open-ended section of the survey. Thirty-three respondents completed the survey and identified strengths and weaknesses about the support systems for teachers at the school. Table 7 displays what the respondents noted as the most commonly identified weaknesses. For example, the most significant findings of weaknesses were lack of consistency of supports and lack of time. Table 8 displays what the respondents noted as the most commonly identified strengths. The most significant findings of strengths were helpful school community and positive collaboration.

*Table 7**Most Commonly Identified Weaknesses*


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Identified Weakness	Number of Teachers (n=33)
Lack of Time	7
Lack of Consistency	7
Beginning Teacher Necessities	6
Mentoring	6
Engaging Professional Development	6
Administration Communication	5
Insufficient Resources	5
None Listed	4
Meaningful Collaboration	3
Knowledge of Curriculum	2

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*Table 8**Most Commonly Identified Strength*


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Identified Strength	Number of Teachers (n=33)
Helpful School Community	15
Positive Collaboration	13
Sharing of Materials	11
Support from other Teachers	7
None listed	5
Effective Mentoring	3

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### **Respondents' Suggestions**

Survey respondents had the opportunity to list suggestions to improve the teacher support systems at the school. The suggestions are discussed in the qualitative section along with the suggestions from the interview participants.

### **Qualitative Findings**

The following section provides a qualitative analysis of the data obtained through the interviews of 10 teachers. The interviews included the perceptions of three veteran teachers who acted as mentors/professional developers, four beginning teachers who had taught for 1-3 years. The interviews also included the perceptions of two transfer/veteran who had been teaching for more than three years, but were new to Eastside School, and one veteran teacher who had taught for more than three years and had only taught at the Eastside School.

There were six areas that emerged from the data analysis. There were themes that derived from each area (Table 9)

Table 9

*Themes*

Frame of Analysis	Categories	Theme
Extent of Support	Types of support systems received	Mentoring the Life Savoir Useful Informal Collaboration Irrelevant Professional Development Increase Supports for Everyone
Effectiveness of Supports	Quality of Teaching	Planning to be Effective Teachers Effective Classroom Management
	Evaluations	Uninformative Observations Reaching Student Goals
Support Strengths	School Culture	A Comforting School Community
Support weaknesses	Roles	Multiple Roles for Teachers
	Minimal support	Inconsistent Support
		New Supports for Teachers

**Types of Support Systems Received**

Types of support systems emerged from the data and showed that teachers expressed the amount and what types of support systems received. The implementation of support systems for beginning teachers and staff was perceived as limited across the three different teacher types that were interviewed. Recurrent references to the different kinds of supports by the participant's mentors showed themes: mentoring as a life savior; useful informal collaboration; irrelevant professional development; and limited supports.

**Mentoring the Life Savior.** The participants, both beginning and veteran teachers, made similar statements about receiving mentors. Mentoring was indicated by most of the respondents, but the amount and frequency were not consistent. The majority of the interviewees explained that they received mentors, but most of the mentors were

also teachers and held several other positions in the school building. They discussed that some of their needs were not being met. All of the veteran teachers confirmed mentoring was not executed properly because all of the mentors also held other positions and mentored several teachers. This presented problems with time availability and inconsistent mentoring efforts. Participant A, beginning teacher stated:

“I had a great mentor teacher, and she helped me out a lot, but I felt that she couldn’t provide me with much time, because she wore many hats at school. When I had questions sometimes, I had to ask other teachers on my grade or just Google it.”

Participant B, another beginning teacher explained, “I received a mentor in the beginning of the year, and then we began to meet less and less. Participant C, the third beginning teacher briefly said, “I did get a mentor, but she was also a mentor to a few teachers. It was very hard to get a hold of her. Sometimes I had to email her my questions when I got home.”

Some teachers were not officially placed with a mentor but were asked to refer any questions they had to other teachers on their grade.

Participant F, transfer veteran teacher stated:

Although I have taught a few years, I would have appreciated being partnered with a veteran teacher at this school to show me the ropes. I was placed on a grade with two other teachers that were new to the school too. It was hard for them to answer any of my questions; we were all in the same boat.

All three veteran teachers agreed that they mentored new teachers. Their perceptions did match those of the new teachers. Mentor teachers expressed that although they met with all of their beginning teachers to explain routines, management of classrooms, and expectations of the school, they rarely had a great amount of time to do so. Participant I, a mentor teacher, staff developer, and classroom teacher said, “Our school is small and the same people are asked to do several things. I met with my new teacher when I had the time, but I know I could have done better.” Veteran teachers who were involved with mentoring others complained about mentor teachers not being compensated for their positions. Veteran teachers also commented on not being as prepared, as they would have like to have been in mentor training.

**Useful Informal Collaboration.** Both beginning and veteran teachers expressed positive statements towards collaboration with other teachers in the building. They discussed how it was beneficial for them to gain knowledge from other members of the school faculty. Collaboration allowed support teachers, cluster teachers, beginning and veteran teachers to have a chance to learn from each other about how to improve lesson plans and lesson execution. It also gave the teachers a chance to talk how to manage students, how to adjust to the school culture, and how to overcome the challenges of teaching.

Participant C, beginning teacher stated:

I would say 90% of the people in the building are very collaborative and want to work with others easily. I felt free to ask the other teachers on my grade about things I didn't understand. I also planned units with the science teacher and the

ESL teacher. The science teacher even visited my room and demonstrated a few lessons.

Participant A, beginning teacher explained:

Working with the other teachers on my grade was awesome, they were so helpful, and we meet after school, during planning periods, and I was able to call on teachers at home when I had questions. I learned behavior management techniques, and how to properly plan my lessons, we also vented.

Participant G, one transfer veteran teacher confirmed that collaboration among teachers at the school was the best way for her to gain support from the school.

My grade team is awesome, we work really well together, and I learned a lot from them, they also listen to me about things that I have done that have worked for students in the past.

Participant E, was the only transfer veteran teacher that expressed negative feelings towards collaboration as a support system. She stated, “ I think that I would have worked better with the pre-k team teachers, my grade team and I just didn’t get along”.

All of the mentor teachers agreed with the other participants by expressing that collaboration among the teachers and staff in the school was a support system that helps everyone involved.

Collaboration is a support system in which most teachers participated at the school. Although it is generally not seen as a support system, the faculties at the school are required to collaborate with each other. Collaboration sheets were filled out each time that faculty members meet to support each other. The forms ensure that the support is



systematic, and each faculty member is held responsible for their collaboration efforts. Teachers were able to build relationships with each other that fostered enrichment, encouragement, and knowledge. New and veteran teachers described learning from each other and supporting each other in their daily needs as educators.

**Irrelevant Professional Development.** The participants, both beginning and veteran teachers, explained that professional development at the school was provided, but the extent to which it was provided was insufficient. Most of the participants were critical of their professional development experiences, which included three out of the four participating beginning teachers. Participants agreed that the professional development was the same for every teacher. “Most of the school attends the same professional development workshops each month and they take place of faculty meeting sometimes. We all sit there learning the same thing”. explained Participant A. Participants also mentioned the workshop’s usefulness varied among teachers.

The majority of both beginning and veteran teacher participants agreed that the professional development was prevalent at the school, but was not meaningful for individual teachers or groups of teachers. Participant I, veteran mentor teacher noted, “We receive PD [Professional Development] on many things, but the mentors and staff developers don’t receive PD on how to be a mentor or staff developer. Participant C, beginning teacher added, “I went to the same workshop twice, I learned the same information twice. I don’t even know if the administrators realized that.” They also pointed out the teachers received professional development at school, taught by other teachers and outside educators. Teachers rarely traveled to offsite professional

development workshops. Some mentor veteran teachers explained that outside workshops were more frequent in past years, but had decreased in the past two years.

**Increase Supports for Everyone.** Participants, both beginning and veteran teachers, explained that they all felt as if they could have received more support. They described having to resort to individual practices to gain the knowledge that they needed to be able to meet the high demanding expectations of teaching. Many of the individuals shared that they asked other colleagues at other schools for resources and asked them questions about information that they needed.

All four beginning teachers felt that the extent of their support was limited, and both veteran and transfer teachers felt as that they had received some appropriate supports, but could use more. Stated Participant D, veteran transfer teacher:

When I first got to this school, we had a literacy coach

And a math coach, which was great but it only lasted for one year, after that I relied on the staff developers at the school.

“It is hard being a staff developer, mentor and teacher” shared by Participant J, veteran teacher. According to Participant H, veteran teacher, “Every year we receive support systems for new teachers and staff, but they change from year to year. It never stays the same.” The participants all mentioned the lack of consistency in the system of support.

The participants also expressed that they had known other schools that have provided new teachers with official mentors that have regularly set meeting times. Some participants mentioned that they had also, known other schools to personalize

professional development, set meetings for support groups to discuss challenges and even plan social events for new teachers to vent and get to know each other.

### **Quality of Teaching**

Quality of teaching appeared as the next indicator to emerge from the findings. Overall the participants spoke with concern about how effective the support systems they have received had prepared them to become effective teachers. The most frequent references to faculty needs were in the areas: planning to be effective teachers and effective classroom management

**Planning to be Effective Teachers.** All teachers surveyed expressed a need for more training and support for planning and delivering classroom lessons. New teachers also thought the training experienced teachers received in the past was more effective in preparing them for the reading and math curricula. New teachers expressed frustration when planning these curricula due to their inexperience and lack of training in these fields. Participant A, beginning teacher expressed her views on planning and the need for more training in this area:

Everyone plans differently, but being new, I would like to see an experienced teacher's plan. I would like to have them review my plans, and my charts before I deliver a lesson to my students. I mean, even if the new teachers had a group that met once in a while just to plan together I think that would help us a lot.

Some respondents said that they often did their planning in conjunction with their co-teachers when there are two or more teachers present. Some also complained about the

lack of support for teachers who work in classrooms with two or more teachers.

Participant B, beginning teacher stated “There should be more workshops on how to plan and who will teach what, when there are two teachers in a room. I asked a few times and I was told to use “Google” and “YouTube.”

All respondents referred to the existence of one integrated co-teaching classroom for each grade and expressed a desire to have more professional development on how to improve the quality of those classrooms. Participant J, veteran teacher mentioned, “Sometimes I feel uneasy about it because I am not sure if we are doing this correctly, especially with them coming to look at how you planned for differentiation and questioning.” All participants expressed a need for more support in the area of planning.

**Effective Classroom Management.** All four of the beginning teachers reported that they had received support from mentors and other teachers on the topic of student management in the classroom. Three of the four beginning teachers explained that mentors have given them handouts on techniques and strategies about how to modify behavior in their classrooms. “Administrations will look at how well your students are engaged while you are teaching,” stated Participant I, veteran teacher.

Because of the location of the school, a low-income section of an inner city community in the Bronx, the students tend to have a high rate of behavior problems. Many beginning teachers have mentioned that they would like to have more professional development on how to deal with troublesome students in the classroom so that they can become quality teachers that have the attention of everyone in the class. Participant B, third year beginning teacher said:

I think that I could reach so many more students if I knew some ways to relate to them. I try, but the techniques that I have aren't working. I get embarrassed and frustrated when I see that some of the other teachers know how to handle their kids. Maybe a workshop or teacher share meeting about student management would help.

The majority of the veteran teachers including the mentors all agreed that more support on behavior management would be beneficial to them. Participant H, veteran expressed: "There is a need for something extra for teachers that struggle with behavior and many teachers have asked for it, but we've only received one workshop in the last year".

### **Evaluations**

The findings revealed themes related to teacher evaluations and observations and the lack of training or supports provided on the topics. Most of the participants had negative perceptions about the supports systems that are provided regarding teacher evaluations and observations. Participants expressed that they were anxious about how they would be evaluated based on informal and formal observations from administration. Respondents indicated a lack of enough support for teachers in the areas: Uninformative Observations and Student Achievement.

**Uninformative Observations.** The majority of beginning and veteran teachers described that during observations, administrators review all aspects of a teacher's lesson, and many explained that they did not feel adequate while they were being observed.

Observations take place throughout the year for many teachers. It was indicated that beginning teachers are observed several times a year while veteran teachers are observed less. Teachers reported that there was a need for more training in certain areas pertaining to teacher observations and evaluations.

Teachers reported that Eastside School uses the Danielson framework as a form for observing teachers. All teachers know that observations will be more systematic, and they will be possibly judged in areas that they are not strong in and may not have received proper training. Participant A, beginning teacher disclosed, "... because I don't know that much about Danielson, I feel inadequate." Participant I, mentor teacher added, "We should be getting more professional development on things like that, and it is essential, so that you're prepared." It was suggested that teachers and administrators have more conversations about observations and evaluations. Most of the interviewees agreed that the topic of evaluations and observations were somewhat secretive and mysterious.

**Reaching Student Goals.** All respondents agreed that student achievement was directly impacted by teacher support systems provided at the school. Most agreed that it showed how effective the supports are. "The whole reason we are here is for the students; we want to become effective teachers so we can have effective students". stated Participant G, transfer teacher. It was mentioned that more focus is being placed on the analysis of student work and data. Participant E, transfer teacher said:

Recently there has been a shift in analyzing student work and data to raise the level of student achievement, we need to keep up with the times and gain the proper training to keep up with the new standards. We will get a little PD here and

there, and we end up knowing a little bit about everything, but not enough to make us feel like we are experts on one topic. I know that I need more help with dissecting student work to raise the level of a kid's achievement.

Participant J, mentor teacher also explained:

I have spoken to my mentees about reviewing student work because that is how we are judged as educators at this school. During common planning I spent 45 minutes on how to improve student scores on assessments and schoolwork.

Participant D, transfer teacher added, "We are so concerned with the state test and the student scores, I am sure that we can raise the scores if we analyzed their work more."

All of the individuals reported that they would like more assistance in the area of correcting, monitoring, and analyzing student work.

### **School Culture**

Most of the interviewees agreed that the school community was a contributor to teacher support strength. Almost all the beginning and veteran teachers had positive views towards the school's culture. The most frequent references cited the helpful school community as a valued support system.

**A Comforting School Community.** Interaction among the teaching staff made it easy for new teachers to glean information from others. "The teachers here work well together, and we can ask each other questions. Most people have an open door policy". stated Participant A, beginning teacher in her second year. Both veteran and beginning teachers reported that they gained a substantial amount of knowledge and support just by talking to other teachers. The majority of the beginning teacher participants explained

that even if they were not trained or did not have a mentor, they felt very comfortable getting information from other teachers from the same teaching grade or from others in the school. All three mentor teachers agreed, because the school had such a helpful community, they felt some of their stress was relieved. "I felt a little guilty at times, because I knew they could ask the teachers on their grade and the grade teachers would be willing to help!" explained Participant H. All of the beginning teachers also agreed that the support from the faculty as a whole contributed to clarifying many area of teaching for them. Participant G, transfer teacher also confirmed that the helpful community of the school made her transition easier. She stated:

I didn't get a mentor. I believe that administration felt that only new teachers are in need of mentors. Now being my second year, still a new person to the school, I see there's a professional part and then there's the personal part that you have with your colleagues. I think that I adjusted well to the school because I had positive experiences in both parts.

Not every participant found that the school possessed a helpful community. According to Participant E, transfer teacher, the community was unhelpful and she referred to it as a weakness. She explained:

I took a break from teaching for a few years to raise my son. Then I ended up transferring here. It was hard and it still is hard, I feel like the other teachers around me know so much and they are not willing to share what they know...



With only 1 out of 10 interviewees seeing the community of the school as a weakness, the great majority of the individuals felt that learning from each other in the school's helpful community was an important support system asset.

### **Roles**

Participants described several weaknesses related to the support systems at Eastside School. Data collected during the interviews revealed that the support systems would better serve beginning and veteran teachers by minimizing the roles and responsibilities of teachers holding multiple positions and by increasing the consistency of certain types of teacher support systems.

**Multiple Roles for Teachers.** Beginning and veteran participants felt because of the small size of the school, there were not enough people to hold all of the needed positions at the school. It was reported that several of the support team members, like staff developers, mentors, and grade leaders all hold several positions. Participant I, veteran mentor teacher said:

It is hard to give the appropriate amount of time to anything that I do, I have to plan for my students, prepare model lessons for my mentees, meet with them, prepare for curriculum mapping meetings, prepare to teach in professional development workshops, and I am on the school safety team. Sometimes there is not enough time in the day to do the things I intend to do. Sometimes there isn't enough time in the week to do any extra unless it was scheduled.

Beginning teachers did express empathy for mentor teachers because of the heavy demands placed on them, but none had a wealth of knowledge about how extremely hard

it was to balance all of the roles, because none of the beginning teachers could serve as mentors. Mentor teachers are asked to serve as mentors without compensation and hardly any extra time provided to be effective mentors. All veteran mentors expressed their frustration with trying to maintain multiple roles as school leaders, teachers that work with students daily, and mentors for other teachers. Participant H, mentor teacher explained why some supports systems were not successful:

We are not compensated, but it is an extra job. We have to log in the hours that we spend mentoring, we are supposed to provide feedback to the mentees, but I don't always get to execute those things, because I am so busy. But, I do think that what we do would be more beneficial if like I said previously, we were a provided support to beginning teachers without any other responsibilities.

Participant J, mentor teacher expressed why having several roles led to a lack of time:

It is hard not being available. You might not always be available especially if I wear a lot of hats like I do. The most beneficial part of being a mentor is being available to the teachers whenever they need you. Unfortunately, at our school, it's a program not a full-time position.

All three beginning teachers agreed that the allocation of several roles and responsibilities to certain staff members was a weakness in the support systems.

Participant A, beginning teacher suggested, "My mentor did the best that she physically could, but if being a mentor was a position alone, I know all of us would have gained a lot more." Participant F, beginning teacher explained, "It would have helped if our mentors and staff/ professional developers were not also classroom teachers, AIS

teachers, and other things.” Beginning and veteran teachers both felt that some of the other support systems were affected because of the several roles that mentors had, which had an impact on the amount of time they spent with beginning teachers.

**Inconsistent Supports.** Both beginning and veteran participants reported consistency to be a major weakness related to the support systems provided by the school. According to Participant C:

I think that I would benefit more by meeting with my mentor more. At the beginning of the year our meetings were scheduled, now they’re not. I feel like meetings are not consistent. Sometimes, I just want to reflect on the day or a particular lesson. Sometimes I need ideas for my observation lessons.

The perception of inconsistency throughout several support systems was noted several times. Time and yearly changes seem to be connected to the lack of consistency throughout the support systems for all teachers at the school. Participant B, beginning teacher reported:

Sometimes I feel like I meet with my mentor regularly and sometimes I feel like I don’t, but I do think it is a problem if I ask my mentor something and she waits a week to follow up on it.

Because mentors held several roles and responsibilities at the school, mentors might not be able to provide a comprehensive service to new teachers. Participant D, transfer teacher explained:

We have professional development at the most a couple of times a month, and all day twice a year, but it would be nice if PD was scheduled and based on your needs or a groups of teachers' needs. I have heard of other schools doing that.

Participant H, mentor teacher also stated, "I think that our school does provide support systems and we all work hard for each other, however we and myself especially must improve on being consistent in everything that we do." All participants felt that consistency of support systems would make the school support systems more structured, and everyone would know what would be expected from each support effort.

Participant E, transfer teacher expressed:

At the beginning of the year, we had faculty conferences; then all of a sudden, we stopped having them for like.... three months. There was no explanation, nothing. We finally got our faculty conferences back. I don't know if it is official or not, but I know that when I get to meet with the whole school and the principals, it is always beneficial.

The majority of all participants agreed that the lack of consistency was a concern for the whole staff. Based on the survey and interview data, mentor meetings, faculty meetings, curriculum selection, scheduled professional development, follow-ups, feedback, meetings, and even observations from principals were sporadic and were not consistent. The reasons for such inconsistency could be due to the lack of time for faculty who have many responsibilities, yearly changes in ideas and plans or because the program had not been previously evaluated to point out the weaknesses and areas for improvement. All participants reported that they would like to see more consistency with

curriculum selection, time management, faculty meeting, administrator conferences, mentor relationships, professional developments, and feedback from mentor and administrators.

### **Minimal Support**

The final area that was revealed was the lack of some supports or minimal supports at Eastside School. One major theme emerged from the interviews, and that was the need for other types of support such as beginning teacher group meetings, new teacher guides and vertical planning. Beginning and new teachers expressed they would like to see new and different types of support systems implemented at the school.

**New Supports for Teachers.** The majority of beginning teacher participants shared that there was a need for additional supports to be implemented at the school. Beginning teachers compared themselves to new teachers at other schools in the borough and city and felt like they were missing some crucial support systems at their school. New teachers made suggestions about support systems that they wished were provided at Eastside School.

They requested a more involved orientation meeting that would explain more about the school, its mission statement, ideology, curriculum goals, and other vital information for beginning teachers. Some respondents favored a more involved working relationship with mentoring teachers. Other suggestions included fewer obligations for mentoring teachers and additional pay for the additional work and social outings where teachers can share ideas in an informal setting.

Participant F, beginning teacher stated:

I have friends that explained to me that their school provided them with a new teacher orientation a few days before the school year began. They had the opportunity to tour the entire school, learn about the school environment, sit with an assistant principal for a question answered session, and have a head start to set up their rooms. When I got here, I didn't get that... I was told there was a new teacher meeting that I needed to attend and when I got there, I only need to provide the payroll secretary with personal info to set up my direct deposit.

One mentor teacher explained that there had been a discussion about new teacher orientations at the beginning of the year, but it was never implemented and only talked about during a grade facilitator meeting.

Participant B suggested:

Mentor teachers should hold one or two positions. Maybe have mentoring hours in the morning and hold another position in the afternoons because, I loved when my mentor sat with me after my principal observation and explained all the things I did right, then she talked about all the things I needed to work on. But she was only able to do this when she had the time.

All four beginning teachers mentioned that they knew of other schools where mentors were mentors/classroom support teachers, or positioned as coaches/ mentors.

Participant B, beginning teacher said:

Maybe buddy a first-year teacher with a second or third-year teacher. I think that partnership would foster relatable conversations. Sometimes a new teacher may

not always feel comfortable speaking with a seasoned teacher about certain things because they may look at you in a weird way.

Veteran teachers concurred with beginning teachers about adding a few new support systems to the school. Participant H, mentor teacher explained, “I believe that we should incorporate a formal official mentor program. I also think that the mentors should be compensated for their work.” All of the mentor teachers agreed that they should be trained properly in mentoring new teachers. They also suggested that mentoring should be a separate position. A mentor teacher suggested that the school should incorporate scheduled outings so that all teachers can gather, share and vent to each other.

Participant J, another mentor said:

I really feel that the administrators should be seen more. They need to be used as a support system also. All of them were teachers at one point. They have a lot to offer. Maybe out of the three administrators, they divide the staff and have conferences for questions and feedback.

The school may give new teachers and veteran teachers the extra guidance they need to meet the demands of being successful quality teachers, by adding new support systems to the existing successful support systems.

### **Quantitative and Qualitative Suggestion**

Generally, the majority of the of all survey and interview participants suggested allocating more consistent time for planning with highly effective mentors, and other teachers on the staff, hiring a literacy or math coach, providing more time for engaging workshops and professional development. The majority of participants making

suggestions were beginning teachers. Both beginning and veteran participants also suggested that beginning teachers have an opportunity to view the school in the summer during orientation and attend professional development and workshops before the beginning of the school year.

Both beginning and veteran teachers suggested that all beginning teachers should be placed with an official school mentor. The majority of participants also suggested that new teachers, mentors, and administration should evaluate the mentor program regularly. Beginning and veteran teachers also explained that more workshops on students with special needs students and English language learners, and more meetings with administrators were needed.

Listed below are the suggestions given by the participants from the interviews and surveys. The following suggestions were generated from more than one respondent.

- A better orientation program that outlines what is expected of teachers, explains what administrators will provide for support, states what the school mission and curriculum are about and what the students are like.
- Have better incentives for mentoring teachers and fewer ancillary responsibilities to free up their time for mentoring.
- A closer working relationship and more time spent between mentoring teachers and their co-teachers.
- More school-sponsored social outings for teachers to help them get better acquainted and informally share ideas with administrators.



- A periodic review and upgrade of the school's mentoring program, including feedback from participants.

Referring back to constructive developmental theory, if administration decides to implement some of the suggestions listed above, perhaps they will provide teachers with different developmental orientations in different forms. Thus, providing maximum growth opportunities for new and veteran teachers (Drago-Severson, 2011). Also, teachers at the school would be able to pass through Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1986) five stages of professional development, which passes novice teachers to becoming experts with the appropriate support systems.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this program evaluation was to collect data that would explore perspectives from beginning teachers and experienced teachers, by exposing the effectiveness of key components of the teacher support systems for beginning teachers including achieving goals of effectively supporting beginning teachers, focusing on peer mentoring, professional development, and collaboration.

By using this mixed method design, I explored a school's support systems for new teachers and staff by evaluating the current system's effectiveness and providing means to improve the program. By using both quantitative and qualitative methods for this evaluation, I was able to obtain in-depth information. The outcomes of the study documented progress and identified areas for improvement.

The findings from both the survey and interviews suggested that most of the beginning teachers and staff did receive peer mentoring, collaboration and professional development as support systems at the school.

Responses associated with the first guiding question about implementation of support systems have shown that the extent of the supports is what seems to be irregular and inconsistent in relation to routines and procedures based on teacher input. Not all of the beginning teachers receive the same necessary supports when connected to types and length. The majority of the veteran teachers also noticed a lack of consistency with the teacher supports that they received. The participants indicated the need for consistent support systems related routines, specifically meetings with mentors and procedures for all teachers at the school. For example, teachers are not receiving consistent feedback from other teachers, mentors, and administration.

Responses associated with the second guiding question about perceived effectiveness of the systems have shown that the support systems at the school are in need of improvement. The system should be formal, routine and consistent for all teachers involved. The findings also suggest a need for more engaging professional development that is based on the needs of both beginning and veteran teachers. Results indicate a need for more time allocated for professional development/training on special needs students, English language learners, curriculum and planning.

Responses associated with the third guiding question about strengths and weaknesses of the systems have shown that although teachers felt that the supports at the school overall were adequate, the support systems are in need of several improvements

based on the strengths and weaknesses of the supports reviewed in the evaluation study. The findings indicated that the school environment, culture and staff willingness to share and help other was seen as a strength and an attribute as a teacher support system. The findings also indicated that administration communication towards staff, necessities for beginning teachers, consistency of supports, mentoring, and time were all seen as weaknesses in relation to the support systems provided from the Eastside School. This information may offer recommendations for the school administration to consider. The next section describes the evaluation report and dissemination of the project as a model to evaluate the teacher support systems at Eastside School.

## Section 3: The Project

### **Introduction**

A program evaluation was designed to provide a summary report that would show if the program were achieving goals of effectively supporting beginning teachers and staff, by focusing on peer mentoring, professional development, and collaboration. It was needed to communicate information from the evaluator to the administration Eastside School to facilitate growth and improvement the program. The evaluation summary report was created as a written document that described the evaluation project, the program's strengths and weaknesses, and how the program operated with the school's program goals. It also included recommendations based on conclusions drawn from the results. Administrators at other similar local schools may use the report as a guide to improving their support systems program.

### **Description and Goals**

The program evaluation addressed the school's problem of not having a formal assessment and evaluation of the beginning teacher support systems at the school. The evaluation report (see Appendix A) provides information that may raise awareness to the administration and guide them in making improvements. It provides a platform for dissemination and use of evaluation information.

The report was broken into six sections: Introduction, Mentoring, Collaboration, Professional Development, Overall, and Recommendations. The report provided resources that were used during the process. It included charts and tables as visuals for clarity. It was written with simplicity for clear understanding of results, conclusions, and

recommendations. It may have the potential to add to the research on evaluating teacher support systems and may serve as a model for evaluation processes at other schools evaluation processes in the district or city.

### **Rationale**

An evaluation and evaluation summary report were selected for this project because could help the stakeholders recognize the support system strengths and measure the need for improvement. The summary report would provide the stakeholders with feedback based on the data collected and answer the guiding questions.

### **Search Strategy**

This section reviews the literature that supports the use of an evaluation as a design, along with an evaluation summary report for this project. The sources for the review of literature were found in databases at the Walden University Library and include both peer-reviewed journals and professional journals. Other sources were found using Google Scholar, which provides access to professional journals, articles and texts. Key words and/or phrases used during the search include: *program evaluations, school program evaluations, teacher program evaluations, evaluations process, evaluation report, evaluation summary, assessment report, school program improvement, and teacher program improvement*. Texts that addressed evaluations were also used in the review.

This review is an exploration of the evaluation model that was used for the evaluation and lead to the evaluation summary report. I also delved into literature that

supports how evaluators can most effectively report the results and guide administrators to institutional change through evaluation reports.

### **Evaluation Model**

There are many different types of evaluation models an evaluator can choose from, depending on the purpose and program being evaluated (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004). Alkin (1985) explained that evaluation models have shown what evaluators have done or show futures evaluators what they should do when conducting evaluations. The appropriate model is based on what the stakeholders are seeking (McNamara, 2000). Philips (1991) explained that goals-based and systems-based approaches are two model approaches that are primarily used in the evaluation of training programs. Kirkpatrick's model that was developed in 1959 is the most prominent framework used in the evaluation of training programs (Dixon, 1996; Stufflebeam, 2000). This approach is a goals-based approach that determines the extent to which the program has effectively met pre-set goals (Kirkpatrick, 1998).

Another widely used evaluation model in training programs is system-based approach. Stufflebeam's CIPP model (1987), Collier and Cohen's IPO model (1990), and Fitz-Enz's TVS model (1994) are all systems-based approaches that are used to evaluate the overall situation. System-based approaches do not primarily focus on the evaluation of training of a program based on participants (Eseryel, 2002). The primary focus of this evaluation explored the effectiveness of the support systems for beginning teachers and staff at the school based on the participants' perceptions and experiences. As a result, a systems-based approach was not as appropriate to use as a conceptual framework as a

goals-based approach. Worthen and Sanders (2004) concluded that an evaluator could determine the best model based on the stakeholder's requests.

Evaluation models provide evaluators with a blueprint or a set of guidelines and rules to follow. Kirkpatrick's four levels of evaluation model were a useful tool for evaluation and were selected as a guide for this project. It aided in creating the evaluation survey, interview questions, and evaluation summary report (Appendices A, B, C, and D) with some modifications (ASTD, 2009; Kirkpatrick, 1959a; Kirkpatrick, 1959b; Kirkpatrick, 1960a; Kirkpatrick, 1960b; Kirkpatrick, 1998; Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006.). This model has been one of the most utilized models whether used fully or adapted (ASTD, 2009; Kirkpatrick, 1959a; Kirkpatrick, 1959b; Kirkpatrick, 1960a; Kirkpatrick, 1960b; Kirkpatrick, 1998; Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006.) This model has been used for a long time because it is effective and simple. The strength of this model is found in its simplicity (Alliger & Janak, 1989). The model has had controversy. Some critics see the model has not gone far enough (Bates, 2004; Riotto, 2004). Even with opposition towards the model, evaluators continue to use Kirkpatrick's model as a form of evaluation. Boyle and Crosby (1997) explained that the Kirkpatrick Model is important because it measure satisfaction, proficiency, and overall program effectiveness. The following are researchers who found Kirkpatrick's model useful.

Lin (2007) conducted a study using qualitative and quantitative methods to examine the effect of the mentoring program. The subjects consisted of four teachers from an elementary school that met to investigate collective experiences with mentoring. Lin used Kirkpatrick's (2006) Four Levels of Evaluations as a guide to evaluate the

impact of the program. It was also used to create the pre and post survey given to the participants. The data revealed how each participant reacted to each level. The data gathered from the surveys, interviews, and observations show positive responses to the mentoring program. Dougherty (2000) conducted a case study using qualitative methods to explore the effects of a cognitive coaching for teachers in an elementary school. The subjects consisted of 31 participants. The study used Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Evaluations (1998) to create the survey that evaluated the impact of the program.

Kirkpatrick's (2006) evaluation model provides four levels of measurement: reaction, learning, behavior, and results. The reaction level measures how the participants have reacted to the program they were a part of. The learning level measures what the participants have learned and absorbed from the program. The behavior level focuses on the extent the participant's job behavior has changed as a result of the training. The results level measures whether the application of training is achieving results. The results should be related to the goals set out for the program and show if they were successful or effective. All of the levels were carried out by collecting data from surveys and interviews from the participants from Eastside School. The results lead to conclusions that were gathered by the results, which lead to recommendations (Patton, 2008). Those recommendations were placed into the evaluation summary report.

### **School Program Evaluations**

School program evaluations are crucial in evidence-based decision-making of programs in the educational field. The U.S. Department of Education (2008) has supported the use of program evaluation standards for academic programs. School



stakeholders can explore their programs on many levels and find out the quality of the program, by using program evaluations and evaluation reports (Suchman, 1967; Tyler, 1942). Bruch and Reynolds (2012) described that program evaluations and summary reports help the evaluator and program stakeholders recognize the program's strengths and measure the program's need for improvement. In educational organizations, program evaluations are important because the evaluations assess programs that are intended to provide services or to improve a component of the overall function of a service (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004, Hawkes, 2000). It also measures the impact that the program has on its participants. With the country's movement toward accountability in schools, it is essential that administrators use data-based assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of school programs.

### **Evaluation Reports**

Patton (2008) suggested that presenting the feedback to stakeholders is just as important as the actual data collected. Darwin (2011) explained that the feedback from an evaluation helps stakeholders to modify the program based on the findings. This project evaluation summary report helped to sum up the answers to the guiding questions in Section 1. The questions were asked to assess the effectiveness of the support systems provided for beginning teachers and staff at the school. Rossett (2010) explained that more educational teacher training programs are utilizing evaluations to improve or enhance existing supports and strategies for teachers. The administrators decided to allow the evaluation to be conducted at the school site, they also asked for simple and clear report with feedback on the results, in order to make the necessary improvements to the

program. Since the school was founded in 2002, many teachers have been guided at the school through several supports, but the effectiveness of those supports was unknown until this evaluation was conducted.

According to the Educators' Guide to Service-Learning Program Evaluation (2010), the evaluator should sift through the data while creating an evaluation summary report and only include the most important conclusions and recommendations. The most important conclusions in this project were based on the findings in Section 2. Overall, the support systems at the school were seen as adequate but still needed a few improvements. According to the W. K. Kellogg Foundation (1998), a summary report should be readable and written in short paragraphs covering each idea. A written evaluation summary report was designed and presented in six sections. A written report will be shared with the stakeholders. Guba and Lincoln (1981) suggested that decision makers receive reports or feedback from the evaluation that addresses those concerns. Once it is reviewed, stakeholders will be able to make the improvements.

Feedback given to stakeholders is seen as critical information for decision-making that could lead to needed change (Attewell & Domina, 2008; Fraser, 2008; Weber, 2011; Worthen, 1997). For this project, the goals of the program were viewed, data about the program were collected and analyzed, and a summary report of conclusions and recommendations will be shared with the administrators from the school.

## **Implementation**

### **Potential Resources and Existing Supports**

The evaluation summary report contained information that determined which components of the support systems were successful, which elements are effective, and which components are in need of modification. There were several resources and supports needed to implement the create program evaluation summary report. One existing support was obtaining the goals of the existing informal program, which included providing three main effective supports systems for teachers at the school acted as a resource. The school administrators, staff developers, and published literature provided these goals. By obtaining the goals, I was able to have a starting point that helped to create guiding questions, which was another resource.

An additional resource was time allotment for data collection. Administration encouraged teachers to participant in the interviews at the school and complete surveys. The participants acted as resources and supports as well. The participants provided feedback and their perspectives on the program, so that it could be analyzed to create the evaluation summary report.

To facilitate future evaluations, the future evaluator could use the resources provided with this project or make modifications to them. For example, the consent forms, interview guides, and survey are all provided and found in the Appendix section.

### **Potential Barriers**

There was one significant potential barrier related to creating the evaluation summary report: the school is a small school with a small faculty. Knowing this

information, there was a limited amount of participants for the survey and interviews. There were 33 volunteer survey respondents and ten volunteer interviewees. Using a small sample population is problematic since the limited amount of data makes it difficult to reach generalized conclusions and possible recommendations to add to the evaluation summary report. Every effort was made to get enough participants to volunteer. It is possible that participants held back on providing answers they felt might incriminate them. Many may have been reluctant to express their animosity for fear of recriminations and they may have answered untruthfully.

Another significant potential barrier related to creating the evaluation summary report was my responsibility of being impartial while creating the report. Being a teacher and an informal mentor at the school makes it seem as if I would alter results to steer the report in a particular direction. It was my responsibility to report results honestly, regardless of my role at the school.

### **Proposal for Implementation and Timetable**

The implementation and timeline for this program evaluation and evaluation summary report took place in four phases. Those four phases were:

*Phase 1:* Obtained goals of the program and researched literature on the criteria for what constitutes those goals as effective. Created survey, created interview guide, and set up Survey Monkey database. (Fall 2010)

*Phase 2:* Emailed participants link to the online survey on Survey Monkey. Collected data concurrently, through online surveys and in-person interviews (20-40 minutes) with participants at the site. (Spring 2012)

*Phase 3:* Analyzed data by coding and triangulating. Evaluated results and noticed conclusions. (Summer 2012)

*Phase 4:* Developed Evaluation Summary Report based on the results from data. Dissemination of the report may be presented formally to school administrators and possibly the district superintendent. Dissemination of the report may also be shared during a workshop with the faculty of the school. A district wide principles workshop may take place where the evaluation and report will be presented. Future opportunities may be offered to present the evaluation and report for broader distribution. Based on the decisions of the administrators, other evaluations may take place in the future (Spring 2015).

### **Roles and Responsibilities of Student and Others**

For this evaluation, I acted as the researcher and evaluator. This role included designing the evaluation, collecting data by interviewing and analyzing data based on the surveys and experiences of the participating teachers in the school's current support systems, and designed the evaluation summary report. As the evaluator, my responsibility was to record all interviews with the help of a field notebook that contained reflective and descriptive notes to accompany data that are audio recorded. After survey data were analyzed, conclusions were drawn, and the evaluation summary report was created. I designed the evaluation summary report by following a simple structure to ensure a clear understanding of the results, conclusions and recommendations. While holding the role as researcher and evaluator, I was also a classroom teacher and an informal mentor to

novice teachers at the site. Because of my position at the school, I was not supportive or critical during any parts of my research.

Administrators were involved in the program evaluation by providing pertinent information to the evaluator prior to the analysis. Their future responsibility will be to receive the evaluation summary report and continue to provide the supports that were perceived as effective. They may make changes to those supports that were not perceived as effective to improve the program. The participants also played an important role in this program evaluation. Their responsibility was to participate openly and honestly about their knowledge and experience by providing feedback pertaining to the program, which lead to the creation of the evaluation summary report and dissemination of information

### **Implications Including Social Change**

#### **Local Community**

This program evaluation is significant for the school on a local level. It allows administrators at the school to analyze the results from the evaluation of their current support systems for new teachers that were specifically created for that school. The evaluation can be used annually or can be modified and used to continue to evaluate the program. After the results are reviewed by stakeholders (administrators) decisions can be made to improve the weaker areas of the school's support systems for beginning teachers and continue to provide support systems that were deemed effective. The administration may make decisions that may lead to improvements, by focusing on results and recommendations from the evaluation of the school's support systems. Perhaps new teachers can transition into classrooms easier, and the goal of effectively supporting

beginning teachers may be reached. While administration strives to support beginning teachers, students may have the potential of receiving improved lessons, advisement, and support by teachers. This project's data-driven approach may help improve education in the community.

### **Far-Reaching**

This evaluation may be able to bring awareness to the school and supporters of the school. It may be able to reach other similar schools in the district or state levels. This program evaluation may act as a guide or framework for other evaluators to follow whether it evaluates a similar program or another type of program in the academic realm. The project has the potential to offer input for local colleges to help prepare graduating student teachers for the classroom. It may be added to developing research on the types and effectiveness of teacher support systems in public schools.

### **Conclusion**

The evaluation summary report was designed to create awareness the effectiveness of the beginning teacher and staff support systems at the school. It was needed to relay information from the evaluator to the administration at the school to facilitate growth and improvement the program. The evaluation summary report was created as a written document that described the evaluation project, the program's strengths and weaknesses, and how the program operated with the school's program goals. This section was a review of how the evaluation summary report was created, implemented, and how it may be applied in the future for local and general use.

The next section is a description of the project's strengths and conclusions, and an exploration of the reflections of the researcher and discuss instructions for future researchers.



## Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this program evaluation was to explore and interpret the experiences of teachers participating in beginning teacher support systems to determine the effectiveness of mentoring, collaboration, and professional development. It describes the types of help the teachers received under the support systems. It determines which components are considered effective and successful and which components are in need of improvement. The teachers gave their perceptions about what components existed, the extent of the components, if they were successful, or if they needed improvement. An evaluation summary report was designed to present to stakeholders that included conclusions and recommendations based on the findings in Section 2.

In recent years, the teaching profession has been shifting towards holding teachers more accountable in several aspects. They have been called upon to become highly effective teachers that produce highly effective students (New York City Board Of Education, 2011). Pressure can lead to large numbers of new teachers leaving the profession due to the new demands (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013). The rates of teacher attrition are more excessive in low-income communities (Thompson, 2012). If schools have a strong and effective beginning teacher program that provides them with appropriate support systems perhaps, the attrition rates may lower.

### **Project Strengths**

This project study has several strengths. One strength is that the study was created based specifically on a need to assess the effectiveness of support systems provided for

beginning teachers and staff at Eastside School by conducting a formal evaluation. The evaluation also provide stakeholders with an evaluation summary report. According to Scriven (1967), the purpose or goal of a program evaluation is to determine the worth of whatever is evaluated. Austin (1982) believed that program evaluations are created to find simply out how the program is working. The school has been guiding teachers without a formal evaluation for several years.

Another strength is that the project was designed based the importance of sharing feedback to stakeholders. Evaluators must present feedback from evaluations so that appropriate changes may be made (Darwin, 2011). Fraser (2008) indicated program evaluation reports provide stakeholder with evidence about the effects of the program on based on the participants' knowledge or perceptions.

The final strength is that the data collection for the evaluation included triangulation of both qualitative and quantitative data. Data were triangulated to create conclusions and recommendations relative to the program effectiveness. I was allowed to design an evaluation summary report that produced depth within the research (Lally, 2002). The supports were closely measured from two data sources: faculty surveys and veteran/mentor interviews and beginning teacher/ transfer interviews.

### **Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations**

Although the program evaluation was successful at providing stakeholders with a formal evaluation of the program at the school and a summary report, the project could have been improved. The first limitation established proved to be voluntary participation. There was a limit of the number of participants, which led to a limited amount of data

collected. The findings may not reveal the perceptions of those faculty members that decided not to participate. The problem could have been addressed by giving potential participants more time to participate. An alternative could be to block out a set time in the day, possibly before a faculty meeting to participate in an online survey. A possible recommendation could be to provide some incentive to those potential participants to gain more volunteers. For example, a possible incentive could be to give each volunteer participant an extra planning period coupon to use in the future.

A second limitation in the program evaluation was participant truthfulness. Some of the participants may have not been as truthful and honest as expected to be. Participants may have not answered difficult questions in the survey or interview honestly in fear of the researcher sharing specific answers from specific participants to administrators. I was the researcher conducting the program evaluation alone, a teacher and informal mentor at the school. Although each participant was aware of the protection rights and anonymity, a few still may have altered their responses. Although the participants were provided with an emailed copy of their rights inside of the consent letter, this problem could have been addressed by placing the participant rights on the Survey Monkey website for constant review from the participants. The alternative would have been to place a copy of participant rights into each faculty member's mailbox. A copy of the participant rights could have been taped onto the interviewee's desk in the interview room, for constant review from the participant. One recommendation would be to train a team of several teacher evaluators at the school to conduct future evaluations of the program. Perhaps participants may feel more comfortable with a group of teachers

sharing responsibilities to perform certain parts of interviews rather than just one single teacher. Another recommendation could be to hire an outside evaluation team to conduct future evaluations of the program.

### **Scholarship**

Over the progression of this program evaluation, I have developed an appreciation of peer-reviewed scholarly literature. Having access to specific types of educational work, allowed me to explore various points of view from several researchers and authors. I was able to use certain works as a guide and certain works as a model for recommendations for this program evaluation and summary report (Alkin 1985; Kirkpatrick, 2006; Worthen & Sanders 1987). While reviewing the literature for Sections 1 and 3, it was realized that scholarly work is critical for the maintenance of continually learning and critical thinking for the professional of education. Historical educators have worked in isolation to push their students to the next level. Through close research and examination of literature on the topics of guiding and supporting beginning teachers, actually all teachers, I have found that, educators must help each other to grow and push their students collectively (Chakraborty & Ferguson 2010). It is instrumental that teachers, mentor one another, collaborate with each other, and teach each other on higher levels.

I appreciate that a novice researcher, like myself, has had the opportunity to review the literature from the past and present by using online databases to help refine my search for specific knowledge. While in search for specific information for the program evaluation and summary report, I found myself learning as an educator every

time I closely examined a journal, article, or snippet from a book. This close analysis of other scholarly work allowed me to realize that learning is constant no matter what stage that a person is in a profession or their education. My experience with this program evaluation, as a doctoral student, has been an important contribution to my growth as an educator and researcher.

### **Project Development and Evaluation**

I learned a great deal about project development and evaluation. As a novice researcher, I thought that I initially had developed the entire project out mentally. Very quickly, I realized that the development of a program evaluation of this magnitude could not be created without close research and exploration of other evaluations and peer-reviewed literature on the topic.

Throughout the development of the program evaluation and summary report, I reviewed many peer-reviewed journals and articles on program evaluations. I examined many different types and models of evaluations. Finally, I selected a model that was used as a guide, which was Kirkpatrick's four levels of evaluation (Kirkpatrick, 2006). After studying the research-based planning and development, I moved on to identifying stakeholders, collecting data, analyzing data, revealing findings, disseminating and providing recommendations in a written summary report to stakeholders.

I learned that while, developing each part of a program evaluation is challenging, and the most challenging part in my experience was creating the survey instrument. It took more research and close examination of many peer-reviewed articles and journals on survey instruments. Each step in creating the modified survey was meticulous. The

questions had to match the programs goals of supporting teachers through mentoring, collaboration and professional development, along with the overall guiding questions. With the help of my doctoral committee, I learned how to create language that was clear and understandable for the faculty taking the survey. Developing the program evaluation and summary report was a complete learning process.

### **Leadership and Change**

While in the process of conducting the program evaluation, I noticed that teachers change many aspects of the school environment through different levels of leadership. From this project, I learned that leadership does not only come from administrators in a school building, but from the whole staff. By reviewing peer-reviewed literature and analyzing data, I learned that veteran teachers and staff could be educational leaders for new beginning teachers and staff. Their leadership helps to change and mold new coming teachers by guiding them with knowledge and expertise that they wouldn't have received without support. Brownlee (1979) suggested that administrators should seek out outstanding teachers and use them as school leaders. On the other hand, I also learned that new teachers could be leaders also. When teachers share ideas it leads to effectiveness and productivity in the profession (Wheatley, 2000). Their leadership can help to change veteran teachers and staff just by sharing new and innovative methods for teaching.

The success of a school is no longer on the shoulders of administrators alone, the whole school as a community can show leadership and promote positive change by participating in professional learning communities, mentoring, professional development,

and collaboration. According Carotta (1999), teachers who are given leadership roles in schools, are more likely to stay longer at a school and feel more a part of the school community. All of these components are needed to improve the academic achievement of the schools of the school.

### **Analysis of Self as Scholar**

As I reflect on my educational growth as a scholar, I can honestly recognize that I have shifted from a novice researcher to an experienced researcher. Going through the process of completing this dissertation, I have gained skills that I never obtained before. Although it was a trying journey, my perseverance and the help of my Walden doctoral committee got me through trying times. While I continue to reflect, I realize that I can push myself to think critically about scholarly points of views and come to my conclusions about education topics. I am also surprised at how I have developed the skill to navigate through online databases to refine the information needed. I am pleased with the growth made during this process. My growth will continue professionally. I am now more curious to learn more and continue research into other subjects and topics concerning education in my local area.

### **Analysis of Self as Practitioner**

Based on my experience in this program, I have learned a great deal as a practitioner. I learned that I could not accomplish anything of this magnitude without hard work, dedication, and focus. There were many distractions throughout my educational journey at Walden, but I remained focused on my goals. Also, this process would not have been accomplished if it were not for the relationships that I felt were

needed to build with the administrators and participants that were related to the project. I found myself becoming a professional scholar when speaking or educating anyone about my program evaluation.

Honestly, I did become overwhelmed while trying to complete different sections of the project, but I really enjoyed collected data from the participants, especially the interviewing process. Deep connections were felt with most of the interviewees; I loved feeling their passion for about their thoughts on mentoring, collaboration and professional development at the school. I have come to the realization that I would love to continue working on future projects. I would feel even more accomplished if I were able to share my scholarly work with others, possibly on a college or university level.

### **Analysis of Self as Project Developer**

As a project developer, I have gained knowledge on how to develop a program evaluation from the implementation stage to the final stage. At the beginning of the program, I identified my topic and was proud that I stuck with the same topic throughout the whole process. I felt a true passion toward the topic and wanted contribute to change at the school. As mentioned before, I found that the most challenging part of the process was creating the survey because of the attention to detail. As I reflect a more about being a project developer, I realized that coding data to create themes posed a challenge for me also. This element is something that I will continue to improve upon in future research.

### **The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change**

This program evaluation addressed the effectiveness of the support systems provided for beginning teachers and staff specifically at Eastside School; however their



project will have an impact on social change because of its publication. The project will provide increased knowledge on what constitutes as effective support systems in the areas of mentoring, collaboration, and professional development. Many schools have support systems for beginning teacher and staff, although their components may be different, and several parts of the project could be modified to fit each school's set of needs.

Stakeholders on a local, state and even national level review the perceptions of beginning and veteran teachers to reveal what they see as important or meaningful in support and guidance. Through this process administrators or stakeholders could redesign the project to evaluate their support systems for beginning teachers and staff and possibly create highly effective teachers, that overall impact the entire school environment.

### **Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research**

This program evaluation and report summary are significant because it will provide an opportunity for stakeholders/administrators to analyze the results from the evaluation that assessed the effectiveness of the support systems for beginning teachers and staff at the school. The administrators will be able to address the areas that need improvement and continue the components of the program that are effective and successful. Throughout this program evaluation, it was learned that more emphasis should be placed in the areas of mentoring and professional development. The program evaluation was created so that it can be used as a form of assessment of the support systems in the future at the school.

This evaluation could have application for the field of education because other researchers could use this as a guide to creating a school specific evaluation. It could

even reach high levels of in the educational field because Eastside School is partnered with a local college that has a teacher preparation program/student teaching service. Some of the findings from the evaluation may be shared with the college in order to better prepare the student teachers that may be graduating.

There are several suggestions for future research. While there are is a large amount of researchers that have focused on the area of effectiveness of support for first year teachers, additional research on the topic of would bring a greater awareness to the significance of the subject. Because I only focused on one school in one geographic area, the results acquired can only be relatable for this population. For future research, it is recommended to broaden the project to several schools with similar support systems to widen the population and to increase the generalizations of the results. It is also recommended to create more studies about the gap between teacher preparation programs and real world job expectations of first-year teachers. This research would possibly help to close the gap between teachers preparation programs and real world job expectations and would decrease the significance of effective support systems for new teachers in schools.

### **Conclusion**

Beginning teachers come into the teaching profession with several challenges. They must meet the demands of meeting all of their students' needs, maintain professionalism at all times, acquire and maintain relations with parents, students and colleagues, all while meeting the new demands of becoming a high effective teacher in the City of New York. The new demands could be overwhelming for a first year,

beginning teacher. Several teachers find it so overwhelming that often many of the do not return to the profession the following year. But, many schools have adopted support systems that can provide guidance and solace for beginning teachers. Although supports systems are implemented, many of them lack in certain areas. This program evaluation assessed the program support systems for beginning teachers and staff in the areas of mentoring, coloration, and professional development. It was revealed in the evaluation summary report that beginning teachers and staff agree that the program does have strong components in the areas of collaboration, but need to improve in the areas of mentorship and professional development. Improvements to certain components of the program could greatly affect the effectiveness of the support systems in the future and possibly reduce attrition rates beginning teachers at the school.

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## Appendix A: Evaluation Summary Report of Findings and Recommendations

The overall purpose of this project was to evaluate the support systems provided for new teachers and staff at Eastside School and present the administration with an evaluation summary report. The evaluation was based on goals established by state and local precedents for guiding beginning teachers coming into the teaching profession with several challenges.

Teachers must meet the demands of meeting all their students' needs, maintain professionalism at all times, acquire and maintain relations with parents, students and colleagues, all while meeting the new demands of becoming a highly effective teacher in the City of New York. The new demands could be overwhelming for a first year, beginning teacher. It can be overwhelming for other staff members as well. Several teachers find it so intense that often many of the do not return to the profession the following year. Many schools have adopted support systems that can provide guidance and solace for beginning teachers and staff. Although supports systems are implemented, many of them lack in certain areas. This program evaluation assessed the program support systems for beginning teachers and staff in the areas of mentoring, collaboration, and professional development. It was revealed in the evaluation summary report that beginning teachers and staff agree that the program does have strong components in the areas of collaboration, but need to improve in the areas of mentorship and professional development. Improvements to certain components of the program could greatly affect the effectiveness of the support systems in the future and possibly reduce attrition rates beginning teachers at the school.

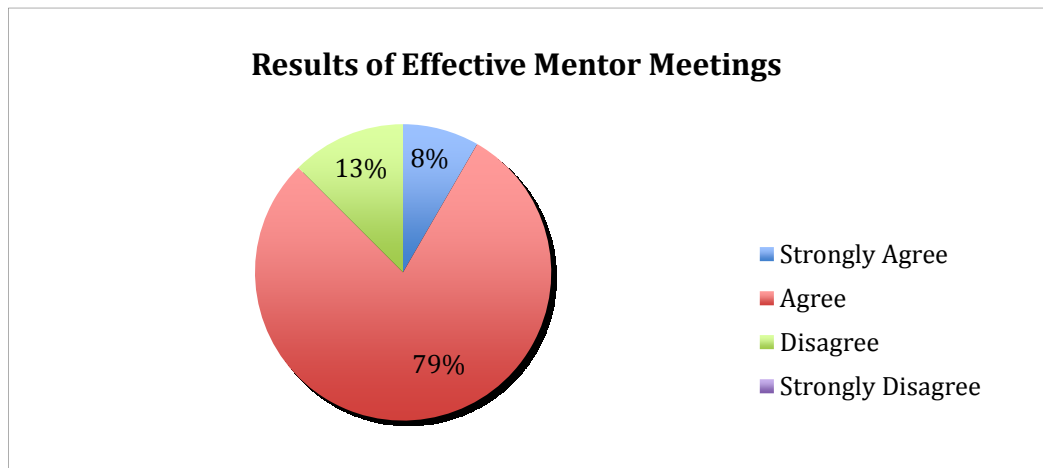
The evaluation summary report revealed insight on the program, based on the given goals of determining which parts of the program were effective and which parts are in need of improvement. A survey was emailed to 50 teachers in classrooms from Pre-kindergarten to fifth grade. Participation was voluntary. Ten teachers were asked to participate in interviews based upon predetermined selection criteria to ensure at least two participants were represented from each category relevant for this evaluation: veteran teacher, beginning teacher, transfer teacher and coach/mentor. The results of the data were separated by the goals of the program (mentoring, collaboration, and professional development), after analyzing data from 33 surveys and ten interviews. The guiding questions that drove this evaluation project on the support systems for beginning teachers at the school are as follows.

1. To what extent are the support systems for beginning teachers and staff being implemented?
2. What are the perceptions of beginning and experienced teachers regarding the effectiveness of new teacher support systems?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the support systems for beginning teachers and staff, specifically in achieving goals of effectively supporting beginning teachers?

## **Mentoring**

The first component of the program that was analyzed was mentoring. Mentoring is mandated by New York State and is one of the major focuses at the school. Data analysis revealed the extent of mentoring at the school. It is evident that mentoring takes place at the school and the majority of beginning teachers have experienced this support. More than half of beginning teachers indicated that mentor teachers provided useful feedback and also informed them of important matters during meetings. Although most of the respondents had mentors, many indicated they were not able to spend a lot of time with their mentor. According to most individuals, mentors were assigned but meetings were not consistent, because all of the mentors also held other positions and mentored several teachers at one time. A few teachers explained that they had not received a mentor and were instructed to seek help from other teachers at the same grade level.

Exactly 79% of all teachers surveyed felt that the mentor and new teacher meetings were effective, which includes 5 of the 9 beginning teachers. The majority of staff thought that new teachers were benefiting from mentor resources.



*Figure A1. Results of the Effectiveness of Mentor Meetings*

Respondents felt that a more structured and formal program for preparing mentoring teachers that included state and national input standards and more face-to-face time between co-teachers. Teachers need to be told specifically what to do, when to do it and what approaches to use to address new teacher concerns. They also feel like they need more time for proper mentoring with targeted policies and objective goals. It appears that mentoring is a somewhat effective support system at the school, but could benefit from some improvements because not all of the beginning teachers are experiencing the support and not all teachers are receiving meeting time with mentors.

In addition, data revealed strengths and weaknesses of mentoring at the school. Data indicated that only 3 out of 33 respondents reported mentoring as a strong support item. This information does coincide with qualitative data, simply because most teachers felt mentoring at the school could be improved in several ways. It was seen as a weakness

from 20 out of 33 faculty participants. Specific weaknesses related to mentoring were the lack of time and consistency.

### **Collaboration**

Collaboration involves working with other teachers on the same grade level or other teachers at the school. Collaboration involves meeting with and discussing specific classroom strategies and procedures as well as familiarizing each other with new policies and programs the school may implement. Collaboration is largely informal, but the school authorizes time for teacher collaboration. Unlike mentoring, teachers cooperate at all levels of experience and grade teaching assignments. The goal is to disseminate information and experiences to benefit all involved with teaching.

Based on the survey data, both beginning and veteran teachers identified the extent of collaboration as a support system at the school on many levels. About 21% of teachers surveyed reported that they were officially allocated between 5 to 6 hours per week to collaborate with other faculty members. Over three-fourths of the total respondents explained they had experienced collaborating with veteran and beginning teachers, by sharing ideas about analysis of student work, school curriculum, behavior management strategies, and classroom environment strategies. Six out of the nine that experienced the support were beginning teachers. Almost 100% of teachers indicated that they had viewed and discussed educational materials coming from the school. Collaborating teachers also indicated that they had observed five of the nine beginning teachers to assess performance and offer input.



Although collaboration exists at the school, based on the study results, it is not consistent in the areas of observation and time they had been officially allocated by the school to plan and collaborate with other teachers. Only 45% (4 were beginning teachers) said that they were officially allocated between 1 and 2 hours per week.

*Table A1*

*Time Allocated for Planning*

Hours Per Week	Response Count ( <i>n</i> =33)	Response Percentage
1-2 hours	15	45.45%
3-4 hours	11	33.33%
5-6 hours	7	21.21%

The survey showed what teachers thought was effective about collaboration as a support system. Less than half the total teachers felt that planning time provided for collaborating teachers and beginning teachers was adequate. Over half of the teachers felt that special publications (handbooks, guides, lessons, handouts, other materials) provided them to be effective. Approximately 40% of teachers felt that observing fellow collaborating teachers execute lessons as professional development was effective.

Collaboration is an activity in which most teachers have participated at the school and was seen as a strength by 31 of 33 respondents. Teachers are able to build relationships with each other that foster enrichment, encouragement, and knowledge. New and veteran teachers were learning from each other and supporting each other in their daily needs as educators.

## **Professional Development**

The evaluation also sought to determine the extent of professional development as a support system at the school. The amount of time allotted for professional development varied among participants. The results indicated that first-year teachers received more professional development per week than other teachers and staff. This indication may be due to the differentiation of teacher and their needs. Teachers may be allocated time for collaboration based on their years of experience, and many are unsure of the amount of time they are supposed to be allowed or they have not been told of any time at all.

Based on the Danielson Evaluation Framework (Danielson, 2009), the school should provide professional development that is based on the teacher' needs. Approximately 53% of respondents felt that they receive professional development based on their needs, with six of the favorable respondents being beginning teachers. About 43% of the respondents received predetermined professional development.

Professional development was seen as an effective support provided by the school to beginning teacher and staff. Nearly two-thirds of the total respondents felt that the professional development was effective, this included six out of the nine beginning teachers. The majority of respondents indicated that the professional development measures provided by members of the school and outside of the school were effective. Although professional development was seen as effective, weaknesses associated with time allocations were reported by all teachers. Data analysis also revealed that most teachers felt they "receive a one size fits all" professional development approach. Some

teachers saw poor communication with administration as an impairment toward expressing their needs regarding professional development.

Another indicated weakness involved mentoring teachers and the amount of professional development material they receive regarding mentoring new teachers. Most felt additional training in this area would benefit all teaching staff.

### **Overall**

Over 60% of the participants perceived the support systems provided were adequate based on the survey. Only 6.7% saw them as strong and 36.7% perceived them as weak. The numbers show that the majority of the faculty felt that the support systems are sufficient, but are not very strong. The numbers also show that a significant amount of the faculty felt that some of the support systems are weak. The majority of the survey and interview participants suggested allocating more consistent time for planning with highly effective mentors, and other teachers on the staff, hiring a literacy or math coach, providing more time for engaging workshops and professional development. The majority of participants making suggestions were beginning teachers. Both beginning and veteran participants also suggested that beginning teachers have the opportunity to view the school in the summer during orientation and attend professional development and workshops before the beginning of the school year.

Both beginning and veteran teachers suggested that all beginning teachers should be placed with an official school mentor. The majority of participants also suggested that new teachers, mentors, and administration should evaluate the mentor program regularly. Beginning and veteran teachers also explained that having more workshops on special

needs students and English language learners, and more meetings with administrators are needed. Teachers also identified what they perceived as strengths and weaknesses in the support systems (Table A2 and Table A3).

*Table A2*

*Most Commonly Identified Weaknesses*

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Identified Weakness	Number of Teachers (n=33)
Lack of Time	7
Lack of Consistency	7
Beginning Teacher Necessities	6
Mentoring	6
Engaging Professional Development	6
Administration Communication	5
Insufficient Resources	5
None Listed	4
Meaningful Collaboration	3
Knowledge of Curriculum	2

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*Table A3**Most Commonly Identified Strength*


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Identified Strength	Number of Teachers (n=33)
Helpful School Community	15
Positive Collaboration	13
Sharing of Materials	11
Support from other Teachers	7
None listed	5
Effective Mentoring	3

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**Recommendations Based on Findings**

The following recommendations are based on the dissemination of the findings and conclusions of the evaluation. Data was compared to the goals of the program, along with the three guiding questions to produce the recommendations.

1. Provide all beginning teachers with a peer mentor prior to the start of the school year. Continue this for three years and change mentors each year.  
Allow each mentor to be paired with only one beginning teacher.
2. Enlist staff members to become mentors by providing some compensation in overtime pay or compensatory hours. Incentives may also alleviate the responsibilities from the small selected few mentor teachers that hold several other positions at the school. Each beginning teacher will be assured to have a

mentor and no beginning teacher will be without a peer mentor to guide him or her for the school year.

3. Provide mentors and mentees with an online schedule form that could be filled out show all times that the pair met. An administrator or a selected faculty member could monitor the forms weekly or bi-weekly. This improvement will ensure consistency of peer mentoring meetings. The improvement will also allow the school to align with New York City beginning teacher mentoring hours. It will offer some security to beginning teachers to know they can expect support from their mentoring teacher.
4. Provide mentor teachers with professional development materials designed for mentoring beginning teachers. There are professional development opportunities available to all New York City mentor teachers. In order to make this support more effective, allow mentor teachers to attend monthly or bi-monthly professional development workshops on mentoring during school hours. Some mentors may be asked to return to school and bring important information back to fellow mentor teachers. As well-trained mentors, veteran teachers will feel confident about properly guiding beginning teachers.
5. Provide equal time periods for all teachers for collaboration on a mandated weekly schedule. A good standard would be the maximum time some respondents reported for collaboration of 5 hours per week, or one hour per school day. This improvement will provide teachers with time to support each other on a consistent basis. In order for collaboration to be more effective, it

can take place through grade level meetings, class inter-visitations, and teacher/ teacher observations, planning across grades and planning with cluster teachers on a weekly schedule. This time allocation could take place during designated morning, prep, or after school sessions. The program could require detailed notes describing the collaboration agenda and when it took place.

6. Provide engaging professional development that is based on the needs of both beginning and veteran teachers. Improvements can include:
  - According to Danielson Evaluation Framework (Danielson, 2009) teachers should receive professional development based on their needs, not a set of pre-determined workshops.
  - This improvement could take place after an administrator has evaluated a teacher and identified the teacher's needs.
  - Based on those needs, some teachers can be clustered together to receive the same types of professional development while other teachers may need a more singular approach.
  - Teachers could be provided with a checklist of their professional development needs, along with 2-3 slots for professional development wants, so that teachers can attend professional development /training. The required checklist provides teachers and administrators a log of all professional development.
7. Open the lines of communication between administration and staff.

In order to improve all aspects of the support systems provided by the school, beginning and veteran teachers must feel free to voice needs, wants and opinions without being penalized. Staff members can better communicate with administrators who also serve on the committees, by recruiting new and veteran teachers to engage in school committees. Using weekly memos, newsletters or social outings to communicate.

8. Continue to evaluate. On a yearly basis, the supports systems should be evaluated to continue to track the effectiveness of the support systems provided for beginning teacher and staff at the school. An appointed committee could be selected to complete this task.



## Appendix B: Beginning Teacher Interview Guide

1. Describe how it is being a new teacher at this school.
  - a. What were some obstacles?
  - b. What helped you get through those obstacles?
  - c. What do you think would have helped you get through those obstacles?
2. What kinds of support did you receive as a new teacher?
  - a. Describe the supports that you received.
3. Describe how your mentor supports you.
  - a. In what ways is your mentor's support helpful?
  - b. In what ways is your mentor's support less helpful?
  - c. Describe how often and how long do you meet with your mentor
  - d. Explain how the support from your mentor has improved your teaching.
  - e. How could the school's administrators encourage more effective mentoring of new teachers?
4. Describe your experience with collaboration at this school.
  - a. Explain how planning with other teachers has helped or has not helped you as a new teacher?
  - b. Do you have any suggestions for improvements?
5. Describe your experience with professional development as a new teacher.
  - a. How often have you been presented with professional development in the past? 3 months?
  - b. What effect has professional development had on your teaching?
  - c. What kinds of professional development do you attend outside of the school?
  - d. Do you have any suggestions for improvements?
6. What other types of supports would you like to see new teachers receive at this school?
  - a. Why would it help?
7. Do you think the support systems at this school were effective in helping you improve your teaching performance? If so, how do you think the beginning teacher supports at this school have changed your performance as a teacher?
8. Do you have any suggestions about how administrators could improve overall support and guidance for new teachers the school?

## Appendix C: Mentor/Veteran Teacher Interview Guide

1. Tell me what it is like being a veteran teacher supporting a new teacher.
  - a. How exactly do you support them?
  - b. What were some obstacles?
  - c. What helped you get through those obstacles?
  - d. What do you think would have helped you get through those obstacles?
2. What kind of training and support did you receive as a mentor to support new teachers?
  - b. Describe how you are compensated.
  - c. How were you trained to support a new teacher?
  - d. How are new teacher supports centered on new teachers?
3. Describe your experience with mentoring at this school.
  - a. Why is mentoring effective or not effective for new teachers?
  - b. Do you have any suggestions for improvements?
4. Describe your experience with collaboration at this school.
  - a. In what ways is this process more helpful?
  - b. In what ways is this process less helpful?
  - c. Do you have any suggestions for improvements?
5. Describe your experience with professional development at this school.
  - a. In what ways is this process helpful?
  - b. In what ways is this process less helpful?
  - c. How could the school's administrators encourage more effective professional development for new teachers.
6. What other types of supports would you like to see new teachers receive at this school?
  - a. Why would it help?
7. Do you think the support systems at this school were effective in helping beginning teachers to improve their teaching performance? If so, how do you think the beginning teacher supports at this school have changed the performance of beginning teachers?
8. Do you have any suggestions about how administrators could improve overall support and guidance of new teachers the school?

## Appendix D: Faculty Survey

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey. Responses to this confidential survey will help to assess support systems for beginning teachers that are being evaluated for effectiveness at this school. Thank you again for your assistance.

**Background Information.** *Please provide the following background information. (No attempt will be made to identify individuals or schools in the analysis, which will focus on groups).*

1. How many years have you been taught in this school? \_\_\_\_\_ year(s)
2. What grade level do you teach?  
 P-K  1-2  3-5  Other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_
3. Have you mentored a teacher in the past five years? Yes/No
4. Have been mentored in the past five years. Yes/No
5. Have you taught more than three years, but are new to the school. Yes/No
6. How much planning time does your school officially allocate to you? \_\_\_\_\_ hours per week
7. How much time is allocated for professional development instruction? \_\_\_\_\_ hours per week

**Support Checklist.** *This section asks about the occurrence of the supports that beginning teachers are receiving at this school. As you read each support, please indicate if you have participated by receiving or giving any of the following supports by marking (x) in the box. If you are unable to answer any question because you are an experienced/veteran teacher please skip to the next question.*

Support Systems		I have personally experienced this.	I have not personally experienced this.
8.	A special orientation session held for beginning teachers before the school year began.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9.	Have had a mentor assigned to you.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	Have participated as a mentor for a beginning teacher.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	Mentor teachers and beginning teachers actively meet at least three times a week.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12.	Mentor teachers inform beginning teachers about analysis of student work, school curriculum, behavior management strategies, and classroom environment strategies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.	Mentor teachers provide useful feedback about classroom practices to beginning teachers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14.	Collaborating teachers and beginning teachers are provided with co-planning time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15.	Collaborating teachers and beginning teacher share ideas about analysis of student work, school curriculum, behavior management strategies, and classroom environment strategies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16.	Beginning teachers have the opportunity to observe other teachers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17.	Collaborating teachers provide useful feedback about classroom practices to beginning teachers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18.	Collaborating teachers and beginning teachers are provided with special publications (handbooks, guides, lessons, helpful handouts, other materials).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19.	Beginning teachers are provided with professional development.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20.	Beginning teachers are provided with predetermined professional development.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21.	Beginning teachers are provided with suggested professional development based on their needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22.	Beginning teachers attend professional development conducted by other teachers employed at the school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23.	Beginning teachers attend professional development conducted by other outside professionals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Supporting Teachers.** *This section asks about the quality of the support that beginning teachers are receiving at this school. As you read each support, please indicate how effective you think the strategy is at this school. Please rate all strategies, whether or not you have actually participated in them.*

<b><i>To what extent do you agree that each support is effective at this school? (Please circle one only.) Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree or Not Applicable</i></b>		<b><i>SA A D SD NA</i></b>
24.	The special orientation session for beginning teachers before the school year began was effective.	<i>SA A D SD NA</i>
25.	The meetings mentor teachers and beginning teachers have are effective.	<i>SA A D SD NA</i>
26.	The guidelines and resources provided to beginning teachers from mentor teachers concerning student work, analysis of school curriculum, behavior management strategies, and classroom environment strategies are effective.	<i>SA A D SD NA</i>
27.	Partnerships between mentor teachers and beginning teachers at this school are effective.	<i>SA A D SD NA</i>
28.	The planning time provided for collaborating teachers and beginning teachers is adequate.	<i>SA A D SD NA</i>
29.	The special publications (handbooks, guides, lessons, handouts, other materials) provided to collaborating teachers and beginning teachers are effective.	<i>SA A D SD NA</i>
30.	Allowing beginning teachers to observe fellow collaborating teachers execute lessons as professional development is effective.	<i>SA A D SD NA</i>
31.	The professional development provided for beginning teachers is effective.	<i>SA A D SD NA</i>
32.	The professional development conducted by other teachers employed at the school is effective.	<i>SA A D SD NA</i>
33.	The professional development conducted by professionals outside of the school is effective.	<i>SA A D SD NA</i>

**Your Comments.** *Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions.*

**34. Overall, how would you rate the support beginning teachers receive at this school?**

- very weak*       *weak*       *adequate*       *very strong*

**35. List up to 4 weaknesses in the support systems for beginning teachers at this school.**

**36. List up to 4 strengths in the support systems for beginning teachers at this school.**

**37. List up to 4 suggestions for improving the support systems for beginning teachers at this school.**

Thank you for your participation.

Used with permission of Richard Braley, Ellice Martin, and Alysia Roehrig.

## Appendix E: Introductory Consent Letter/Survey

Dear Faculty Member:

My name is Dracaena Mosley and I am a faculty member at [TEXT REDACTED]. I am also a doctoral candidate at Walden University in Minneapolis, MN. As a part of my doctoral research, I am studying how beginning teachers are supported at our school. Currently, I am evaluating the faculty's perceptions of the current support systems for beginning teachers.

As a faculty member who is a beginning teacher, mentors a beginning teacher or collaborates with a beginning teacher, your participation in a short, online survey would assist my research greatly. The survey, administered through a program called Survey Monkey, consists of 37 questions and should take you less than ten minutes to complete. Your decision to participate will have no effect on your relationship with the institution and is voluntary. Furthermore, your input will be strictly anonymous throughout both the data collection and reporting processes of my study. Please be advised that by completing the survey questions, you are consenting to having your confidential responses published. Please keep a copy of this letter for your records.

Instructions for participation:

1. Click on the Survey Monkey icon found at \_\_\_\_\_
2. Follow the instructions of the program, taking care to answer each question.
3. Click "Done" at the end of the survey when you are finished.

Questions and concerns

If you have questions or concerns about this study, or if you would like to receive a copy of the research when it is completed, please contact me at [dracaena.mosley@walden.edu](mailto:dracaena.mosley@walden.edu). If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant in this study, please contact the director of the research center at Walden University, Dr. Leilani Endicott, at 1-800-925-3368, extension 1210.

Thank you for your participation in this study, which is integral to the completion of my research and beneficial to exploring the needs of the school. I very much appreciate the gift of your time and feedback in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Dracaena Mosley  
Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership

## Appendix F: Introductory Consent Letter/Interview

Dear Faculty Member:

My name is Dracaena Mosley and I am a faculty member [TEXT REDACTED]. I am also a doctoral candidate at Walden University in Minneapolis, MN. As a part of my doctoral research, I am studying how beginning teachers are supported at our school. Currently, I am evaluating the faculty's perceptions of the current support systems for beginning teachers.

As a faculty member who is a beginning teacher, mentors a beginning teacher or collaborates with a beginning teacher, your participation in an interview would assist my research greatly. I will administer the interview. The interview should take about 20-40 minutes of your time and will be audio taped. Your decision to participate will have no effect on your relationship with the institution and is voluntary. Furthermore, your input will be strictly confidential throughout both the data collection and reporting processes of my study. Please be advised that by signing below and participating in the interview, you are consenting to having your confidential responses published. Please keep a copy of this letter for your records.

Instructions for participation:

1. Provide your signature below

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Questions and concerns

If you have questions or concerns about this study, or if you would like to receive a copy of the research when it is completed, please contact me at dracaena.mosley@walden.edu. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant in this study, please contact the director of the research center at Walden University, Dr. Leilani Endicott, at 1-800-925-3368, extension 1210.

Thank you for your participation in this study, which is integral to the completion of my research and beneficial to exploring the needs of the school. I very much appreciate the gift of your time and feedback in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Dracaena Mosley  
Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership



## Curriculum Vitae

Curriculum Vitae  
Dracaena Mosley, Ed.D.**EDUCATION:**

Doctor of Education in Education

**Walden University**, Minneapolis, MN

December 2014

*Dissertation:* A Mixed Methods Evaluation of New Teacher Support Systems at an Urban Elementary School

*Advisor:* Dr. Paul Englesberg

Master of Science in Elementary Education

**Mercy College**, Bronx, NY

February 2004

Bachelor of Arts in Communications

**Marymount Manhattan College**, New York, NY

June 2000

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE:****Teacher**

May 2005 – Present

- Provide a safe environment in which high, clear expectations and active learning is promoted.
- Gather data and reflect on learning through a systematic process that drives instruction.
- Support and encourage inquiry-based learning.
- Facilitate learning experiences that are meaningful to students and prepare them for their futures.

**EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP:****Grade Facilitator**

Bronx, NY

September 2011 – June 2014

- Facilitated weekly grade meetings by debriefing colleagues about important matters.
- Participated in across grade planning by reviewing and selecting materials that would benefit students in every grade.
- Coordinated grade trips.
- Provided the grade with appropriate materials for lessons.

**Mentor Teacher**

September 2011 – June 2014

- Developed and managed a strong mentoring relationship
- Modeled lesson plans and demonstrated lessons.
- Provided guidance and constructive feedback.

**Cooperating Teacher**

Bronx, NY

September 2011 – June 2012

- Developed and managed a strong relationship with student teacher.
- Modeled lesson plans and demonstrated lessons.
- Provided student teacher with varied opportunities to work with students.
- Provided guidance and constructive feedback student teacher.
- Guided student teacher in planning, teaching and assessing work samples.
- Completed student teaching evaluation forms and participated in 3-way evaluative conferences.

**PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS:**

*Computer Skills:* Proficient in Microsoft Office, Adobe Acrobat and Smart Board

**REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**