

# Delaware's New Teacher Mentoring/ Induction Program: Initiation, Implementation, and Integration

July 2007



*prepared by*

*Jeffrey A. Raffel • Rachel R. Holbert • Karen A. Curtis • Anthony Middlebrooks  
Audrey Noble • Francis O'Malley*



Institute for Public Administration  
College of Human Services, Education & Public Policy  
University of Delaware

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*with funding provided by the*



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Delaware Department of Education

## Preface

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As the Director of the Institute for Public Administration at the University of Delaware, I am pleased to provide this report, *Delaware's New Teacher Mentoring/Induction Program: Initiation, Implementation, Integration*. Funded by the Delaware Department of Education (DOE), this report continues the work done for a previous study, *A Preliminary Report of The Delaware New Teacher Mentoring/Induction Program*. It also builds upon the report *Six Case Studies of the Delaware New Teacher Mentoring/Induction Program* by aggregating the data provided in the case studies to develop overall findings and recommendations.

This report describes Delaware's current mentoring/induction program, its history, and future plans in depth. It then presents overall results gathered by analyzing the case studies in six sections: Evaluation, Leadership and Administration, Purpose and Goals, Mentoring, Pathwise, and Assessment *for* Learning. Finally, it offers recommendations and critical questions for the program, the answers to which could help shape and improve it over the long run.

Jerome R. Lewis, Ph.D.  
Director, Institute for Public Administration

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We would like to thank Mary Ellen Kotz, Ed.D., Education Associate for Professional Accountability (Mentoring/Induction Programs) in the Delaware Department of Education for her support and guidance throughout this project. This work would not have been undertaken if not for her. Pat Bigelow, also an Education Associate for Professional Accountability, helped us to understand the program and conceptualize the research as well. Wayne Barton, Acting Director, Professional Accountability, was, once again, extremely supportive and positive about our work. These Department of Education administrators have an excellent understanding of how research can lead to better practice, and we appreciate the placing of their financial and verbal support behind this effort.

This research could not have been accomplished without the time and effort expended by the more than 100 teachers, administrators, and others who talked with members of the research team at length. They helped us describe the state of implementation and provided us with many ideas on how the program was implemented and what could improve it. We thank them all, as we do those who approved our studying the four districts and two charter schools.

Bob Hampel, Professor, School of Education, provided very helpful advice, conceptual ideals, and copy editing at several points during this research project. Dennis Loftus, Director, Delaware Academy for School Leadership, provided good counsel as well. We thank these two consultants from the University of Delaware.

Finally, we thank the Institute for Public Administration staff for their support in their effort, particularly Mark Deshon, who assisted with the report's editing and cover design.

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## Executive Summary

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The Delaware New Teacher Mentoring/Induction Program, first implemented in 2004-05, was designed to provide mentoring to support new teachers and provide an induction process to improve teaching performance during their first three years of teaching. Case studies of the program in 2005-06 indicate it is viewed as a positive successor to the previous mentoring program.<sup>1</sup> Interviews with more than 130 program participants, including new teachers, mentors, lead mentors, site coordinators, principals, central administrators, and board members, indicate the program is given positive reviews for its support of new teachers, assistance in addressing issues of classroom management, and encouraging new teachers to reflect upon and improve their pedagogy. The program's mentoring component and non-evaluative observations are the most-cited highlights. Areas needing strengthening by the state and/or the districts and charter schools include mentor training, principal and district administration knowledge of the program, opportunities for teacher observation of other classrooms, and providing meeting times for mentors and protégés.

In the six sites the program has moved beyond initiation to implementing its “nuts and bolts.” Great variation in program implementation is manifested across the sites in areas such as leadership and organization, lead mentor and mentor recruitment and selection, and adoption of Pathwise, one of the major induction components. The two districts with longer-standing commitment to professional development have integrated the program to a greater extent, but all sites have farther to move toward integrating the program into the organization and development of teachers and schools. Implementation of the *Assessment for Learning* component has begun in the districts and schools and shows potential for furthering teachers' professional development.

The study's interdisciplinary team consisted of an anthropologist (Karen Curtis), a political scientist (Jeff Raffel), a former Delaware teacher of the year (Fran O'Malley), an educational psychologist and now leadership professor (Tony Middlebrooks), a program evaluator (Audrey Noble), and a public administration doctoral student with an emphasis in program evaluation (Rachel Holbert). With the assistance of the state's program administrator, the team chose six sites for study: two large school districts, two smaller districts, and two charter schools, with three sites located below the Chesapeake and Delaware canal and three north of this geographic dividing line. The team gathered information primarily through individual and group interviews using a common protocol for each role (such as new teachers, mentors, and lead mentors). Mentoring-related information, such as orientation materials, was collected. Participant checks, through which either all or a subset of the individuals we spoke with could comment on the case studies' facts and findings, were also conducted. Finally, the research team attended meetings and trainings, both at the school/district and state level, when possible.

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<sup>1</sup> Please see Raffel, J., Holbert, R., Curtis, K., Middlebrooks, A., Noble, A., and O'Malley, F. (2007). *Six Case Studies of the Delaware New Teacher Mentoring/Induction Program*. Newark, DE: University of Delaware.

The specific results of the six case studies are as follows:

### **Evaluation**

Overall, the new program is considered a major improvement over previous mentoring efforts, specifically for its provision of support for new teachers, assistance in addressing issues of classroom management, and for helping new teachers reflect upon their pedagogy.

Implementation variability is considerable with respect to the sites' administrative and organizational structure, leadership, and extent of implementation. Some sites view the program as an addition to other requirements, while at two sites the program is more integrated into their professional development activities, hiring practices, and overall philosophy.

None of the six sites has conducted any formal evaluations of the new mentoring/induction program, although one district keeps an ongoing tally of teacher retention. The few sites that incorporate informal evaluation indicate positive changes in new teachers' classroom capabilities.

Given the program's complexity, successful implementation takes time and focus. Several respondents sought stability in the program to allow for the program's long-term successful implementation.

### **Leadership**

Program leaders lead by holding regular meetings with the lead mentors and mentors; informally communicating with those who report to them through ongoing e-mail, visits, and face-to-face informal conversations; responding to questions and issues; providing training; and being visible, accessible, and flexible.

The program is compatible and aligned with district and charter school goals but, with the exception of two districts with previous commitments to professional development is not well integrated with other professional development programs.

Lead mentors are knowledgeable about and committed to the program and are well respected by other participants.

Those on other levels, such as superintendents, principals, and mentors, support the program, but they rarely participate in its leadership.

Few participants mentioned direct obstacles to program implementation.

## **Purpose and Goals**

While many of the program's goals are acknowledged, there is no consensus on them within schools or across sites. To some extent, perceived goals of the program vary by roles. New teachers emphasize the program's supportive nature and its impact on their effectiveness; mentors stress the program's impact on developing professional teachers; and administrators focus on the goal of retention. At this time, few see its goals as transformational for the organization.

## **Mentoring**

Throughout the six sites, mentor selection and matching is accomplished by those in various roles such as principals, site coordinators, and, most often, lead mentors.

Mentor selection and matching to protégés are based on criteria that vary across the organizations studied. Among others, they include grade level, subject, teaching skills, and personality characteristics.

Most mentor-protégé matches are working well, especially those where proximity of characteristics such as space, grade level, subject area, and background is evident.

The nature of mentor training varies greatly across the sites.

Mentoring can lead to professional development for mentors as well as protégés.

Perceived problems with mentoring include too few mentors, special-subject teachers lacking direct subject help and classroom-management assistance, and finding time for mentors and protégés to meet. The most limited resource in mentoring is time, which is constrained by the preparation time needed by new teachers, the added professional and family responsibilities of the more experienced mentors, the desire to keep teachers in the classroom, lack of adequate planning time during the day, and pre- and after-school responsibilities of all teachers.

Most new teachers feel comfortable with the distinction between the mentoring/induction program and their formal evaluation; at several sites people perceive a "firewall" between the two.

## **Pathwise**

The most appreciated aspects of Pathwise are the protégés' classroom observations of experienced teachers, opportunities to reflect on instructional techniques, classroom-management help, and its organized framework.

Pathwise is viewed by new teachers and mentors as often complicated and confusing, with too much paperwork and redundancy.



Pathwise is viewed as working best for regular elementary school teachers but has more limited applicability for special-subject and high school teachers.

Many participants tend to differentiate between mentoring and Pathwise, even though they are meant to be integrated and cohesive.

### **Assessment *for* Learning**

Many participants value the Assessment *for* Learning component for its usefulness in the classroom. However, most districts implementing it report struggles with its structure, level of difficulty, and consistency. Since implementation has just begun, and because implementation of a complex program component takes time to develop, these results should be considered suggestive rather than definitive.

Following the results sections are suggestions for future improvement that program sites and DOE, school districts, and/or charter schools may wish to consider:

- Promote genuine understanding and support of school leaders.
- Improve and expand mentor training.
- Provide more structured time for mentor-protégé interaction.
- Encourage more collegial interaction beyond the mentor-protégé dyad among participants in the program, including lead mentors, mentors and protégés.
- Promote more observation.
- Continue to adapt first-year induction materials and streamline paperwork.
- To the extent possible, use nationally recognized criteria for mentor selection and matching.
- Find creative ways to share current “best practices” within the program among districts and charter schools.

The report concludes with a brief section on questions for the future and research directions that may help answer these questions and, ultimately, help to further improve the program.

## Introduction and Background

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Effective mentoring and induction programs provide professional development at the most significant point of a teacher's career—its beginning. Mentoring programs provide support that helps teachers make a positive transition to teaching and provide new teachers with stronger support networks and professional skills. Induction programs are attempt to improve teacher quality, increase student achievement, and ultimately, boost teacher retention. Mentoring and induction programs may increase the likelihood of the teacher remaining in the school, district, or state. With an estimated half of new teachers leaving within five years of starting, successful retention programs are imperative.<sup>2</sup>

The Delaware Mentoring/Induction Program, which was implemented during the 2004-05 school year, aims to provide all new public school teachers in the state with the benefits of both mentoring and induction. While teacher retention is a long-term outcome that can be determined after teachers finish the program, its shorter-term components and processes can be studied now to assess their effectiveness in achieving some of the shorter-term goals, like provision of a support system and initiating new teacher professional development. Learning how the program is being implemented throughout the state and how it is affecting its participants helps all interested parties judge its worth and make suggestions for its future improvement. This report examines the program's early implementation in four school districts and two charter schools.

According to Carol Bartell, “the induction stage [of a teacher's career] is typically considered to span the first three years of teaching,” which “is often a ‘make or break’ point for the teacher, as evidenced by the traditionally high dropout rate during these initial years.”<sup>3</sup> Induction programs are generally created at the district, multi-district, or state level; however, they are delivered on the local and personal level via mentors or other experienced teachers. This not only allows new teachers to learn about classroom-management strategies, curriculum standards, and lesson planning but also helps them to acquire a familiarity with school and district norms and procedures and gives them the opportunity to build relationships with their colleagues. Induction programs should be viewed as more than simply programs. Successful induction programs are complex systems supported at all levels of the education process, from the state level, to district administrators and school principals, to individual colleagues in each school.<sup>4</sup>

Ellen Moir identifies several characteristics of a quality induction program, including full-time program administrators, specific care in mentor selection, ongoing mentor training and development, new teacher and mentor training in data collection and

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<sup>2</sup> Ingersoll, R., and Smith, T. (2003). The wrong solution to the teacher shortage. *Educational Leadership*, 60(8): 32.

<sup>3</sup> Bartell, C. (2005). *Cultivating high-quality teaching through induction and mentoring*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

<sup>4</sup> See Portner, H. (2005). Embedding mentoring and induction into the school's culture. In H. Portner (Ed.), *Teacher mentoring and induction: The state of the art and beyond*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. (75-92).

analysis, and training in induction and new teacher needs for principals and other site administrators. “All of these elements are important,” she maintains, “and each has been shown to support the others, creating a well-rounded, robust system that has the capacity to transform the experience of a teacher’s first years and to bring the entire community of educators into the process.”<sup>5</sup>

### **Foundation of the Current Mentoring Program**

Delaware began statewide support for teacher mentoring programs more than a decade ago with a grant program for individual school districts to initiate mentoring programs. In January 1995, the State Board of Education approved funding for three sites for the Delaware New Teacher Mentoring Program. By 1996 the state, in conjunction with the consulting firm Performance Learning Systems, had provided funds for all districts to develop their own mentoring programs. Eight districts participated that school year, and by the 1997-98 school year, all districts had mentoring programs.

The earlier mentoring program was reviewed and evaluated several times in the 1990s. Steve Sassaman, a consultant who also trained the mentors, and the DOE’s William Barkley submitted evaluations of the program in 1996, 1997, and 2000.<sup>6</sup> The Sassaman and Barkley 2000 report was based on a short survey of mentors and new teachers as well as the consultant’s earlier report, which focused on counts of participation and procedural documents and guidelines. Audrey Noble, Kevin Laughlin, and Will Letts of the Delaware Education Research and Development Center also evaluated the program in 1999. The Noble, et al. report listed “best practices” for teacher mentoring programs, conducted structured interviews across the districts to compare the program’s implementation to best practices, and listed future research and evaluation questions.<sup>7</sup>

In 2000 the Delaware General Assembly passed the Professional Development and Educator Accountability Act, adopting a three-tiered licensure system that requires all educators (including not only teachers, but counselors, school nurses, and others) holding initial licenses to take part in a three-year mentoring and induction program. Experienced educators new to Delaware take part in a one-year mentoring and induction process. The new program was designed to move beyond a *mentoring* program based on matching a new teacher with a “buddy” to a comprehensive, professional, teaching/learning-based *induction* program. In the 2004-05 school year, DOE implemented a common mentoring/induction program for new teachers throughout all of Delaware’s school districts and charter schools. The program is based on Charlotte Danielson’s “A Framework for Teaching” and “Framework for Induction Program”, and Richard Stiggins’ “Classroom Assessment *for* Learning.” New educators are also required to meet with their mentors for at least 30 hours during their first year of teaching, including 18 hours of the Pathwise

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<sup>5</sup> Moir, E. (2005). Launching the next generation of teachers. In H Portner (Ed.), *Teacher mentoring and induction: The state of the art and beyond*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. (70-71).

<sup>6</sup> See Sassaman, S., and Barkley, W. (2000). Final Evaluation Report of the Delaware New Teacher Mentoring Program. Dover, DE: Delaware Department of Education.

<sup>7</sup> Laughlin K., Letts, W., and Noble, A. (1999). New Teacher Mentoring: Review of Research and Delaware Programs. Newark, DE: University of Delaware.

Induction Program. The combination of Pathwise and Assessment *for* Learning is unique to Delaware. New teachers also may be required to attend activities sponsored by their district (or charter school) for up to another 30 hours in the first year.

DOE lists the goals (or “benefits”) of the program as follows:

1. Provides all new educators with a mentor and/or team of mentors to support their growth during their first year of teaching.
2. Provides a non-evaluative partnership between new teachers and those serving the mentoring/induction program in their districts.
3. Assures that new teachers do not have to repeat any part of the state program when transferring to a new district.
4. Uses a process for gathering information that breaks down the typical barriers of isolation in the teaching field.
5. Moves the new teacher through a development cycle using mentors, learning teams, and individual activities.
6. Assists the new teachers in being able to assess their own professional performance and set goals for future professional development.
7. Assures that those working with the new teachers, lead mentors, mentors, and site coordinators are trained in all aspects of the program.<sup>8</sup>

As noted in the final benefit, the new program uses a “train the trainers” model, meaning that lead mentors are trained by DOE staff and national experts, who, in turn, train mentors to work with protégés. Mary Ellen Kotz, DOE’s Education Associate for Professional Accountability (New Teacher Mentoring and Induction), and Pat Bigelow, Education Associate for Professional Accountability (National Board for Professional Teaching Certification), are fully trained and certified in Pathwise, Assessment *for* Learning, and other programs that help mentors work with adult learners. Lead mentors are trained in the summer and throughout the school year by the two DOE administrators and well-known educators and trainers in the areas of mentoring, induction, working with adult learners, and creating professional development experiences. This arrangement supports a DOE vision of the department working directly with districts and charter schools to improve teaching and learning. DOE also prefers this path because it can provide an instant response to concerns and needs and does not have to rely on a consultant, as it had to with the former mentoring program.

Administration of the current program relies on Ms. Kotz, who has formed two groups that help her disseminate information and modify the program as necessary. The first one, a large group composed of at least one representative from each district and charter school, meets about four times a year and is responsible for disseminating information about the program to all participants at their sites. This could include training dates, new materials, or answers to questions. In addition, the DOE administrators keep in touch with each site’s coordinator through e-mail and/or personal visits throughout the year. Bartell notes, “In larger and more complex programs, a leadership team is often selected

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<sup>8</sup> See DOE’s New Teacher Mentoring/Induction Program website: [www.doe.k12.de.us/programs/ntmentor/what.shtml](http://www.doe.k12.de.us/programs/ntmentor/what.shtml)

to attend to the functioning the program.”<sup>9</sup> Delaware’s leadership team, composed of approximately 15 representatives, helps the DOE administrators assess the program and make modifications to it. It designed the Assessment *for* Learning cycle and is currently in the process of modifying the Pathwise induction component.

For its first three years, the mentoring/induction process has been structured in four cycles over three years. Cycles One and Two are carried out by following certain aspects of the Pathwise induction program that includes cognitive coaching, descriptive feedback, bias identification, elements of practice as described in the Danielson’s Framework, collecting evidence of practice and providing descriptive feedback to new teachers. These cycles focus on the development of new teachers’ skills in the area of classroom environment, planning and preparation, and instruction. Guided by the rubrics that describe the levels of performance in Danielson’s Framework, new teachers and mentors determine where current performance lies and set goals for further professional development. During this process, teachers are provided with one-on-one mentoring. Most sites complete Cycles One and Two in one year, though some allow two years.

Cycle Three usually takes place during the new teacher’s second year, when the mentoring/induction program’s focus is on Assessment *for* Learning through the work of Richard J. Stiggins. The goal of this cycle is to develop assessment literacy, enabling new teachers to help their students assess their own work and create improvement goals for themselves, as well as to understand the appropriate use of summative and formative assessment. Included in the process are strategies that focus on constructing assessments and assignments that contain student-friendly language, examine student work, and enable students to self-reflect and set goals for improvement. Currently, a pair of lead mentors train new lead mentors in Pathwise and Assessment *for* Learning over the summer. The cycle is conducted in learning teams that should contain no more than six teachers whenever possible. Embedded in the process is working with colleagues from all professional levels and engaging in professional conversations around how to improve student learning. Lead mentors are trained through both in-state professional development conducted by the Assessment Training Institute and attendance at the annual Assessment *for* Learning conferences. Lead mentors are responsible for knowing when the meetings are to be held, making certain that the teams have the materials needed for their meeting, assisting the team leaders whenever needed, and collecting any materials from the meetings. The Assessment *for* Learning program is a deliberate step to address DOE’s student achievement goals and moves new teachers into a collaborative role with their colleagues. Thus, the issues of both teacher skills and student achievement are being addressed within the mentoring/induction program.

Cycle Four, which typically occurs during the program’s third year, is designed to assist new teachers who are moving to a continuing license to develop a professional growth plan that will secure their required 90 hours of professional development necessary for renewal of their continuing licenses. In addition, some districts require that the new

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<sup>9</sup> Bartell, C. (2005). *Cultivating high-quality teaching through induction and mentoring*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. (48).

teachers focus on continued professional development during that year. New teachers work with lead mentors during this cycle.

### **Current Evaluation of the Delaware's Mentoring/Induction Program**

In the fall of 2004, the DOE requested that the University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration (IPA) conduct an external evaluation of the mentoring/induction program. DOE sought to determine the program's effects on teacher retention, skills, and professional development as well as how the program was being implemented and how it could be improved. That is, DOE had summative (effects) and formative (process) questions. DOE also recognized that the evaluation should be a multi-year project.

The first year's report, *Preliminary Evaluation of the Delaware New Teacher Mentoring/Induction Program*, was completed in January 2006.<sup>10</sup> The first mentoring program evaluation was based on questionnaires using the Delaware Educator Data System to ascertain how program participants viewed and evaluated the program. The evaluation effort sought to receive responses from all involved directly in the program, in other words, a complete enumeration without sampling. However, the surveys were distributed late in the school year, in competition with another survey tied to the federal No Child Left Behind law, and there was some confusion about the process for completing the instruments. The result was a low response rate. The analysis nonetheless did identify a general satisfaction with the program and several concerns to address.

### **Methodology**

In August 2005, the DOE representatives and IPA researchers agreed that the next phase of the analysis should include an analysis of several cases of the mentoring/induction program's implementation. A subset of districts and charter schools was identified and then studied to ascertain the process of implementing the program successfully, what obstacles occurred, and how they were addressed. Specifically, DOE administrators asked the following questions:

1. What criteria are used to select mentors and lead mentors?
2. What makes a good leader for this program? Why do certain districts succeed?
3. Are leadership teams working together to develop the aspects of the program?
4. How is the implementation of Assessment *for* Learning proceeding?
5. How do sites deal with barriers to meetings and support?

The primary goal of the New Teacher Mentoring/Induction implementation case analysis was to examine conditions that support full and positive program implementation, obstacles to successful implementation, and implementation issues to be addressed. The study was designed to describe and help analyze the program's implementation utilizing similar past work as a basis for identifying the significant factors affecting

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<sup>10</sup> Raffel, J., and Holbert, R. (2006). *Preliminary evaluation of the Delaware new teacher mentoring/induction program*. Newark, DE: University of Delaware.

implementation success and failure. That is, the team sought to understand the process and implementation of the program rather than whether it has attained its proposed outcomes of teacher improvement and retention and increased student achievement.

The interdisciplinary study team consisted of an anthropologist (Karen A. Curtis), political scientist (Jeff Raffel), former Delaware teacher of the year (Fran O'Malley), educational psychologist and now leadership professor (Tony Middlebrooks), program evaluator (Audrey Noble), and public administration doctoral student with an emphasis in evaluation (Rachel Holbert). The work was conducted through the IPA but included individuals affiliated with three additional UD centers—the Center for Community Research & Service, the Delaware Center for Teacher Education, and the Delaware Education Research & Development Center.

With the assistance of the state's program administrator, six sites were selected for study: two large school districts, two smaller districts, and two charter schools. The sites selected all had started on the path toward program implementation and had some success. Two districts and one charter are located south of the Chesapeake and Delaware canal and two districts and one charter are north of this geographic dividing line. Two districts have a recent history of emphasis on professional development and teacher recruitment and retention, and two do not. Some sites are quite diverse in the racial compositions of their student bodies. The following districts, presented below in Table 1 with their identities masked to maintain anonymity,<sup>11</sup> were studied.

**Table 1: Sites Studied for Case Study Analysis**

<b>District or School</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Urban/rural</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Percent Minority</b>	<b>Percent Low Income</b>
Carlisle	Large	Urban/suburban	New Castle	45-50	35-40
Webster	Large	Urban/suburban	New Castle	55-60	40-45
Franklin	Small	Rural	Sussex	45-50	50-55
Riverdale	Small	Rural	Kent	35-40	40-45
Highline	Charter School	Suburban/rural	New Castle	10-15	5-10
Penfield	Charter School	Suburban	New Castle	20-25	5-10

Case studies were carried out via individual and group interviews at each of the sites. The research team specified a common outline and questions for each case analysis (see Appendix 1). The research team collected mentoring-related information and attended meetings with lead mentors and trainings for mentors, lead mentors, and site coordinators, both at the school/district and the state level, when possible. Participant checks, through which either all or a subset of the individuals interviewed could comment on the case studies' facts and findings, were also conducted. Because the entire team did not visit each site, a cross-case-study matrix was developed to help team members compare sites and ensure that each result held true for at least four sites.

<sup>11</sup> Percentages are provided within a five-percentage range to mask the districts. Data taken from Delaware School Profile Reports ([profiles.doe.k12.de.us/EntitySearch](http://profiles.doe.k12.de.us/EntitySearch)).

The program participant questions focused on the following areas:<sup>12</sup>

- program leadership
- context of the program at each site
- purpose and goals of the program
- the mentoring/induction process
- Pathwise and Assessment *for Learning*
- overall assessment of the program.

The answers to the questions posed to each group of participants helped the research team determine how the program was implemented at each site, establish commonalities or themes in each of the cases to establish successes and obstacles, and gather suggestions for program improvement, both from the research team and practitioners.

In the districts and charter schools, the following individuals were interviewed:

- site coordinator
- lead mentor(s)
- mentors
- new teachers
- principals
- central office administrators (such as superintendent, personnel director, or curriculum director)
- others as suggested/necessary.

Table 2 displays the program participants interviewed (N=134) by school or district and by role within the program.

**Table 2: Mentoring/Induction Program Participants Interviewed by Role**

	Carlisle SD	Webster SD	Franklin SD	Riverdale SD	Highline Charter	Penfield Charter	Totals by Role
<b>New Teachers</b>	20	17	10	5	9	5	<b>66</b>
<b>Mentors</b>	5	10	10	2	2	4	<b>33</b>
<b>Lead Mentors</b>	4	3	2	3	0	0	<b>12</b>
<b>Site Coordinators</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1	<b>6</b>
<b>Principals</b>	4	2	2	1	0	1	<b>10</b>
<b>Informal Leaders</b>	3	0	0	1	1	0	<b>5</b>
<b>Others</b>	1	1	0	0	0	0	<b>2</b>
<b>Totals by District/School</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>134</b>

<sup>12</sup> In addition to DOE administrator input, questions were developed by using the following resources: Bartell, C. (2005). *Cultivating high-quality teaching through induction and mentoring*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press; and Portner, H., (Ed.) (2005). *Teacher mentoring and induction: The state of the art and beyond*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.



The overarching themes and results from the case studies are discussed herein with examples and specifics from across the sites. Readers interested in the cases are advised to refer to the June 2007 report, *Six Case Studies of the Delaware New Teacher Mentoring/Induction Program* ([dspace.udel.edu:8080/dspace/handle/19716/2315](http://dspace.udel.edu:8080/dspace/handle/19716/2315)).

### **Role of Pathwise**

The regulations that support the legislation requiring new teachers to participate in a mentoring/induction program stipulate that the program be aligned to Danielson's Framework and provide "training and support in the components of the Delaware Performance Appraisal System."<sup>13</sup> One of the legislation's goals was to have induction efforts consistent with and supportive of the framework on which teachers would be evaluated and to base the program on a substantive theory of exemplary teaching, not just a "buddy" model of mentoring. At the time that DOE and the statewide leadership team designed the program, they found that Pathwise, a commercial product based on Charlotte Danielson's work and available from the Educational Testing Service (ETS), was the only program available to meet this requirement. Pathwise thus became the foundation of the mentoring/induction program's first two cycles.

It is important to note that Pathwise has changed over time. Indeed, DOE has utilized three versions of Pathwise to date and is planning a fourth modification for fall 2007. Districts trained its mentors on and used the initial version at the beginning of the program in 2004-05, but the next year ETS reduced the number of events and changed the materials somewhat. Participants also found that some of the materials needed by new teachers were included only in the mentor packet. A third version, which utilizes a non-interactive web-based format and is slightly different from the previous versions, was used to varying degrees at some of the sites (one of which is included in the study). While there are advantages to using a ready-made national, commercially available program, the disadvantage is that DOE and program participants must struggle to continually adjust to externally made changes that may or may not be to the local program's benefit. In addition, the cost structure is established by ETS instead of by DOE's needs or limits. Consequently, the DOE administrators have received permission from Charlotte Danielson to use her Framework for Teaching to design new activities for Cycles One and Two instead of using ETS materials. The administrators noted that with the assistance of their leadership team, they are planning to "Delaware-ize" the cycles by making them more flexible and allowing new teachers to utilize the content programs they are also teaching, such as the Smithsonian science kit or Trailblazer math. Introduction of these newly created cycles is planned for the 2007-08 school year.

The changes to Pathwise have led to some confusion and difficulties in the districts' implementation. For example, some mentors trained on the first version had to mentor new teachers using the second one without receiving complete training about it. On the other hand, new teachers involved in the program's first year complained more about burdensome paperwork than those who started in the program's second year, indicating that the changes to Pathwise could be viewed as positive even if confusing. As the

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<sup>13</sup> 14-1502 Del. Code Regs. § 3.4.1.

previous report noted, Pathwise needed modification for educators outside of the traditional classroom, an effort that DOE has been addressing.<sup>14</sup> DOE is planning to introduce new specialist programs for school nurses and counselors in fall 2007.

Pathwise is based upon a continuous improvement model in which new teachers “plan, teach, reflect, and apply.”<sup>15</sup> The program requires that new teachers talk with other teachers, observe veteran teachers, and read professional materials related to their area for development. Mentors observe their protégés, review the findings with them, discuss their plan for development, and return at a later point to observe growth and offer further feedback. New teachers also observe their mentors or other experienced teachers. While appropriate for adult learners, such an active learning approach is not always appreciated by those who have to do the active learning, especially when they are trying to cope with the pressures of their first full-time placement or feel their previous education or experience was sufficient to excel in the classroom. Thus, it may not be a surprise that some teachers express frustration about Pathwise as described later. But whether the frustration is justified or not, being addressed or not, or aimed at the correct target or not, it does indicate and affect the challenge of implementing a successful program at the district, school, and individual levels.

Districts and charter schools have some flexibility over how the program is implemented at their sites. For example, they can require more documentation and paperwork than DOE requires. Many site leaders feel more comfortable with a certain degree of paperwork that is handed in for accountability purposes, to show that the activities within Pathwise and Assessment *for* Learning are being carried out. A few district leaders feel comfortable enough with their lead mentors and mentors so that little or no extra paperwork is required. The state coordinator remarked that the flexibility “allows [district leaders] to match their own leadership style [to the program].” Regardless of district requirements, some new teachers decide to fill out the Pathwise forms, since they add structure and a paper trail to their activities. Several districts initially opted to extend Cycles One and Two over two years, which created confusion for both mentors and new teachers when Pathwise changed from one year to the next. Currently, most districts have combined Cycles One and Two into the new teachers’ first-year experience; charter schools appear slower to follow that trend.

## **Perspective**

As noted above, the current program was conceived as more than a mentoring program, since it requires a mentor with whom the new teacher carries out various professional development activities. Thus, it should be viewed as an induction program with a mentoring component. In other words, the program emphasizes pedagogy and reflective practice rather than providing a mentor to answer mundane questions like where the copy paper is stored. Yet the program’s conceptualization might not be the reality “on the

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<sup>14</sup> Raffel, J., and Holbert, R. (2006). Preliminary evaluation of the Delaware new teacher mentoring/induction program. Newark, DE: University of Delaware.

<sup>15</sup> *Pathwise Mentor Resource Manual*. (2001). Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.

ground,” so the team looked for evidence that the program was more than something that provided a “buddy” for each new teacher.

The mentoring/induction program’s backbone rests upon its teacher leaders—the site coordinators, lead mentors, and mentors who make it work at the district and school levels. According to Katzenmeyer and Moller, teacher leaders are teachers who “lead within and beyond the classroom, identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders, and influence others toward improved educational practice.”<sup>16</sup> Yet little is known about the conditions that either nurture or inhibit teacher leadership at these sites. Some experienced teachers want to “give something back” to new teachers, the school, or their profession while remaining close to students and the classroom, and mentoring can be a first step toward this broader goal. However, while mentoring can be a rich, rewarding experience for both mentor and new teacher, it can also be draining and can lead to burnout if mentors are not appropriately trained and supported. The same can be said of the lead mentor role, since it may be the first time a teacher has had any responsibility for training and coordinating her or his colleagues. Because there are fewer lead mentors than mentors, however, they are more likely to be trained in a consistent manner. In some cases, they also have direct access to the DOE administrators, who are able to provide support as well as the option to participate in statewide meetings and trainings, where they are able to connect with others in similar positions.

Villani bridges teacher leadership and induction by asserting that “skilled mentors are teacher leaders whose service to new teachers can affect the entire school community.”<sup>17</sup> Mentors and lead mentors do this by creating a sense of belonging among new teachers, creating opportunities for professional dialog with colleagues, and modeling lifelong learning. However, they also “face special challenges,” including collegial opposition, administrator ambivalence or resistance, and conflicting needs for time.<sup>18</sup>

When Britton and Paine et al., studied four countries and one Chinese city with strong teacher induction programs, they found two “key patterns”: “First, [the goals of induction] are broad and robust. In each site, policies and practices aim not at a single dimension of a teacher’s development, but at many. Furthermore, each site targets significant, complex issues in teaching rather than offering shorthand recipes and quick orientations....Second, there is a rather remarkable congruence in terms of large categories around which effort is invested: improving teaching quality and personal development,”<sup>19</sup> rather than retention, since the goal of retention is dependent upon an undersupply of teachers and high turnover rates. The authors note that even if these issues were solved, induction would still be an important tool for improving teacher quality. As a part of their comprehensive approach, these international programs emphasize (1) multiple sources of support, rather than one person who is responsible for transmitting the

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<sup>16</sup> Katzenmeyer, M., and Moller, G. (2001). *Awakening the sleeping giant: Helping teachers develop as leaders*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

<sup>17</sup> Villani, S. (2005). Mentoring promotes teacher leadership. In H. Portner (Ed.), *Teacher mentoring and induction: The state of the art and beyond*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. (171).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, pp. 175-178.

<sup>19</sup> Britton, E.D., Paine, L, Pimm, D., and Raizen, S. (2003). *Comprehensive teacher induction: Systems for early career learning*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

entire program, (2) opportunities for self-reflection, both professionally and personally, and (3) adequate time devoted to new teachers and the induction process.<sup>20</sup>

The questions raised by DOE focus on leadership and why certain districts succeed. The DOE administrator was especially interested in the characteristics of the site coordinators and lead mentors and how their knowledge, skills, and abilities helped their districts to succeed. Program participants in each site were asked who their leaders are and what they do. However, addressing the question of why certain districts succeed was not as straightforward. First, only districts that had had some success were studied, so there could be no comparison of successful to unsuccessful districts. Second, as yet there are no clear operational measures of program success. Third, responding to this question required the integration of issues of teacher leadership and program implementation. In the context of this program, leaders must take their understanding of the state program and lead the implementation of the program at their district or charter school. How they do this in the specific context of the program was at the heart of this research. Thus, to better address the question of why certain sites succeed, the concept and research on program implementation was introduced.

While focusing more on federal than state programs, an extensive literature has been written on the implementation of programs defined at one level of government and implemented by another.<sup>21</sup> The Delaware New Teacher Mentoring/Induction program is a legislatively mandated program, passed by the Delaware General Assembly and implemented by local districts with implications for the districts and new teachers. Specifically, districts and charter schools implement the overall program, including Pathwise and Assessment *for* Learning, and the licensure of individual teachers is based on their successful completion of the program.

The first major work bringing together the factors impacting implementation was Daniel A. Mazmanian and Paul A. Sabatier, who in 1983 published *Implementation and Public Policy*.<sup>22</sup> Critiques of implementation research include those from Goggin, Bowman, et. al.'s *Implementation Theory and Practice: Toward a Third Generation*<sup>23</sup> and Peter and Linda deLeon's "What Ever Happened to Policy Implementation? An Alternative Approach" in the *Journal of Public Administration Research & Theory*.<sup>24</sup> A recent guide to conducting research on program implementation is Alan Lerner's *A Guide to Implementation Research*.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Britton, E.D., and Paine, L. (2005). Applying ideas from other countries. In H. Portner (Ed.), *Teacher mentoring and induction: The state of the art and beyond*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. (225-237).

<sup>21</sup> Pressman, J., and Wildavsky, A. (1973). *Implementation: How great expectations in Washington are dashed in Oakland*. Berkeley, University of California Press.

<sup>22</sup> Mazmanian, D., and Sabatier, P. (1983). *Implementation and public policy*. Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman & Company.

<sup>23</sup> Bowman, A., Goggin, M., Lester, J., and O'Toole, L. (1990). *Implementation theory and practice: Toward a third generation*. Glenview, Ill.: Scott Foresman & Co.

<sup>24</sup> deLeon, L., and deLeon, P. (2002). What ever happened to policy implementation? An alternative approach. *Journal of Public Administration Research & Theory*. 4: 467-492.

<sup>25</sup> Lerner, A. (2004). *A guide to implementation research*. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute Press.

The implementation literature makes clear that programs defined at one level of government are not necessarily successfully implemented at another level. Indeed, the impetus for the development of the early literature was the failure of federal programs to be implemented successfully by states and localities. The first book in the field, Wildavsky's and Pressman's *Implementation: How Great Expectations in Washington Are Dashed in Oakland*, stressed this problem, and the first major education study of implementation, Jerome Murphy's analysis of Title I,<sup>26</sup> also clearly documented such disappointments. The literature that developed afterward made clear that successful implementation of federal programs could not be assumed. Not surprisingly, later research suggested that the same issues plague state programs as well. A recent RAND Corporation report indicates that U.S. schools are not fully implementing reform strategies recommended by academic experts and that this inability likely explains why such reforms do not increase student achievement.<sup>27</sup>

In this context of problematic implementation, Berman suggests that implementation is usually “adaptive.”<sup>28</sup> That is, policies and programs defined at one level get interpreted down the line to fit the circumstances of the lower level. The program as implemented is molded by the context, culture, and organizations at the local level. This was viewed as both positive and negative—positive because it allows local circumstances in schools or districts to shape the program, and negative because the goals and objectives of the original program could become diluted or distorted at the lower level such that the program has little impact and simply becomes business as usual. To complicate matters, new programs often are modified after they are implemented, and the context in which they are implemented changes. Schools and districts face challenges—leadership turnover, financial constraints, and new demands from far and near. The study team was thus cognizant of the likelihood of adaptive implementation in a dynamic environment.

The team brought several theoretical and conceptual frameworks to the study and recognized that no one framework would explain the results. Since the research team was not testing a theory but rather seeking to describe, understand, and analyze what occurred across the six sites, the various frameworks of the team members—public administration, leadership, anthropology, program evaluation, educational psychology, and pedagogy—helped in the interpretation of the results. The team was also aware that the program did not exist in a vacuum, and the relation of the program to its context was explored. For example, at each site they inquired into the role of professional development, the culture of collaboration, the significance of teacher recruitment, and the role of principals in order to understand how these impact the program's implementation.

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<sup>26</sup> Murphy, J. (1971). Title 1 of ESEA. *Harvard Educational Review*. 41(1).

<sup>27</sup> DeMartini, C., Karem, R., Mariano, L., and Vernez, G. (2006). *Evaluating comprehensive school reform models at scale*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

<sup>28</sup> Berman, P. (1980). Thinking about programmed and adaptive implementation: Matching strategies to situations. In H. Ingram and D. Mann (Eds.), *Why policies succeed or fail*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

## Results of the Multiple Case Analysis

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The results of the six case studies are stated below. The general findings are discussed under each major finding, followed by illustrations from the six case studies. The purpose is not to present *all* of the evidence but rather to be illustrative; that is, to provide sufficient evidence to support the generalization, illustrate the finding, and help the reader understand the details. Those wanting more data are referred to the individual cases as presented in the accompanying report.

### *Evaluation*

**Overall, the new program is considered a major improvement over previous mentoring efforts, specifically for its provision of support for new teachers, assistance in addressing issues of classroom management, and for helping new teachers reflect upon their pedagogy.**

While the perceived impact differed and complaints about aspects of Pathwise often were strong, the judgment invariably was that the overall program had had a more positive impact than the previous mentoring program.

Most Highline Charter mentors and protégés gave the overall program high marks. One teacher remarked, “I think it’s worked very well. I go to [my mentor] if I have any questions, and then we had to do assessments and then look at them...it kind of takes me out of the whole [classroom] mind frame. So it’s worked very well.” Another teacher, who had few good things to say about the mentoring/induction program, related that “I’m not the kind of person that easily seeks out help because I feel like that’s a crutch. This kind of forces you to do that whether you want to or not. It forces you to form bonds with other teachers and seek out help even though you don’t want to. So that’s a good thing for it.” Both of these comments indicate that the new teachers appreciate the program for more than a mentor’s camaraderie; its value came in having someone trained in induction to help provide a context for the new teachers’ experiences in the classroom.

At Penfield Charter, new teachers and mentors also positively view the program’s overall impact on the new teachers’ teaching and classrooms. New teachers and, to some extent, mentors, believe they have improved their classroom management and pedagogy as a result of the program. A new teacher described the impact of the program on her teaching by stating, “I believe it has helped. I definitely gained more confidence with my classroom-management skills. A lot of suggestions were made to me, which I applied to my teaching. And I feel that I’m a lot better in that area.”

In Riverdale, many respondents compared the program quite favorably to the previous program. One lead mentor noted that the new mentoring/induction program has increased her responsibilities and deepened her understanding of new teachers:

It was, in some ways we were almost like party coordinators. And it wasn't as...professional....[Now] I'm much more aware of what is going on with the people under my purview. I'm more aware of how the teachers are doing. And I think that's better....One of the largest changes [is that] it's really a job now.

A long-time Riverdale mentor detected a profound difference between the two programs in their structures and areas of focus, and thinks the new program is better:

We weren't there [before] to actually observe lessons. We weren't there to help [new teachers] develop their plans, or come up with a growth plan. So I think it's changed a lot. The meetings before seemed to be just kind of random, [something] that they had to do. And now...we look at the whole classroom, and look at a lesson that they're teaching. It was never that structured. So I definitely approved [of the change].

**Implementation variability is considerable with respect to the sites' administrative and organizational structure, leadership, and extent of implementation. Some sites view the program as an addition to other requirements, while at two sites the program is more integrated into their professional development activities, hiring practices, and overall philosophy.**

The districts and charter schools studied utilize a wide range of administrative approaches to implement the mentoring/induction program, based upon their size and current structure, the centrality of professional development, and other unique considerations. While the two charters and the smaller districts added the responsibilities for the program to those with similar responsibilities, the larger districts' programs are administered by full-time site coordinators.

Because of its smaller size, Franklin's program is carried out primarily by its energetic and committed lead mentors. Administrative support duties are handled by the site coordinator, a district administrator. As the site coordinator stated, "the lead mentors are the program." They serve as the primary facilitators of mentoring and induction-related professional development within the district, are seen as the program's experts, serve as the central source of information regarding the program, were regularly involved in state-provided training, and are responsible for resolving day-to-day problems. Comments like "I would say the [lead mentors] are in charge. They definitely are the ones saying, 'Here's the schedule, here's what you need to get done,'" were frequently heard.

The Webster School District employed a full-time mentoring program site coordinator for the previous mentoring program, and continues to do so now. Webster's 15 lead mentors also include "master teachers" who help those with specific backgrounds, such as nurses and teachers who went through Alternative Routes to Certification. In addition, the Webster district developed the role of "school liaison" to provide some consistency through each of its schools.

In the Carlisle School District the program is integrated into the district's organization and operations. Leadership and administration of the program is provided by a full-time site coordinator, with district-wide responsibilities for new teacher professional development as well as the mentoring/induction program. The site coordinator meets biweekly with the curriculum director and is in regular contact with lead mentors, mentors, and new teachers by telephone and e-mail. She is also a member of the district content area specialist team, which meets biweekly and is concerned with necessary content area support and training.

In Riverdale the site coordinator position is divided between two people in the district's administration—a professional development administrator who handles most of the paperwork and day-to-day questions and issues, and a central office employee who handles payment issues and other administrative duties. The administrator is also one of six lead mentors and a mentor as well. One unique aspect of this district is that the lead mentors are divided into pairs by cycle: two handle Cycles One and Two, two handle Cycle Three, and two handle Cycle Four.

Professional development is stressed at Riverdale, and the mentoring/induction program fits well with the district's overall philosophy. Riverdale's program greatly benefits from both the material support and encouragement that its administration provides. One lead mentor mentioned that "we had a lot of support at the central office. And that also worked because they helped impress upon the [school] administrators how very important this is. And so they have supported us financially, given us a lot of freedom."

The site coordinator and lead mentor positions are combined at the charter schools. At Highline, a very organized and well-liked teacher handles the duties (though the school's business manager handles monetary and data input tasks for her). Some teachers said that the program has improved since she assumed leadership and gave examples of her accessibility. At Penfield Charter School, the dean of instruction is in charge of the program. Indeed, she is the individual who, with the school's director, initiated the program at the school, makes key decisions as to the recruitment and selection of mentors and their matching with new teachers, and meets regularly with the lead mentors.

These six sites have accomplished the first stage of implementation, program initiation. Instead, they are in the second stage, program implementation within the organization's context. Although they may not have not yet reached the third stage, integration and systems change, the Riverdale and Carlisle districts are closest. Integration includes an emphasis on early hiring of new teachers in order to find and match them with mentors *before* the school year begins, consolidation of the mentoring/induction program with other professional development for new teachers, and a district or school culture that supports elements of the program by providing time for mentors and protégés to communicate and observe one another.



**None of the six sites has conducted any formal evaluations of the new mentoring/induction program, although one district keeps an ongoing tally of teacher retention. The few sites that incorporate informal evaluation indicate positive changes in new teachers' classroom capabilities.**

None of the districts or charter schools have undertaken formal evaluations of the program. At least two sites have noted higher teacher-retention rates, although the extent to which the mentoring/induction program is the cause is not clear.

Each year the Carlisle district compiles teacher retention data and reports them to the school board. Improvements in teacher retention are viewed as resulting from improvements in teacher-hiring practices and the implementation of the mentoring/induction program. In addition, each training session offered by Carlisle as part of the mentoring/induction program includes an evaluation section.

At Penfield Charter the retention rate of new teachers has greatly increased since the program's implementation. The school director indicated that all but one teacher, and all new teachers, would be returning for the 2006-07 school year. The key question is, to what extent is this retention the result of the mentoring/induction program? Of the five new teachers in the program, all but one had previous teaching experience and two had extensive (five years or more) experience. Perhaps hiring more experienced teachers helped retention. The school's overall stability could certainly have helped as well. Or perhaps the administration had developed a better ability to hire teachers who were the right fit for the school. Whatever the cause, the result has been greater teacher retention.

Highline's vice-principal evaluates the program on a more informal and continual basis and indicated that it has led to some positive outcomes in relation to classroom skills improvement. "I can tell you that the teachers are really starting to look at their teaching practices, and that's been a bonus. [They are] starting to self evaluate what their needs are, and talking to other teachers, and looking at different teaching styles," she said.

**Given the program's complexity, successful implementation takes time and focus. Several respondents sought stability in the program to allow for the program's long-term successful implementation.**

Moir reminds her readers that "embedding induction and mentoring into a school's culture takes time, probably a minimum of two or three years beyond the program's implementation... Induction and mentoring will have been embedded into a school's culture once people have lived through the program and found it to resonate with their beliefs and values, have experienced its success, and have felt that they and their school have grown as a result."<sup>29</sup> Because the program has changed, due to either state and/or district decisions, several participants expressed a desire for program stability. For example, at the Webster district there have been changes to the Pathwise component, the

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<sup>29</sup> Moir, E. (2005). Embedding mentoring and induction into the school's culture. In H. Portner (Ed.), *Teacher mentoring and induction: The state of the art and beyond*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. (90).

district's orientation, and the number of required meetings for mentors and protégés. One second-year teacher best described the overall confusion about the program:

I'm doing Cycle Three this year as a second-year teacher. Last year Cycle Three was for third-year teachers. So none of us know where we're going in the program. I know it's new and they have to trial-run it and get all the glitches out...once they get all of that together, that will really help the program to run more smoothly.

A Carlisle lead mentor agreed, saying:

It's been new every year. They've been adding things and changing the program. So staying on top of that has been a little bit difficult for me. I could see next year being easier because now I've been trained in Pathwise and assessment, know what the requirements are of each teacher, what they need to go through. As people get used to the program or as it stays in the building for a longer period of time, then it will become easier.

Many Riverdale teachers believed that the mentoring/induction program was headed toward stability in their district. As one teacher predicted,

I think we'll still be using Pathwise; it's a great reflective program...I don't see [the assessment piece] going anywhere either, regardless of what the state does. I think they're valuable components. The structure may change, but the pieces will still be there.

### ***Program Leadership***

**Program leaders lead by holding regular meetings with the lead mentors and mentors; informally communicating with those who report to them through ongoing e-mail, visits, and face-to-face informal conversations; responding to questions and issues; providing training; and being visible, accessible, and flexible.**

Site mentoring/induction leaders use a variety of leadership techniques; they make sure the program operates well and are attuned to the operational details of the program. One district has greatly formalized the program with an orientation manual and program manual for lead mentors, mentors, and protégés. Others have formal mentoring calendars. Successful program leaders are good leaders *and* good managers.

The Carlisle site coordinator visits each school in the district on a regular basis and is in direct contact with new teachers. She provides her office, cell, and home phone numbers to new teachers. She often informally observes new teachers and volunteers to teach in their classrooms so that they may observe her or so they can observe other teachers. One new teacher commented, "She is just really excellent...She always makes me feel comfortable and gives me good advice when she comes in the room." She is also in regular e-mail contact with new teachers, mentors, and lead mentors. She sends e-mail

reminders about all events and assignments. A mentor said, “She’s very organized. She’s great. [She] answers your questions pretty much immediately, doesn’t get frustrated with too many questions [about] the same thing. She communicates with us often.” The site coordinator has also developed a formal orientation and program manual for participants. Respondents were nearly unanimous in their high regard of her efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness. As one district administrator said, “She does a lot that is not required....She is highly organized. We are very, very fortunate to have [her].”

At Penfield Charter, the site coordinator meets monthly with the mentors for one-half hour before school begins. While the meetings are relatively informal, she has an agenda in mind. She also keeps informal contact with the mentors, checking to see how they are doing and where they and their protégés are on Pathwise. Communication is relatively easy within this school. “I can talk to all four mentors at lunch,” she said. She supports the program in several ways, including responding to questions from mentors, obtaining resources for new teachers, arranging for classroom coverage for classroom observations, and sharing specific ideas on teaching or classroom operations. One mentor described her support in great detail:

She was able to obtain a copy [of a resource book] for each of the new teachers. I can go to her for ideas, for instance, graphic organizers, or note-taking sheets. Specific things. [The site coordinator’s] background is reading. So, you know, that type of thing, if I’m looking for a different approach....[The site coordinator] really empowers us to do what we need to. And she’s there if we need her.

Webster’s site coordinator trains, organizes, and supports the lead mentors and generally ensures that all the new teachers are making their way through the program. She also holds regular meetings with her lead mentors in order to make key decisions on how to structure the program each year and address any issues that have been raised. She is accessible to all program participants, including mentors and new teachers. Because she has been to all of the program’s trainings, participants perceive her as a credible source of information. Teachers serving in every role throughout the mentoring/induction program consistently noted her coordination, organization, and support.

Webster’s lead mentors train the mentors, hold occasional district-wide meetings for new teachers or mentors, and answer any questions they may have. School liaisons at Webster match mentors with new teachers, collect paperwork for the site coordinator, and hold monthly meetings about upcoming events or issues such as report cards, parent-teacher meetings, and the Delaware State Testing Program. Essentially, school liaisons are responsible for the new teachers as well as events within the school, while lead mentors are responsible for the mentors and their well-being.

**The program is compatible and aligned with district and charter school goals but, with the exception of two districts with previous commitments to professional development is not well integrated with other professional development programs.**

The mentoring/induction program has filled a significant void in charter schools and replaced a “buddy”-type mentoring program in many districts. In Carlisle and Riverdale, districts where professional development is a priority, the program has moved beyond the implementation stage toward integration with other professional development programs.

Neither charter school had had a mentoring program before the state implemented the current mentoring/induction program. Perhaps because of the program’s relative novelty, few participants viewed any other programs at the schools as either complementing or competing with it. When asked about other professional development programs, most teachers noted in-service days, though a few were able to travel elsewhere for specific training. Although the mentoring/induction program is not formally tied to any other professional development opportunities offered at Highline, the vice-principal stated that “each piece of the mentoring program, obviously, is for teacher improvement. So, yes. It’s all tied together. But we haven’t had formal planning to tie it together.” However, one teacher disagreed, saying that the program “is kind of on its own. It doesn’t really coordinate with any other vision, or goals, or anything. Not that it’s not helpful.”

Nearly everyone in the Webster district saw the mentoring/induction program as simply added to, rather than integrated with, professional development programs. For example, the mentoring/induction program is one of many topics at the new teacher orientation, but it had not been placed in the context of meeting some overall vision for new teachers. Although few could see any direct connection, some indicated that the mentoring/induction program might be tied indirectly to the district’s efforts with classroom management or longer-term personal and professional growth. For example, one mentor stated that the portions of the mentoring program and their in-service days are dedicated to setting goals and creating plans to reach those goals. The site coordinator did note, in addition, that Assessment *for* Learning is becoming “a serious initiative of the district.”

The program seems best integrated in the two districts that most emphasize professional development. In the Carlisle district, respondents see the mentoring/induction program as well integrated with other district professional development opportunities. This is likely due to the role of the site coordinator as a leader in all new teacher professional development as well as her participation on the district content area specialist team. In Riverdale, protégés meet their mentors, the site coordinator outlines the program’s requirements, and Pathwise materials are distributed during new teacher orientation. Everyone agreed that the program and the district’s educational philosophy fit together well. The district focuses on professional development, so district administrators see the program’s instructional portions as helping to mold new teachers into professionals. One lead mentor remembered that Riverdale’s superintendent, in his remarks at the beginning of the school year, discussed how the district is data-driven and always looking for ways to be reflective and improve. “Every teacher in the room needed to be a reflective practitioner...It was nice for them to hear [that] not only did he expect that from the new

teachers, he expected from every teacher in that room, [that] you'd better be looking at your data, you'd better be reflecting daily on what you're doing in your classroom. So [the mentoring/induction program] aligns perfectly with Riverdale," she said.

Another way that the mentoring/induction program fits well into the Riverdale district is through its use of Cycle Three, Assessment *for* Learning. Not only do all second-year teachers move through the cycle, but all teachers in the district are strongly encouraged to take it as an enrichment cluster. (DOE-approved classes or activities are offered to Delaware educators that result in small pay increases upon completion.) One lead mentor commented that "In Riverdale...we had a large push for Assessment *for* Learning. That has been a district initiative. And so [the mentoring/induction program's] really gone right into it. And I think the [new] teachers...are going to be ahead of the curve, because they're used to it."

The Franklin case study illustrates one challenge resulting from a lack of integration. Even though the program's leadership by its lead mentors appears strong and enthusiastic, those at higher levels do not appear to be responsive to or aware of the program's mission. This disconnect undermines the integration of the program into the district's professional development, teacher retention, or overall improvement efforts.

Thus, to the extent the mentoring/induction program is not integrated into the individual districts or charter schools, it is good news and bad news. No program is at odds with the mentoring/induction program, but at several sites it is not explicitly woven into a more comprehensive whole.

**Lead mentors are knowledgeable about and committed to the program and are well respected by other participants.**

In four of the six sites, lead mentors drive the program. Riverdale's six lead mentors work as a team to choose mentors and match them to new teachers. An administrator echoed the team concept: "There's a lot of good ideas out there for the mentoring program that come from the lead mentors. I mean, they see things, and do things, so, it's collaborative....We're in a small district. [Everybody knows] everybody here on a first name basis. So it's not any problem getting people together and talking." Riverdale's lead mentors also feel their actions are supported by the district's administration.

Highline Charter's lead mentor, who is also a mentor and a full-time teacher, was noted by several participants for her enthusiasm and commitment. "[The lead mentor's] an awesome teacher....And she had a desire to do this mentoring program. Plus she went to all the trainings, and that was great. She fills me in on everything," said a vice-principal. New teachers who were coaches or had after-school commitments commented on how she arranged alternative meetings to review information discussed at any regularly scheduled meetings. A new teacher also gave an example of the lead mentor's dedication: "She knows the answers, and if she doesn't know the answer, she finds the answer and gives it to you right away. She's absolutely on the ball. I know that she's at this end and I'm at that end of the building, but more than once, she just stopped me in the hallway

and said, ‘I [was] going to send you an e-mail but [let’s] go ahead and deal with it [now].’ That way it saved us a lot of time [rather than] having to sit down.”

At the Franklin School District the lead mentors teach at the high school but have backgrounds that distinguish them from most teachers within the district. It was obvious that they are very oriented toward managing programs. One principal said of the lead mentors, “I think their role is very important...[to be] established and considered to be a highly qualified person within your school...[and they] are embedded within the community, people who understand the philosophies and the mission statements of both the school and the district.” A mentor explained the ways that the lead mentors help her: “They really have done a good job giving us instructions and materials. If we had any questions, they would direct us to where we should go.”

**Those on other levels, such as superintendents, principals, and mentors, support the program, but they rarely participate in its leadership.**

Several participants believe their principal is unaware of the program; however, interviews with principals indicate awareness and vague support. Few principals or other school or district leaders take an active role in the program.

Webster district participants found varying support from their school administrators. One mentor noted, “Our principal had very little, if any, support for the mentoring program.” However, a lead mentor stated, “My administrator has been very supportive of the program. She had suggestions for topics that she wanted me to cover for the school liaison meetings...She arranged for the building instructional coach to coordinate her after school meetings with mine so that the new teachers weren’t kept after school too many times.” In light of a perceived lack of awareness and varying support, the site coordinator has provided more information to principals about integrating the program’s goals with the schools’ strategic plans. The principals appear generally supportive: “They came away [from an informational meeting] wanting to know so much more,” she said.

The Franklin district illustrates the more peripheral role of principals and higher administrators. From the participants’ perspectives, district and school administrators were seen as supportive of the new teacher mentoring program implementation but not directly interested or involved in the program. One mentor expressed the opinion of many: “As far as the administration and everything, everybody is accommodating to what you have to do. They know you need time to leave your class and observe your protégés, and they have to come in then...I feel supported because it is a requirement.” Some participants, while not critical of administrators’ lack of involvement, simply implied that the program was outside the range of responsibility of most school-level administrators. Mentors and protégés commented that there “wasn’t a lot of interaction with the administration” and that they “don’t talk a whole lot with [principals] about mentoring.”

It was also clear from the Franklin principal and administrator interviews that they are unfamiliar with the program’s details. One principal said, “I don’t have a lot of hands-on experience with it, to be very honest.” In fact, even though they must sign any substitute

authorization, the some principals appeared to be unaware that the mentoring/induction program provides funds for substitutes in order for mentors and new teachers to complete observations. The lead mentors also described the challenge they faced as they attempted to engage the school administrators. They described it as “a learning curve with our principals because [they] are still thinking mentoring and orientation and the buddy program.” The lead mentors try to involve upper administration in the program by sending them copies of meeting minutes and offering to explain the program at retreats, but the communication appears to remain one-way.

Because of its cohesiveness, Riverdale is an exception to this norm. It appears that everyone, including the superintendent and the principals, have some awareness of the mentoring/induction program. Some new teachers mentioned that principals and other members of upper administration attend an end-of-the-year colloquium for first-year teachers. Several administrators have also received Assessment *for* Learning training, which increases their awareness of Cycle Three.

### **Few participants mentioned direct obstacles to program implementation.**

Only one participant mentioned constraints that have a direct impact on program implementation. One Webster district principal mentioned that her school’s new teachers had to miss faculty meetings in favor of the school liaison’s meetings because the union contract only allows for new teachers to meet for two hours per month after school.

It is possible that direct implementation obstacles were not discussed because they were taken as part of the normal landscape, not the result of contractual or other provisions. For example, the assignment of new teachers to the most difficult and undesirable schools or classrooms may be a problem but is not considered as an issue related to the mentoring/induction program.

### ***Purpose and Goals***

**While many of the program’s goals are acknowledged, there is no consensus on them within schools or across sites. To some extent, perceived goals of the program vary by roles. New teachers emphasize the program’s supportive nature and its impact on their effectiveness; mentors stress the program’s impact on developing professional teachers; and administrators focus on the goal of retention. At this time, few see its goals as transformational for the organization.**

Research on induction and program implementation has found that implementation is more successful where goals are clear and understood by participants.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, Moir notes that “Induction systems operate best when both mentors and new teachers are

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<sup>30</sup> Mazmanian, D. and Sabatier, P. (1983). *Implementation and Public Policy*. Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman & Co.

working collaboratively toward the same goals.”<sup>31</sup> In addition, leaders have been found to be more successful when they clearly articulate a vision for and purpose of the program, as well as desired changes that ought to take place as a result. Delaware’s mentoring/induction program has many statewide goals (as noted earlier) set within a context of formal and informal district and school goals, often defined by strategic plans. In general, induction programs also have broader goals, such as improved teaching skills, teacher retention, and increased student achievement. Thus, these multiple goals present a challenge to the program’s leaders, one that this study sought to better understand.

While there is some agreement across the districts and charter schools about the role of the program in supporting new teachers, there is great variability in the perception of the programs’ specific goals. Support, developing highly qualified teachers, providing quality assurance, and retention were all perceived as program goals. Only a few respondents viewed the program as moving beyond the short-term needs and into the long-term development of new teachers.

Mentors, protégés, and administrators at the Penfield Charter identified several program goals. Their responses were more educated guesses than recollections of goals they had heard or read. Similarly, it appeared that at Riverdale none of the individuals really knew the goals. An administrator, when asked, replied that “I *hope* one of them is retention of teachers.” When asked to compare the program’s goals with the district’s goals, one lead mentor could not answer definitively, because she did not know. “As far as the actual mentoring program, I’m not sure I’ve seen written down, ‘This is our goal for year one,’ or ‘This is goal for year two,’ so I don’t know,” she said. Despite the lack of certainty about goals, participants did identify a number of common purposes.

### *Support and acclimation to teaching*

Most of the charter school participants’ notions of the program’s objectives mesh with the traditional “support system” model. Several mentors and protégés singled out the personal support inherent in a mentoring relationship. One Highline Charter teacher noted, “I believe [the goal is] to provide the new teachers with the support that they need...just some support from qualified teachers that they need.” New teachers at Penfield also stressed support as a goal. “Maybe to help [new teachers] realize that they’re not there by themselves, that there are people that you can lean on so that you’re not so overwhelmed that you’d want to leave a profession that you just spent four years studying [to attain],” said one.

Recognizing the pressures felt by new teachers, educators at the Franklin School District most frequently referred to support as the goal of the state’s new teacher mentoring program as well. They believed that the program was designed as a “way to help people who aren’t as outgoing to get the help and support they need,” one said. Some saw the program (due to its requirements for matching veterans with new teachers) as a way of

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<sup>31</sup> Moir, E. (2005). Launching the next generation of teachers: The New Teacher Center’s model for quality induction and mentoring. In H. Portner (Ed.), *Teacher mentoring and induction: The state of the art and beyond*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. (65).



providing “structured support” instead of the “sink-or-swim” model that has characterized entry into the teaching field in the past. They believed that the program eased the new teacher’s transition into the school culture, regardless of their individual resourcefulness. “I think that they’re really trying to make it easier for a new teacher to find the help that they need, get the support, because if you’re the type of personality where you don’t want to go out and bug anyone or anything like that, it gives you the opportunity,” noted another.

Several educators at the Riverdale district also mentioned the supportive aspects of mentoring as a program goal. A new teacher described it as “to get new teachers to feel comfortable in the district. To get to know the district.” She mentioned that her mentor introduced her to people in the school, emphasized the district’s expectations, and helped her secure materials when needed. “They’re almost like your voice in the beginning. So I think the goal is basically to make the new teachers have an easy transition into the district,” she concluded. A mentor described the program as “teachers with a little bit of experience helping first year teachers make it through a school year. Because, you think that you know a lot, and then you go in and you find out that you don’t. So I guess I would just explain it as teachers with some experience guiding teachers with little to no experience through the school year, hopefully making it a little less painful.”

#### *Improving teacher performance*

A number of respondents across the sites noted that the program helps to strengthen the quality of teaching. In the Carlisle district, participants identified program goals relating to teacher improvement. One new teacher noted that “I would say informally the goal is to have better prepared teachers and have the sustainability to last longer for new teachers.” A mentor, perhaps recalling one of the No Child Left Behind requirements, said that the goal is “to become a highly qualified teacher.” A lead mentor emphatically stated that “the goal is to make you a better teacher. That’s the bottom line. To help you become a better teacher. The more information you get, the more training, the better you are in the classroom.”

Teachers at Highline Charter also mentioned improving teachers’ skills. Some stated that the goal is to help them reflect on their methods and analyze them with another person. One expressed this idea a bit more broadly: “The goal is really to help teacher[s] know their strengths and weaknesses. And focus on...overcoming those weaknesses. And just being the best teacher[s] that they can be.” Several charter school new teachers stressed the program’s assistance through improving their teaching and identifying useful resources. When asked what the goals of the program were, one teacher put it succinctly: “In general, to improve my teaching...and to let me know what resources are available to me, to help me feel more confident.”

#### *Retention*

Retention is one of the primary long-term goals of the mentoring/induction program, and several educators throughout the sites mentioned teacher turnover as a concern. Although

some mentors and protégés identified this goal, it was more frequently noted by lead mentors, site coordinators, and administrators. Franklin educators expressed the desire for the program to help keep teachers in the district. “Hopefully, we’re trying to help the new teachers stay in the district and want to teach here,” one said. One Franklin administrator anticipated the program’s ability “to be able to provide teachers with the support they need at the beginning of their career to stay in the game.” Some mentors also expected that their efforts would “make new teachers feel comfortable...make them successful, and...make them stay in teaching,” as one said.

Some Carlisle participants also recognized retention as a program goal. “I think mentoring is a good idea...because then right away you form a relationship. The more good relationships you have in a school district, the more likely you are to stay,” said one new teacher. Some mentors at Penfield Charter also stressed the program’s role in retaining teachers. For example, one mentor observed, “Obviously they’re trying to hold on to teachers....There are teachers that don’t last more than a few years because they don’t have support....So I think they obviously want to keep teachers and also make sure that teachers are doing what they need to be doing in their classroom.”

Webster’s site coordinator noted that the program’s goal is retention. Some teachers also recognized this goal. One teacher focused on both adjustment and retention: “What I see [is that] they’re trying to guide teachers in the transition of getting into teaching but also in retention....It seems like this is intended to keep people interacting with each other, talking about it as a profession and improving and moving forward instead of isolating yourself.” Another new teacher echoed this, saying, “I think that it’s to make us feel that someone has invested something in us. So it makes us feel like we should stay...they want the comfort level there so they can retain the teachers.”

#### *Long-term development of teaching as a profession*

At Penfield Charter, few participants commented about the program’s role in a teacher’s long-term development. One mentor, however, mentioned that his informal mentor appeared to have this goal in mind the first time they met:

‘Before we even get started with this program,’ he said, ‘I’m going to tell you one thing.’ He said, ‘You can teach one year 30 times or you can teach 30 years once.’ That’s the most powerful statement. And if you live by that, there’s no way you could ever be a bad teacher. If you constantly evaluate your practices, if you constantly evaluate your teaching skills or interactions with the kids, modify, adjust, be willing to try new ideas and try new techniques, and then I add...my favorite saying which is if you’re not making mistakes in the classroom, you’re probably not doing anything anyway. Everybody makes mistakes. Try different things. Challenge yourself to be better.

The creation of “reflective practitioners” is a goal heard several times at Riverdale. One lead mentor stated emphatically that the program’s goal is “to make a reflective practitioner. That is pretty much the whole goal.” A teacher said, “I think the mentoring

program is trying to make you reflective on your own teaching strategies. And help you determine what areas you need to grow. And maybe perhaps creating a plan...if there was a problem, then work on that plan.” One lead mentor encapsulated this thought well when she said that one of the program’s goals is “about building a professional. And it’s about growing teachers. Nurturing people into being professionals. Not just somebody who comes in at 7:30 and leaves at 2:30....It’s about being a good teacher. Not just somebody who’s in there to do 20 years, or 25 years.”

## ***Mentoring***

At all sites, mentoring was viewed as the program’s highlight. Almost all new teachers and mentors interviewed praised mentoring and valued their gains. Furthermore, across the sites respondents at all levels perceived the program’s positive impact on new teachers. At each site most new teachers thought they had been well matched and appreciated their mentors’ support.

**Throughout the six sites, mentor selection and matching is accomplished by those in various roles such as principals, site coordinators, and, most often, lead mentors.**

Villani notes that “sustainable” induction programs have specific criteria for selecting mentors, building principals have input during the selection process, and “potential mentors complete an application including recommendations from colleagues.”<sup>32</sup> In addition, these programs match mentors and new teachers as much as possible according to grade level and content area, involve principals in the matching process, and include a procedure for finding a new match if the first is incompatible.<sup>33</sup>

The cases indicate great variation among sites’ mentor selection and matching processes. For example, in one district these activities take place at the district level and in another the school level leaders take a role. While at Penfield Charter the lead mentor chooses and matches mentors, the Highline lead mentor allows the two vice-principals to find mentors and match them to new teachers. These two administrators know all the teachers in the school, and they use that knowledge to make the best possible matches.

Prior to the 2005-06 school year at the Franklin School District, the selection process was each principal’s responsibility. Since the 2005-06 school year the lead mentors, in collaboration with the district site coordinator, choose and match mentors. Riverdale’s six lead mentors, working as a team with an upper administrator, select and match mentors.

In the large Webster district, a variety of people choose mentors depending on the school. In general, school liaisons are responsible for finding mentors and matching them; however, sometimes this duty falls to lead mentors. In Carlisle the site coordinator works with lead mentors and building principals to recruit mentors and facilitate the mentor-protégé match. At both districts, the role of principals in facilitating and approving

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<sup>32</sup> Villani, S. (2005). Mentoring promotes teacher leadership. In H. Portner (Ed.), *Teacher mentoring and induction: The state of the art and beyond*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. (179).

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p. 180.

mentor-protégé matches varies across schools, associated to some degree with how long principals have been in that role. According to both site coordinators, “the principal has the last say in the mentoring [match],” said one.

**Mentor selection and matching to protégés are based on criteria that vary across the organizations studied. Among others, they include grade level, subject, teaching skills, and personality characteristics.**

The teacher leadership and induction literatures have much to say about choosing mentors. If mentoring is the first step in the creation of teacher leaders, the leadership literature suggests that certain factors indicate readiness on the part of teachers to become leaders. These “include excellent professional teaching skills, a clear and well-developed personal philosophy of education, being in a career stage that enables one to give to others, having an interest in adult development, and being in a personal life stage that allows one time and energy to assume a position of leadership.”<sup>34</sup> The literature also notes that teacher leaders should be willing to take risks, think creatively, be respected by their colleagues, have good listening skills, and keep organizational as well as individual issues in mind.<sup>35</sup>

The sites use similar criteria in various ways to assign mentors to protégés. Some stress grade or building proximity, and others stress personality and teaching and other skills. Several schools and districts recognized the tension involved in matching mentors’ and protégés’ planning periods: if their planning periods are matched, they have a built-in time to meet but not to observe each other, whereas if their planning periods are not matched, they can observe each other but struggle with finding times to meet. At least one district, recognizing that it is often impossible to make perfect matches, provides new teachers with other teachers beyond the formal mentor from whom to seek advice.

#### *Mentor selection: volunteering and/or recruitment*

Throughout most sites, mentor recruitment takes place both through general volunteer recruitment activities and specific targeting of experienced teachers to be matched with particular protégés. In Riverdale, the site coordinator sends out e-mails in the spring to all teachers that explains the mentoring/induction program and asks for volunteers to be trained as a mentor. Providing training around the end of the school year, ahead of the matching process, ensures that (a) Riverdale has a relatively large cadre of trained mentors from which to choose for the incoming protégés, thus possibly providing for better matches, and (b) the district may have extra mentors during the school year for teachers who are hired after the September 30 pupil count or in place of a teacher on extended leave who needs a “buddy” type of mentor. In some cases where the need for mentors is traditionally great, such as in the high school, lead mentors personally approach teachers and ask them to serve as mentors. Early recruitment is part of the

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<sup>34</sup> York-Barr, J. and Duke, K. (2004). What do we know about teacher leadership? Findings from two decades of scholarship. *Review of Educational Research*, 74(3): 267.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p, 268.

planning that mitigates shortages. After the training, the former coordinator and the lead mentor team match mentors and protégés over the summer.

Most schools and districts employ a combination of asking for volunteers and recruiting experienced teachers through personal contact. Such is the case at Penfield Charter, where both occur. While the lead mentor indicated she had sent an e-mail to all teachers asking for volunteers, one teacher reported he had been recruited. Some Franklin mentors indicated that they had volunteered. “I volunteered. I said if you need anybody to do it, and then they called me and asked if I would do it, and I said yes,” said one mentor. Others talked about having been approached to participate. “I just got a phone call asking if I wanted to do it,” said another.

Some Webster mentors volunteered by responding to a general e-mail request, and some had been “tapped” by lead mentors or school liaisons to be matched to a new teacher in a similar grade or content area. In those cases, the matching was done before the actual mentor selection and training. Highline Charter’s vice-principals use that strategy almost exclusively. A match with an incoming new teacher is made even before the experienced teacher is asked to become a mentor.

#### *Mentor matching: subject and grade proximity*

At Riverdale, elementary-grade teachers are generally matched with someone close to, but not at, their grade level, because grade level teachers tend to become close anyway. Furthermore, each grade level tends to have its own planning time, and Riverdale focuses on making it easier for mentors and protégés to schedule observation times. In the upper grades, the team tries to match mentors and protégés who teach the same subject rather than grade. Regardless of grade level, coordinators try to match special-education protégés with special-education mentors, if possible.

At Highline Charter, in addition to looking for “successful teachers who are open to sharing and growing with others,” two of the primary criteria for matching mentors to protégés are similarity in subject area and grade level. Nearly all of the protégés have mentors who teach the same subject area and who teach the grade level directly above or below them. Similar to Riverdale, a vice-principal noted that they deliberately try *not* to match with teachers from the same grade for two reasons: They prefer to match subject areas, and the grade level teachers have planning time together and are already like informal mentors to the new teacher.

In the Webster district, nearly everyone agreed that most important to mentor-protégé matching is grade level and subject area. Special-education teachers are usually paired with other special-education teachers. Special-subject teachers, such as music, physical education, and art instructors, were paired with other special-subject teachers during the 2005-06 school year, but the site coordinator found that most of them desired a mentor in their own building, even if they lost compatibility in subject area. One special-subject teacher mentioned that “I gained a lot of knowledge about how the school works and what to do and what not to do, not from my mentor because my mentor is...in a different school. So I was kind of on my own. But I learned a lot at lunch in the faculty lounge

with everybody else.” Many new teachers sought other teachers who were in some way able to help them in ways that their mentors could not. Based on new teacher feedback, the site coordinator and lead mentors decided to institute a policy of pairing new teachers with in-building mentors for the 2006-07 school year.

### *Mentor matching: building proximity*

Franklin’s lead mentors seem to believe that the best mentors are the best *teachers*; in other words, quality instructors who are committed to the development of their own professional expertise. “You pick good teachers with solid backgrounds in education to go in there and work through this induction program...this mentor for the induction program really has to be an outstanding teacher,” one of them said. Unfortunately, because of a large number of new teachers in the middle school, several had to be paired with mentors who were high school teachers. New teachers and mentors consistently asserted that matching mentors and protégés within the same building is critical to ensuring their full participation in the program. “I think when you’re in the same school, we’re interpreting for our protégés not just good pedagogical methods. We’re also interpreting how you do things here, how this principal sees things, and what your observation is going to be about from the person who’s doing it at your school. If you’re at two different schools, it’s apples and oranges,” said one mentor. A new teacher echoed this sentiment: “[My mentor] is not in my school. So that made it a little bit challenging as far as meeting with her. If I had a question about how middle school does things versus how high school does things, then we had some trouble trying to find answers.”

Several criteria are used in Riverdale to create the most appropriate mentor-protégé matches. While they include physical and grade level proximity of protégés to mentors, building proximity is key. For instance, the district matches specialized-instruction protégés with colleagues who work in the building to allow for quick access. Because specialized-instruction protégés are not paired with mentors who teach the same content, protégés are also given the names of other special-subject teachers in the district to whom they can turn for content-related questions. These protégés take advantage of the proximity for daily consultations, and their mentors find it allows them to monitor their protégé’s progress with Pathwise assignments.

### *Teaching skills, personality, and other criteria*

Desirable mentor qualities in Carlisle include demonstrated teaching and communication skills. A middle school principal looks for a “top-shelf person” with instructional and classroom-management skills. An intermediate school principal recruits teachers with a “professional mindset, common content area, good classroom-management skills, and interest in the program and willingness to participate.”

Penfield Charter’s dean of instruction selects mentors with much teaching experience and success in the classroom. At least three of the four teachers selected to be mentors had extensive previous experience in a mentoring-type role. She uses the criteria of good

classroom management, vision for the school and its mission, good content knowledge, confidence, and cooperativeness:

We very much wanted to have people who had good classroom management and had a sense of the vision for the school because we felt that you can't mentor people solely on educational strategies and management. They need to be mentored into Penfield Charter School, not just mentored into Delaware. We wanted people who were team players and had a vision of what our mission is here. We wanted people who knew their content well enough to feel some confidence in what they did because if they don't exhibit confidence, they can't very well model it for a new teacher... We wanted people that had good content basis even though they might not be mentoring somebody in the same field.

In Riverdale a few teachers and lead mentors also mentioned that some “experience matching” occurs. For instance, if an experienced teacher from the private school system starts teaching in the district, the team will try to find a mentor with a similar background.

**Most mentor-protégé matches are working well, especially those where proximity of characteristics such as space, grade level, subject area, and background is evident.**

Proximity appears to be the key element in a successful mentor-protégé match. The more proximate the mentor is to the protégé—in space, subject, grade, background features and personality—the more positive the comments. Ellen Moir agrees, noting that “As much as possible, [mentors] should be teaching the same subjects at the same grade levels. This matching of content area and grade level saves the mentor valuable time and builds opportunities for deeper collaboration.”<sup>36</sup> Indeed, Daresh notes that the factors that matter most in ensuring a good mentor-protégé “fit” are the “professional goals, interpersonal styles, and the learning needs of both parties.”<sup>37</sup> For many reasons, however, this ideal can seldom be met. Teachers who do not find their mentor well matched turn to informal mentoring with those of higher proximity. (See Appendix 2 for examples of how various types of mentor-protégé relationships can lead to diverse ways that the program is carried out in one school.)

Most of the new teachers at Highline Charter had positive mentor-protégé experiences during the 2005-06 school year. The importance of proximity in determining matches between mentors and protégés was emphasized consistently. Participants stressed the value of mentors who are both close in grade level and physically accessible. “It really does help to have someone [who] knows the grade level,” one teacher commented. Protégés also value opportunities for informal conversations with their mentors, which arise when mentors’ and protégés’ classrooms are close to each other.

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<sup>36</sup> Moir, E. (2005). Launching the next generation of teachers: The New Teacher Center’s model for quality induction and mentoring. In H. Portner (Ed.), *Teacher mentoring and induction: The state of the art and beyond*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. (64).

<sup>37</sup> Daresh, J. (2005). In C. Bartell, *Cultivating high-quality teaching through induction and mentoring*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. (79).

Within individual schools, some new teachers cannot be matched with their ideal mentors. Indeed, special-subject teachers often are in unique positions, so a perfect match within the school is impossible. While a Highline specialized-instruction teacher wished she could have been mentored by another special-subject teacher who sees all the students in the school on a weekly basis, there simply were none available, as all four of the special-subject teachers had worked at the school fewer than three years and are protégés in the mentoring program. On the other hand, a special-education teacher expressed satisfaction with his match to a regular-education teacher because he spends some of his time co-teaching in a regular classroom and because “here they have a nice support group of special-ed teachers” who help out with non-mentoring related issues.

Most Riverdale protégés felt they were “pretty well” or “very well” matched. One new teacher pointed out the benefits of subject area matching. “She taught the same subject matter, and she was special education and had been doing that for many years. So that was very helpful. I don’t think it would have been as beneficial to me had I gotten somebody not in my subject matter.” Like new teachers in other districts, those who thought their match was less than ideal found other teachers who could function in key support roles. For example, one new teacher felt well matched in terms of personality but had to go to another teacher in his grade for curriculum assistance. Another new teacher was matched with a mentor who worked in a self-contained classroom and, consequently, was not as familiar with the issues faced by regular special-education teachers. In the first case, the new teacher’s mentor helped him find other teachers who could help with curriculum issues, while in the second case, the neighboring teacher stopped in and volunteered to help her with any questions.

In the Webster district, most complaints about mentoring involved accessibility. Particularly in middle and high schools, demand for mentors is higher, and new teachers have a greater chance of being ill-matched or matched with a mentor with two or more protégés. Protégés in these situations have more trouble meeting and discussing their personal classroom concerns. One new teacher said, “There were times that I really wanted to meet with my mentor and talk about my own personal things that I was going through...especially with behavior management, and I felt like that time was taken by the other [protégé]....[My mentor] was stretched thin and did the best she could, but I think they should tell mentors only to take one [protégé].” Webster’s site coordinator recognized this to be a problem and said that with the change of Pathwise from taking one year rather than two, more mentors would be available and fewer, if any, mentors would have more than one protégé.

### **The nature of mentor training varies greatly across the sites.**

Just as sites find experienced teachers more valuable to student learning, mentors who have moved through the first few stages of mentor growth are more valuable to new teachers. Consequently, attracting, supporting, and retaining a cadre of experienced mentors is crucial for the mentoring/induction program’s success.



Casey and Claunch describe the five stages of mentor growth, which are similar to the stages of new teacher development: predisposition, disequilibrium, transition, confidence, and efficacy. Teachers who reach the predisposition stage feel confident in teaching children and “are ready to share their expertise and at the same time move on to another level of professional challenge.”<sup>38</sup> During the disequilibrium stage, new mentors realize that the realities of mentoring are more complex than originally anticipated. Transitional-stage mentors accept that they do not have all the answers and “focus their energy on building a new knowledge base” for adult learners.<sup>39</sup> Once they begin to apply this knowledge to their new teachers, mentors have entered the confidence stage. Finally, mentors at the efficacy stage feel a sense of expertise in working with new teachers while developing a healthy sense of detachment from their direct actions. “Seasoned mentors understand that it is their job to create the conditions for learning but not to have expectations about what learning will take place.”<sup>40</sup> Lead mentors may also transition through these stages as well, even though their responsibilities are different.

As noted earlier, the mentoring/induction program’s implementation is based upon a train-the-trainer model. DOE administrators and outside consultants train lead mentors who, in turn, train mentors. This study indicates that mentor training varies greatly; in fact, no two sites incorporate the same approach. Some of these approaches were valued more by the mentors than others.

In Webster, some mentors said they had to return to their lead mentors for help because their training was uneven. Several mentors agreed that the training “depended on the person who was running it.” Most mentors were trained by lead mentors over a schedule of three or four meetings after school throughout the school year. Some mentors noted that even after the training, they did not fully understand their roles and even some basic program requirements. At Webster, more than some other sites, lead mentors (rather than mentors) are seen as the key source of Pathwise information. Reliance on lead mentors is expected to dissipate as mentors become more experienced with Pathwise, assuming they remain mentors for long enough and the program achieves stability.

As noted earlier, Riverdale provides mentor training for three days at the end of the summer, ensuring that they are prepared for the upcoming year. The lead mentors responsible for the program’s first year also offer a refresher course to returning mentors at either the beginning or the end of the summer. The Riverdale mentors generally stated that their mentor training was sufficient. One mentor commented, “I thought the training was excellent. It was very thorough. There were no unknowns.”

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<sup>38</sup> Casey, J. and Claunch, A. (2005). The stages of mentor development. In H. Portner (Ed.), *Teacher mentoring and induction: The state of the art and beyond*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. (101).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p. 104.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p. 105.

## **Mentoring can lead to professional development for mentors as well as protégés.**

In their review of the teacher leadership literature, York-Barr and Duke note that “by far, the strongest effects of teachers leadership have been on teacher leaders themselves.”<sup>41</sup> Villani agrees, identifying several benefits that mentors experience, such as isolation reduction, personal and professional satisfaction, a sense of membership in the school community, and rejuvenation and retention of veteran teachers.<sup>42</sup> While not all mentors viewed the process as helping them become better teachers, several did. Some mentors at Penfield, although recognizing the challenges in their role, found utility in the mentoring relationship. The very process of analyzing teaching with their protégés led to this mentor’s reconsideration of her teaching strategies:

I think I’ve learned more from [my protégé] than [my protégé has] learned from me.... We’re supposed to just be helping them make the right choices, and where they can get help, and to hear their thoughts on, as they try different things. What happens, though, is we end up getting in a conversation about, “Did this work or did this not work?” And you can’t help yourself, but you talk about things you’ve done too.

While Riverdale struggles to find and keep a stable mentor cohort for its new teachers, some mentors who stay with the program for several years benefit in unanticipated but significant ways. As one mentor put it, “it gets me thinking about things that I could do better. When I’m watching somebody else...they have great ideas. So to me it’s always helpful.” Several Riverdale mentors value the opportunity to observe other classrooms, and stressed that they became more reflective practitioners as a result of their mentoring role. As one mentor explained,

A lot of times as teachers we forget to take that time to reflect. I mean, to be honest, it’s not like after every lesson I go, “How did that go? What can I improve?” But every once in a while, since I’ve now done this for two years, I find myself...saying, “This went really well. This is what I would change.”...It has definitely caused me to stop and reflect a little bit more.

Several Webster mentors agreed with one who said, “[The mentoring/induction program] really makes you think about your own teaching.” The mentoring experience appears to help create the “reflective practitioner,” in many cases. Another mentor noted that mentoring “makes me think about how I handle certain situations and what my classroom profile is like. I just don’t have to put it on paper.” She finished by saying that she is “constantly thinking about making [my teaching] better and helping students succeed.” Noting that teacher improvement is a long-range goal of induction programs, more attention might be paid to the secondary benefits that mentors experience.

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<sup>41</sup> York-Barr, J. and Duke, K. (2004). What do we know about teacher leadership? Findings from two decades of scholarship. *Review of Educational Research*. 74(3): 282.

<sup>42</sup> Villani, S. (2005). Mentoring promotes teacher leadership. In H. Portner (Ed.), *Teacher mentoring and induction: The state of the art and beyond*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. (193).

**Perceived problems with mentoring include too few mentors, special-subject teachers lacking direct subject help and classroom-management assistance, and finding time for mentors and protégés to meet. The most limited resource in mentoring is time, which is constrained by the preparation time needed by new teachers, the added professional and family responsibilities of the more experienced mentors, the desire to keep teachers in the classroom, lack of adequate planning time during the day, and pre- and after-school responsibilities of all teachers.**

While most participants praise the mentoring portion, there are some difficulties related to this program component. These issues vary by site but do not overwhelm the positive aspects of mentoring.

The best generalization about confronting the time constraints for mentor-protégé interaction may be that there is no generalization. Each district, each school, indeed, each mentor-protégé pair seemed to have different ways of overcoming their constraints. Approaches ranged from formal meetings arranged around site in-service days and common planning periods to informal interactions in the school hallway or via e-mail.

In Riverdale, about half of the mentors were matched with two protégés. All of the mentors viewed mentor recruitment as the most significant activity for program improvement. Interviewees noted that demand for mentors is especially acute in the secondary grades, where both teacher turnover and demand for coaches and club advisors are greater. Conversely, interest in mentoring is lower in the upper grades. Although the administrators have clear criteria for making matches, they cannot be used if few mentors are available in a building. In one situation, a high school English teacher mentored math teachers for the past two years.

Charter schools experience the greatest difficulty with matching new special-subject teachers with appropriate mentors. At one charter school one teacher talked about the different challenges faced by teachers of special education and special subjects. “It’s really difficult being a specialist teacher, to have a regular math, science, history, English teacher, mentor you. Because it’s a totally different area. The management is different. The atmosphere. Everything is so different in the [special] room compared to the other classrooms,” he said.

As noted earlier, Webster chose to match some special-subject teachers with mentors who worked in other buildings for the 2005-06 school year, a choice that made it difficult for them to meet and schedule observations. A few new teachers also were matched with their department chairs, which created difficulties during the program’s non-evaluative observations. One new teacher noted that “because he was also my department head, there was this whole thing where they were going to have department heads coming in and observing people, so it’s hard to tell...but I don’t remember which was for [the mentoring program] and which was just for his own.” The Webster site coordinator noted that department chairs do not have an evaluative role; however, some new teachers did not appear to understand this.

In Riverdale most protégés and mentors met once a month to conduct formal mentoring business. Most protégés also mentioned that they were able to ask their mentors non-Pathwise-related questions through e-mail or when they saw their mentors in the hall. Most formal meetings appear to take place after school since most mentors and protégés do not share planning periods. It appears that substitutes are used only as a last resort to complete mentoring program activities.

At Highline, mentor-protégé observations and meetings are usually held over three or four half-days throughout the school year, generally starting in the late fall. While the teachers have to find and prepare for substitutes, the school supports these meetings as a form of professional development. The half days allow mentors and protégés to schedule their observations or gather other information and concentrate on working through a particular event, from start to finish, without interruptions. However, it also limits the number of times that a mentor and protégé need to meet and have the opportunity to discuss subjects that are outside of Pathwise but are important to the protégé. A few of the protégés mentioned only those meetings, but most said they have more frequent, less formal, contacts with their mentors as well.

Time for the program at Carlisle was mentioned in other ways as well. A mentor mentioned that the time commitment kept some people from becoming mentors. “I know a lot of the reasons why people in my building don’t want to be a mentor. It’s the time because it’s outside the school schedule.” A lead mentor hoped that increased familiarity with the program will decrease the time needed to carry it out:

Like any program, it’s finding the time....I know [the site coordinator] does everything she can. She’ll come in and cover a class while you go observe somebody. I’ve offered that, but I don’t know how we can find more time. But the other thing is just getting used to the Pathwise program. Hopefully,...the mentors can become more familiar with [it] as we go along. Then it won’t take as much of [their] time.”

**Most new teachers feel comfortable with the distinction between the mentoring/induction program and their formal evaluation; at several sites people perceive a “firewall” between the two.**

If new teachers felt their actions within the mentoring and induction process were being monitored for evaluative purposes, they may not be forthcoming with their mentors or open to outside observation. The mentoring/induction program resolves this conflict between providing support and professional assistance with formal evaluation through a separation called a “firewall,” which has been in place since before the inception of the new teacher mentoring/induction program. Participants generally appeared to understand the program’s professional development function and view it as separate from their formal evaluation. For example, Carlisle’s site coordinator noted that “There’s nothing that’s part of the mentoring and induction that feeds into teacher evaluations. There’s a firewall.” With one exception, new teachers expressed comfort with the distinction between the mentoring/induction program and their evaluations.

The firewall concept has been actively asserted at the Webster School District. As the site coordinator explains it, “The whole Pathwise program of induction is very, very strict about there being a firewall between mentors and building administration...Mentors are never to go to principals and say, ‘you should have seen [this teacher’s] lesson today.’ One of the things we stress with mentors is that your only role is to support the new teacher[s] and give them feedback.” Mentors and lead mentors understood this distinction; as one noted, “I made it clear that I was not going to report on my opinions about any new teacher to [the principal]. Any weaknesses I observed in them was kept completely confidential from the administration.”

One charter school changed its structure to ensure the mentoring/induction-evaluation distinction. One of the school’s vice-principals administered the program during its first year. However, the next year site coordinator and lead mentor duties were transferred to an experienced teacher who had mentored for the previous two years. The vice-principal noted that the change from administrator to teacher was intentional:

It’s nice that it’s not tied to evaluation. If I do it, I can’t help it. I can’t help but tie them to evaluations. Only because I’m responsible for making sure they’re doing what they’re supposed to do. So it’s evaluative, in my opinion, if I do it. And teacher-to-teacher was a little...more open with what their needs are. They’ll be more honest about their needs, I believe, if it’s not an administrator who’s evaluating them. Therefore, it opens the door for them...to improve.

One teacher at this school understood this explicitly, when she said that “[my mentor] comes in to observe me, and that doesn’t make me nervous. It’s not [like] she’s all dressed up in her suit with her clipboard.”

Only one district seemed to be somewhat unclear about the firewall issue, particularly with new teacher observations. Some mentors were uncomfortable observing new teachers because they felt, regardless of the program’s claim that observations are non-evaluative, that they could not help but be perceived in an evaluative role. One mentor mentioned, “When I started, I just kind of listened out the door to see how other teachers were handling the problems. Myself, I’m not comfortable with going in and observing.” Another mentor was more forthright:

The observations are kind of awkward because [the lead mentors] tell you that [you’re] not supposed to be evaluating them, but in a sense that’s what you’re doing. You’re sitting there saying, that’s pretty good. And then when you give them recommendations, that’s kind of what you’re saying. You can do this better. This is how I would do it...Observations are okay, but it’s just like when you get observed by the administration...Every teacher has that tense feeling, like that’s what keeps your job or doesn’t keep your job.

Mentors in this district may be helped with greater communication about the firewall concept and more training in non-evaluative observations, which should not be directive.

While the firewall concept is necessary, it also has its drawbacks, as it can discourage administrators' understanding of the program. The purpose of the firewall is to encourage a feeling of trust between the mentor and protégé, not to create a barrier between administrators and staff. In some cases, however, noted the DOE administrator, "they're afraid to ask questions because they're afraid that they're breaching a firewall." In fact, lead mentors and site coordinators generally want school and district administrators to know more about the program because they believe that greater understanding will lead to greater program support. For example, principals who understand the program's cycles may be able to adjust their expectations for new teachers, so that if new teachers are working through Cycle One (planning and preparation), it may be too soon to expect great improvements in the classroom environment until they complete Cycle Two (classroom environment). In fact, the DOE administrator has spoken about Danielson's Framework and the mentoring/induction program to groups of administrators throughout the state within the past year, a positive step in ensuring that the program is better understood and integrated into schools and districts.

### ***Pathwise***

**The most appreciated aspects of Pathwise are the protégés' classroom observations of experienced teachers, opportunities to reflect on instructional techniques, classroom-management help, and its organized framework.**

Some first-year teachers stressed the benefits of Pathwise. "It makes sure you take a step back and look at what you're doing," said one Carlisle new teacher. Some mentors also saw Pathwise as aiding the new teachers' development. "I think part of it is really good for them because they get a chance to break things down as far as what they're doing in the classroom," said one. A Carlisle mentor noted its relevance for new teachers:

I think for the new teacher coming in the door it's an awesome program. That's the feedback I've heard, because you have to have someone help you get through that first month of school. In addition to that, you're making a connection in the district where you're being given professional development on a continual basis. I must say that...the program has really helped because it's relevant to what you're doing in the classroom.

All teachers, but new teachers especially, are so caught up in the myriad tasks they need to do every day that reflection can easily be forgotten. One Highline Charter teacher whose thoughts were shared by others stated:

I think it does make you stop and really look at each part of a lesson, whereas you might not do that otherwise. So it is a good habit to get into doing. I just think in real life most people have trouble doing that because it's so fast-paced otherwise and you don't really have that much time to do all the paperwork for each activity that you have. But it is eye-opening to have that reflection for each lesson.

As one new teacher stated, “it’s nice to reflect on what’s working, and what’s not working.” Several new teachers echoed this one, who said:

What I liked [about Pathwise] was that I can come out of my classroom, and kind of get it out of my head, and say, “Okay, I need to look at this from a larger perspective.” And the Pathwise program allowed me to put things down on paper, and...[think], How am I really feeling about this? Do I think was effective? Are there things I can change to make things better? So it gave me an opportunity to reflect. I think that was what I enjoyed about it. Because you don’t often take time to sit down and get that....Really think about your lesson.

Several Penfield Charter new teachers lauded the role of observing other classrooms in their development as a teacher. One new teacher stated, “I’ve gone to observe one or two other teachers during the course of the year, and last year. And I would like to do a lot more of that. And I would really like to be able to go out and observe teachers [in my specialty area] in other schools.” The school director also stressed the desirability of teachers observing other classrooms.

According to many Webster new teachers and mentors, Pathwise’s greatest strengths were its observations and non-evaluative feedback. A mentor spoke for others when she said, “I think the observation part is the most crucial part for them, for them to be able to go see other people. I think it’s helpful to have us go see them maybe before an administrator comes just to have someone in there and see what that feels like. I think that is the key to the program.” A new teacher appreciated not only her mentor’s observations, but other ones as well. “The observations were the best part of last year, and not just having my mentor come in and observe me and tell me things that she thought went well...but actually having other teachers come in and observe me....I liked that because it was nice to get feedback from someone else about how they thought things were going.”

**Pathwise is viewed by new teachers and mentors as often complicated and confusing, with too much paperwork and redundancy.**

Pathwise generated a great deal of emotional response from participants. While mentoring generated many positive comments, Pathwise bore the brunt of the criticisms. Complaints were made at all sites, focusing primarily on the paperwork requirements, complicated instructions, and repetition. Several mentors agreed that Pathwise was too burdensome for new teachers.

It is important to note that DOE is aware of this issue and has streamlined Pathwise since its initial implementation. In fact, because of these efforts, complaints about paperwork declined significantly between those who started during the program’s first year and those who started in the program’s second year. DOE has received permission from Charlotte Danielson to develop further improvements to its structure. A collaborative process that includes site coordinator and lead mentor input guided these changes, which will be introduced at the beginning of the 2007-08 school year.

Districts and schools are permitted to and do handle paperwork requirements differently. Some districts, such as Webster and Riverdale, require that some paperwork be handed in for each event completed for accountability purposes. One Riverdale administrator noted that “we require it to ensure *all* teachers are actually doing the work.” On the other hand, Carlisle does not require any paperwork except for attestation forms that need to be signed and handed in by protégés and mentors at the end of each cycle.

Many new teachers expressed dislike for the forms they completed at the end of each Pathwise event, commenting on the repetitive questions that made them feel like they were endlessly writing the same answer. Several new teachers expressed frustration with vague and confusing wording on the forms (one noted that they have to “read a form on how to fill out a form.”) Some mentors also noted confusion about Pathwise. A particularly critical mentor was specific about her problems with the books and forms:

We try to follow the booklet, which I personally think is extremely difficult. The way it is laid out makes no sense to me. I don't think I've figured it out despite my many efforts to do so....Maybe it's just me, but I can't, I just honestly cannot follow where to go next. And I have to constantly come in here and try to figure out if we're on the right track. We have this form, but yet we don't start here. We start over here. And then we're not sure where to go next. It's very confusing.

Some teachers also observed that Pathwise took them back to the educational experience they thought they had completed. New teachers who had received their teacher preparation from Wilmington College and the Alternative Routes to Certification at UD shared these views of repeating the program. For example, one new teacher stated that “I think a lot of the problem is that I was taking Alternative Route classes, and it was such overkill, overload, overlap.” However, another new teacher noted the upside of repetition: “I think [learning about Pathwise in college] helped me more because I went through it before. I think coming into it, not really knowing the system, it would have been overwhelming to me because it was overwhelming when I started it in college. At first, you're not really sure why you're doing it, but then you start to see the changes over time,” she explained. While these programs do discuss Pathwise as part of the new teacher-induction experience and at times share some similar language with Pathwise, they are in no way intended to replace any of the induction components.

Concerns like the ones noted above can result in a rejection or limited use of Pathwise. One mentor stated, “I believe that the fact that it's a bit confusing, the program has probably caused us not to meet as frequently as we would have. If we could understand the steps more easily, we would have actually probably tried to accomplish more specific things.” Some new teachers also brought up the point that working through the Pathwise paperwork kept them from accomplishing other program components. “Sometimes [Pathwise] just got in the way. It made it stressful, and I would have rather have sat down and said, all right, this is what happened today and how do I fix it, but we didn't have time always to do that,” one said. A mentor noted, “I thought it required a lot of paperwork from the protégé, and I think the time could have been spent maybe more with observations...instead of them being somewhere...filling out all that paperwork.”



**Pathwise is viewed as working best for regular elementary school teachers but has more limited applicability for special-subject and high school teachers.**

The general participant reaction was that Pathwise is most appropriate for elementary-level classrooms. At several sites, teachers questioned its relevance for special-subject and high school teachers. Some specialist teachers said that the program does not address their issues. “It was more stuff that was, I’d say, related to core classes more than with [music]. They want you to turn in examples of student work [but] most of my stuff is oral. You’ve got to hear what’s going on,” said one teacher. A special-education teacher mentioned, “A lot of the events...didn’t pertain to the type of activities that I would do.” Another special-education teacher noted that “I just think the most crucial thing is that it’s not always geared towards the rest of us that are kind of left over here.”

Some middle and high school teachers throughout the districts saw Pathwise as targeted to the elementary school level in terms of activities and examples. “It’s a lot of elementary school stuff, and it’s hard to apply that to the children that we have. So when you actually read the book and then you look at your classroom habits, it doesn’t help at all,” said one. Another new teacher pointed out that “I really didn’t think that [Pathwise] helped in those ways, because those questions are based on an ideal situation, the utopian classroom, where you only have 20 students and they’re all at grade level. But the reality of it is we have everything from the lowest of the low to the super, super high, and I didn’t think the questions really tapped into that diversity.”

Part of the criticism from secondary-school teachers may reflect traditions at different school levels. In elementary school, mentoring and induction are more often a part of its culture. In many elementary schools, many activities are done collaboratively, including curriculum planning, child study, professional development, and instruction. One elementary school mentor said, “In general, the teachers here are just very easygoing.... Anybody will help you.”

This point speaks to the importance of context. It is obvious that much of the elementary school environment is conducive to supporting new teachers. The ‘sink-or-swim’ model does not find a home there as it does in the secondary schools. Acceptance of Pathwise may well be impacted by the differing contexts of the three grade levels.

The Alliance for Excellent Education’s report recognizes that little research has focused on the unique issues of high school induction; however, it suggests the following:

- mentors in the same subject area
- training in English-language instruction
- adequate time for induction activities;
- special assistance for teachers with nontraditional preparation
- a positive working environment and realistic workload.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> *Tapping the Potential: Retaining and Developing High-Quality Teachers*. (2005). Washington, DC: The Alliance for Excellent Education. (20-21).

DOE recognizes that certain educators have different needs from regular teachers and has been working to improve the induction experience for special-subject teachers and others who are required to complete the mentoring/induction program. Last year it organized groups of specialists, including nurses, counselors, and psychologists, and has supported their efforts to create parallel induction systems that incorporate Danielson's Framework, observations, reflections, and other components while still being reflective of their professional practice. The revised programs for nurses and school counselors will be introduced at the start of the 2007-08 school year. DOE is also working with the University of Delaware to change the program for special-education teachers, so that it is more meaningful to their work while following the same structure.

**Many participants tend to differentiate between mentoring and Pathwise, even though they are meant to be integrated and cohesive.**

The mentoring/induction program is designed to use the mentor-protégé relationship as a means through which the Pathwise induction program is delivered. While many participants do not recognize that these two components are supposed to work together, Pathwise also may help focus the mentoring relationship. For example, although many new teachers seem to favor mentoring, they also appreciate the observation and reflection that Pathwise requires and with which mentoring assists. On the other hand, some participants see an inherent tension between the two components, as more time spent with one appears to mean less with the other. "It was overwhelming to have to do all the individual education plans and everything that I needed to do for the first year....To be honest with you, I did Pathwise more outside of...mentoring," one new teacher said. In short, the role of Pathwise and mentoring within the program is complex.

A Riverdale teacher suggested that the fuller benefits of the program may not be realized until some time has passed and new teachers gain perspective on their first year:

Yesterday we just finished up with the people who are doing the second-year assessment [piece]. And we were kind of actually talking about this yesterday and said, 'You know, when we look back now, was it really that big of a deal?' And they're like, 'No. It really wasn't. It really was helpful once it was all done.'

***Assessment for Learning***

**Many participants value the Assessment *for* Learning component for its usefulness in the classroom. However, most districts implementing it report struggles with its structure, level of difficulty, and consistency. Since implementation has just begun, and because implementation of a complex program component takes time to develop, these results should be considered suggestive rather than definitive.**

Although he was not discussing Assessment *for* Learning at the time, Harry Wong identifies one of the key aspects of Cycle Three, learning teams: "Teachers remain in teaching when they belong to professional learning communities that have, at their heart, high-quality interpersonal relationships founded on trust and respect. Thus, collegial

interchange, not isolation, must become the norm for teachers.”<sup>44</sup> *Assessment for Learning* was initiated, either completely or partially, in the four districts during the 2005-06 school year. The two charter schools implemented the program during the 2006-07 school year. New teachers can opt to take an *Assessment for Learning* cluster at the same time, which is significantly more work but results in a two-percent pay raise for five years. In many districts, experienced teachers can also participate in *Assessment for Learning* as a cluster, further expanding the new teachers’ collegial cadre.

Many participants spoke enthusiastically about *Assessment for Learning*, especially when compared to *Pathwise*. “There were more things you could actually use in the classroom in *Assessment* [compared to *Pathwise*],” said one new teacher. A lead mentor who led a group and took the component as a cluster said, “It gave me a different way of looking at assessment. I used a lot of the ideas from [*Assessment* and] working with other teachers.” Another new teacher liked the program’s requirement to apply its teachings in the classroom. “Every time we would walk away, we would try to make sure that we implemented something that we did in that particular session in our classroom. So it wasn’t just like we were doing it and not applying it. We would always apply it, and then when we came back, we would talk about how did it work and was it successful,” he said.

As with *Pathwise*, sites are able to take the structure of *Assessment for Learning*—“learning teams” facilitated by lead mentors—and adjust it to fit their own contexts. For example, lead mentors in the Carlisle district held some large-scale meetings in addition to facilitating the smaller learning teams. New teachers reported success with the program when they worked in their smaller groups but found larger, all-inclusive meetings to be unnecessary. “I got very little out of the larger group. We had an excellent group that worked together here at [school], and we learned a lot just talking with each other as we worked through the book together. I would say that...was probably the most valuable time versus the time spent with the larger group. Sometimes we weren’t all on the same page when we met together,” one new teacher said.

Several participants throughout the districts reported problems with the start up of the *Assessment for Learning* segment, including lack of clarity and consistency in structure and expectations and problems with the time commitment required. A new teacher expressed some confusion with the program’s requirements, saying, “I think it took some real communicating to figure out what we had to hand in and in what format.” A lead mentor echoed this sentiment, saying, “The program was a struggle, because the material is very complicated for a second- or third-year teacher to take on, even with support.”

Some of Webster’s lead mentors led meetings of between eight and twenty new teachers; however, as one lead mentor noted, “leaders weren’t provided with enough structure and information about expectations, so we were all running our meetings very differently.” She holds DOE accountable for the inconsistencies, rather than the district: “I think that [2005-06] should have been a pilot year across the state,” she said, “because we were running a program given to us by the state, but [it] didn’t provide us with the structure we

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<sup>44</sup> Wong, H. (2004). Induction programs that keep new teachers teaching and improving. *NASSP Bulletin*, 88(638): 50.

needed.” However, she also credits DOE for making improvements to the component’s structure in the 2006-07 school year. “Those of us with experience have been giving input which was taken seriously and lots of really good changes have come about as a result...the state has given us more freedom as districts to set assignments, readings and expectations.” Webster’s site coordinator noted, “At the end of the year, when it was time for evaluating, many [of the new teachers] said, ‘I went in kicking and screaming, I was furious that I had to do this, but boy, did I learn a lot.’ They really came out of it feeling like they had accomplished something.”

These issues were not heard in the smaller, more cohesive Riverdale district, where two mentors cooperatively facilitated the learning teams for all ten of the district’s Cycle Three teachers. Riverdale’s site coordinator noted that all the administrators have been through the assessment cluster, and some principals have implemented it in their schools apart from the mentoring program. She believes that the assessment component has been “very enlightening” for the teachers who have completed it because “giving kids comments is the most powerful thing you can do....It forces them to internalize what they really need to work on....It gets [teachers] away from always thinking [that] assessment means tests.”

One Riverdale teacher, who works in a team-taught classroom with regular and special-education students, believes that Assessment *for* Learning helps to equalize the groups of students that she teaches. According to that teacher, rather than grouping the students according to ability, the assessment strategies provide a continuum along which all students might progress. It also teaches students to set their own goals for learning, and special-education students work better when they understand the goal of their work. She noted, “If they can see the goal, they can reach it. A lot of times we arbitrarily teach them; they come in and we say, ‘This is our lesson for the day.’ But the kids have no idea where we’re headed. So you’re putting that in front of them immediately and saying, ‘This is where we’re headed. This is what we’re going to learn. And it might take us three weeks to get there, but this is where we’re going.’”

However, a special-education teacher in the Webster district, who works with nonverbal children, did not find Assessment *for* Learning suited well for her students. She said, “I’d say this has had very little impact on me. But the one positive thing I can say about this [is that] I think this is excellent material. I think it’s really very good for classroom teachers. The reason I do like it is because the way they talk about data collection and rubrics and creating clear targets....The problem is that I had nonverbal kids and used picture communication, and a lot of this was very involved. My kids would never understand this. So that’s why it didn’t really fit me in my classroom.” Instead, she and another teacher adapted the materials to be more relevant and is now leading a group of similar second-year teachers in Assessment *for* Learning this school year.

## Suggestions for Future Improvement

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Many educators from throughout the sites offered their thoughts about the program and how it could be improved. They center on the following suggestions:

### **Promote genuine understanding and support of school leaders.**

York-Barr and Duke, upon reviewing 20 years of teacher leadership studies, state that “school culture is recognized as a dominant influence on the success of improvement initiatives in schools.”<sup>45</sup> They list some school culture facilitators of teacher leadership as “school-wide focus on learning, inquiry, and reflective practice,” “teacher leaders viewed and valued as positive examples and role models for teaching profession,” and “strong teacher communities that foster professionalism,” while some challenges are “norms of isolation and individualism,” “lack of clarity about organizational and professional direction (and) purpose,” and “reluctance by teachers to ‘advance’ and violate egalitarianism.”<sup>46</sup> The induction literature agrees. The Alliance for Excellent Education, in its report, “Tapping the Potential: Retaining and Developing High-Quality New Teachers,” states that “induction works best when it is systematically embedded in the culture of a school. A principal, more than any other school leader, can make induction an integral part of the school culture.”<sup>47</sup> Bartell adds, “Site administrators who understand the role of the mentors and the professional development activities in which the teacher will engage can reinforce the messages that new teachers receive.”<sup>48</sup>

Gates and Siskin’s 2001 study of principals’ leadership styles concludes that “while generally supportive of the concept of teacher leadership, principals may lack the knowledge and experience required to effectively support higher levels of such leadership.”<sup>49</sup> Thus, since the success of the mentoring/induction program is dependent to some extent on the principal knowledge and support, DOE and other program administrators may wish to consider a more structured outreach to school principals and other administrators. The Alliance for Excellent Education agrees, noting, “not all principals know how to support new teachers or identify quality mentors. Principals need training in these areas if they are to succeed.”<sup>50</sup>

It was apparent that many of the school and district-level administrators, while supportive of the program in general, lacked in-depth understanding of its scope. To effectively

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<sup>45</sup> York-Barr, J. and Duke, K. (2004). What do we know about teacher leadership? Findings from two decades of scholarship. *Review of Educational Research*, 74(3): 269.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p. 270.

<sup>47</sup> *Tapping the Potential: Retaining and Developing High-Quality Teachers*. (2005). Washington, DC: The Alliance for Excellent Education. (22).

<sup>48</sup> Bartell, C. (2005). *Cultivating high-quality teaching through induction and mentoring*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. (50).

<sup>49</sup> York-Barr, J. and Duke, K. (2004). What do we know about teacher leadership? Findings from two decades of scholarship. *Review of Educational Research*, 74(3): 274.

<sup>50</sup> *Tapping the Potential: Retaining and Developing High-Quality Teachers*. (2005). Washington, DC: The Alliance for Excellent Education. (23).

facilitate the integration of teacher mentoring and induction into the culture of Delaware schools, educational leaders need to be more aware of the program's goals and what it provides for and expects of its participants. Recognizing the critical roles that school leaders play regarding activities that significantly affect mentoring and induction (such as supporting professional development and classroom observations, and providing personnel evaluations), leaders' genuine understanding and support is of considerable importance. The firewall between new teacher mentoring and administrator evaluation, while legitimate, should not obstruct general understanding and support of the program.

The mentoring/induction program's administrator recognizes that school-leader support can only serve to improve the program. She and others believe that application of the Delaware Performance Appraisal System II, a new teacher and administrator evaluation system based on Charlotte Danielson's work, will provide the basis for greater understanding of the mentoring/induction program.

### **Improve and expand mentor training.**

Villani notes that "Coaching is one of the most important aspects of a mentor's role with new teachers. Training is necessary for mentors to become effective coaches."<sup>51</sup> The induction literature suggests that mentors should be familiar with identifying new teacher needs, coaching skills, working with adult learners, collecting classroom performance data, and providing non-evaluative assessments. Moir notes that "to have a real impact, induction programs must provide the same kind of support to mentors that the mentors are, in turn, providing to new teachers."<sup>52</sup> However, while lead mentors receive a great deal of high-quality training, mentor training has received less attention. Mentor training is provided at the discretion of individual districts and charter schools; typically, it takes place in one day before the school year begins or over several days after school during the school year. Support for increased and improved training was not universal; however, many new teachers, mentors, and lead mentors indicated that training in various areas could be expanded and improved.

A major theme at Penfield Charter is the desire for more training in the program. One mentor called the one day of training inadequate, adding that "it takes time to figure out the forms." Another mentor added, "Well, we had a quick one-day training. And not that I like a lot of downtime....I like to be in my classroom, but I think it would have been helpful to break the training down a little bit."

Mentors from other districts agreed with this assessment, noting that while they do not want *more* training, they would like training that is *improved* in its clarity, consistency, and relevance to various grade levels and specialty areas. According to the mentoring and

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<sup>51</sup> Villani, S. (2005). Mentoring promotes teacher leadership. In H. Portner (Ed.), *Teacher mentoring and induction: The state of the art and beyond*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. (183).

<sup>52</sup> Moir, E. (2005). Launching the next generation of teachers: The New Teacher Center's model for quality induction and mentoring. In H. Portner (Ed.), *Teacher mentoring and induction: The state of the art and beyond*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. (62).

induction literature, however, the type of training that mentors really need would require more time, something that practical limitations and contractual obligations may preclude.

As noted earlier, lead mentors consistently praised their preparation. However, both charter school lead mentors found it more difficult to attend all the trainings and workshops. One charter school lead mentor received one day of training in the first year of the program and was one of the few lead mentors who did not feel well prepared. She had been involved in mentoring in her previous position, but would appreciate more DOE training. “I never feel as prepared as I should be....I think the training was good. But I just always feel like, am I missing something? Should I be a better listener, better understanding what they’re saying? Do I really understand the system, the program?” she asked. In fact, the DOE administrator often travels to each school to provide the lead mentor a day of training. She also sends all lead mentors e-mail updates and reminders of due dates, workshops, and so forth. The other charter school lead mentor added, “I think it’s kind of hard being our own entity. Because there aren’t a lot of people out there that I get to communicate with on a regular basis....Sometimes I get a little lost in what’s going on. I don’t think I get a lot of information here that a district will get....So I have to really inquire, ‘What is this about? And what does this mean?’” she said. While the DOE administrator tries to accommodate charter school program leaders, she also stresses that all sites need to make regular training a priority.

### **Provide more structured time for mentor-protégé interaction.**

Lack of time for mentors and protégés to meet is a common theme in mentoring programs and literature on mentoring. The National Foundation for the Improvement of Education reports that while “only 36 percent of protégés who work with mentors ‘a few times a year’ report substantial improvements to their instructional skills, that figure jumps to an impressive 88 percent for those who work with mentors once a week.”<sup>53</sup>

Finding time for mentors and protégés to meet is an issue across sites. Various approaches met with mixed success. For example, in Franklin, the transition over the past two years from structured meeting times to more independent, online communication has left some mentors and protégés wanting something in between. They all recognize the constraints upon their time but they also see a need for more structured interactions. “I think just a little more time, maybe give us a half-day a month. I know time is a critical thing these days, but we just need the time,” said one new teacher.

Highline Charter allows for half-days, covered by substitutes, for mentors and protégés to observe each other and meet afterwards to work through Pathwise materials. Most participants reported satisfaction with this arrangement; however, its drawback is that mentors and protégés may meet very few times unless they see each other informally.

Many mentors chose not to take advantage of the release time provided by the program, since it involved getting substitute coverage for their classes. Because of the

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<sup>53</sup> Foundation for the Improvement of Education. (2001). *Creating a Teacher Mentoring Program*. Retrieved 3/8/07 from [www.neafoundation.org/publications/mentoring.htm#creating](http://www.neafoundation.org/publications/mentoring.htm#creating).

complications of having substitutes in their classrooms—additional planning and subsequent re-teaching—they worked into their schedules observations and other time with their protégés. Many saw using substitutes as an ineffective solution to the time issue. Other suggestions included lessened class loads and shortened days, based on banking hours. Some, but not all, were not open to after-school hours.

It is unlikely there is a one-size-fits-all answer to how to find time for protégé-mentor interaction. However, the research suggests some formality should be required, or strongly recommended. That is, some proportion of the mentor-protégé clock hours of meeting should be in more formal blocks of at least one-half hour. Bartell suggests the following potential approaches to the time dilemma: “releasing teachers from classrooms for a portion of the day or week; using staff development days for meetings; holding Saturday meetings; meeting during times that classes may be working with specialists; and hiring a roving substitute to cover classes when teachers are released. Whatever arrangements are made,” she maintains, “it is most important that regular meetings be scheduled and that teachers honor the established schedule.”<sup>54</sup>

School and district administrators also should encourage mentors and protégés to meet and observe classrooms regularly. Administrators could also discourage the practice of giving new teachers after-school assignments such as coaching or club advising, which would help to free more time for the mentoring/induction program.

**Encourage more collegial interaction beyond the mentor-protégé dyad among participants in the program, including lead mentors, mentors and protégés.**

Many mentors and protégés suggested the need to have more structured time together beyond mentor-protégé meetings to foster collegiality and build professional relationships. They also said that more scheduled time together would strengthen the training experience and enable them to complete some of the assigned tasks more effectively. One new teacher said:

I think there should be more of the relationship going on. I think we should have certain meetings and maybe not just meet with our mentor, but meet with all of the mentors together and all of the people who are in the mentoring program for their first three years at an in-service day or a meeting after school sometime just to get everybody in there together and kind of bang thoughts around.

The Webster district encourages collegiality via monthly building meetings, which new teachers appreciated even though the meetings do not contribute to moving through the Pathwise component.

Program administrators also should consider how interaction could help to build upon mentor learning from participation in the program. Several mentors indicated how much they had learned from the program. Focusing attention on their development, in addition

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<sup>54</sup> Bartell, C. (2005). *Cultivating high-quality teaching through induction and mentoring*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. (80).



to the development of protégés, would be positive. More generally, DOE should consider using this research as a basis for workshops with program leaders and other participants to discuss the program's implementation and future steps.

### **Promote more observation.**

Bartell states that "It is important that mentors have time to get into the new teacher's classroom to observe and give feedback to the new teacher. New teachers also find it helpful to observe their mentor or other experienced teachers."<sup>55</sup> Observation is not just a good idea; the mentoring/induction program requires it at certain points throughout the new teacher's first year. In most cases throughout the sites, protégés did observe mentors and/or other experienced teachers. In almost all cases, the time spent by the mentors observing new teacher classrooms and the collaboration that evolved from this was viewed as very beneficial. "The observation parts were helpful. Especially with my sixth graders, it helped me just set up learning centers, different modes of instruction, and then also provided some positive feedback as well," said one new teacher.

Numerous respondents suggested increasing time spent observing instruction, both the mentor observing the protégé and vice versa. "I observed [my protégé] and I'm giving her my perspective on it. I think it would have been better if she could observe me and see how I may or may not have handled it, and we could have some discussions back and forth," said one mentor. Some participants thought that the observations should include classrooms of other quality instructors, regardless of building and district, as some districts already do in some instances. One mentor said:

Just give them some good, seasoned veteran teachers or maybe even some younger teachers that were very successful with teaching to try to find out what it's really all about. . . .As a matter of fact, I'm not even concerned about them staying right here within our district. The state could even select teachers and let people go out to observe other teachers. Or maybe go through the buildings and get the Teachers of the Year for their districts.

The DOE administrator noted that the mentoring literature now discourages protégés observing mentors because protégés may feel some subtle pressure to teach like their mentors do, regardless of whether or not it is applicable to their classroom.

While it is a requirement and funds are provided for substitutes so that observations can take place, a few participants noted that they were either not observed or did not get a chance to observe. However, it is up to the districts and schools to ensure they can be carried out. This is another area where informed principals and administrators could help strengthen the program. Given that participants find this to be so valuable to the first-year experience, greater emphasis should be placed by districts and schools on ensuring that at least two observations of protégés by mentors and two observations of experienced teachers by new teachers occur.

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid, p. 80.

### **Continue to adapt first-year induction materials and streamline paperwork.**

As noted earlier, mentors and new teachers provided several suggestions to adapt the Pathwise materials to more appropriately address a variety of classrooms and levels of instruction. In fact, a special-education teacher did adapt the Assessment *for* Learning materials for her cohort. Another common recommendation was to lessen the paperwork currently required of new teachers. DOE has streamlined the forms associated with induction since its initial implementation and continues to work on improving it with Charlotte Danielson's and its teacher-leaders' suggestions.

### **To the extent possible, use nationally recognized criteria for mentor selection and matching.**

According to Kilburg and Hancock, the basic factors to a successful mentor-protégé match are “work in the same building; similar interests and philosophy; willingness to work with the new teacher; strong interpersonal skills; same grade level and subject; experience; and expertise in a variety of areas.”<sup>56</sup> Experienced participants agree that for the most part, mentor quality improved with the introduction of the new mentoring/induction program; gone were those who were becoming mentors only for the stipend. Nonetheless, a great deal of variation was found among the sites in how mentors are chosen and matched. In some cases, especially at the beginning of the program and for larger districts, lead mentors and site coordinators had to accept nearly anyone who wanted to mentor; however, as participants have gained experience with the program, they have learned some of the lessons that the literature on mentoring relates.

As discussed earlier, almost all of the program participants viewed matches between teachers in the same building as a critical precondition of successful mentoring. While some extraordinary teachers may be able to work with new teachers in other schools, their commitment does not compensate for what could be lost to the protégé. One Franklin mentor, whose protégé was in another school separated only by a football field, encapsulated the problem: “One of the most consistent criticisms throughout the mentoring program over the years has been mismatching mentors and protégés, [especially when] you have either two people in two unrelated disciplines...[or] if they are at two different schools. E-mail does make it better than it used to be because when we didn't have e-mail, that football field might as well have been miles [away] because you just get focused on your things.” The Webster school district found this to be the most significant factor in satisfaction with a protégé-mentor match and changed its policy to satisfy program participants.

Some induction programs are able to be selective in the choice of their mentors, and the selection process is conducted through an application process. These types of programs go further than the above criteria and search for mentors with a certain number of years of instructional practice, ability to work with adult learners with diverse backgrounds, commitment to lifelong learning and ethical practice, and proof, in the form of

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<sup>56</sup> Kilburg, G. and Hancock, T. (2006). Addressing sources of collateral damage in four mentoring programs. *Teachers College Record*. 108(7):1321-1338.

recommendations from other teachers, of being excellent role models.<sup>57</sup> In the event that schools and districts reach the point where they can choose mentors based on more than building and subject proximity, perhaps they can begin to implement some of the other criteria as well.

**Find creative ways to share current “best practices” within the program among districts and charter schools.**

There is a desire among some program participants to gain a broader view of what works within the program. DOE already hosts large groups of site coordinators, lead mentors, and others for information dissemination three or four times a year. In addition, the DOE administrator regularly sends site coordinators and some lead mentors information updates, and certainly training sessions that include all sites help address this need. However, more might be done. For example, perhaps more lead mentors in addition to or instead of site coordinators could be brought to regular meetings. Perhaps one meeting could be devoted to lead mentors and other teacher leaders trading methods they use to address common problems or issues, such as dealing with time dilemmas or selecting lead mentors. Perhaps a manual describing various ways to approach common questions could be developed, or an e-mail list-serv created for the teacher leaders. Another possibility is to use the mentoring program’s website to post questions about best practices along with the submitted answers.

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<sup>57</sup> Bartell, C. (2005). *Cultivating high-quality teaching through induction and mentoring*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. (76-77).

## **Reflections on Critical Questions for the Future**

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Several questions arose from the interviews and potential changes in the program considered by the top state officials as the study progressed that warrant comment but were not the focus of the data collection and analysis. The points below thus stand as reflections and not definitive recommendations. We believe that these are significant questions to address now but realize that many more possible answers may exist.

### **How effective is the train-the-trainer model?**

On the one hand, the train-the-trainer model is less expensive, because outside consultants are not required for training and training can be on-site. In addition, the training can focus on specific aspects of the program appropriate for implementation in Delaware. On the other hand, the train-the-trainer model is like the game of telephone, where one person tells the next a message and after a few transmittals the message can be garbled or distorted. Not all communicators are equally adept at sending or receiving the message. However, as any teacher knows, the very act of transmitting training often leads the trainer to better understanding of the program.

The cases provided evidence of each of these points. Many respondents sought more or better training, there was not agreement on program goals, and not everyone fully understood the program. It was not possible to sort out to what extent this is the result of it being a new program versus the problems inherent in the train-the-trainer model.

An underlying problem with this model is that it focuses attention and resources at the top of the system when the greatest need for training and support is at the lower levels of the system, the new teachers and mentors. In addition, the program requires cultural change at the school level to reach its full potential. These issues admittedly are complex and without easy solutions but seem to warrant a consideration of the efficacy or strength of the train-the-trainer approach. Alternative approaches, such as a model focusing on team mentoring or full-time release mentors (teachers released from classroom teaching to mentor a cohort of new teachers full time), would be worth consideration.

### **How much would a full-time release mentor approach help?**

Many district program administrators, along with DOE's coordinators, support the full-time-release mentor model,<sup>58</sup> for several reasons. The train-the-trainer approach for many mentors provides less certainty that the mentors are being appropriately trained than training provided at higher levels for fewer mentors. Not only would services to new teachers potentially be enhanced, but this approach would allow for more selectivity in the designation of mentors and better mentor training and development. It could also

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<sup>58</sup> One example of full-time release mentors is used by the New Teacher Center at the University of California – Santa Cruz. Consult its website, [www.newteachercenter.org/ti\\_scsyntp.php](http://www.newteachercenter.org/ti_scsyntp.php), for more details and links to other full-time mentor release induction programs.

potentially help charter schools that find it difficult to keep abreast of the program and, in some cases, provide experienced mentors to all its new teachers. Full-time-release mentors could spend more time coaching new teachers and spending time in their classroom, either to observe, team teach a lesson, or provide new teachers with more opportunities to observe other experienced teachers. Finally, a full-time-release model includes weekly collegial meetings for groups of mentors to share their experiences and act as resources for each other, enabling them to become even better teacher leaders. Delaware's Vision 2015 report provides some support for the idea when it states in one of its recommendations that both pay and advancement should be linked to "progress along the career path, which includes positions such as mentor and master teacher."<sup>59</sup>

Carlisle's program leaders expressed support for large changes in the program. Its site coordinator is ready for Carlisle to be a pilot district for full-time release mentors:

My dream world is for us to have release mentors, released from the classroom. That's my goal. Full release time. I would like to have release mentors, you know, put the logistics down. It would be challenging right now, but I would like them to be released for a period of maybe two, three years. And that their full-time job would be to work solely with the new teachers. And how that would work here at Carlisle, we would not need lead mentors at that point. It would just be these release teachers and myself... We would need maybe four people. And assign those four people twelve teachers. And they would be required to meet with them every week for an hour and a half, two hours. I think that would be most effective.

The cases also indicated some mitigating factors, however. One was the significance of proximity in the success of mentor-protégé relationships. For the most part, new teachers whose mentors did not teach in their school reported a less than satisfactory experience. Second, there was some sentiment that the program keeps changing and that just as people learn what they are doing, it is modified once again. Therefore, more change may be a factor mitigating successful program implementation. On the other hand, the program changes have taken place in order to ameliorate various problems with the previous versions. It is conceivable that the full-time-release model may make more sense at the secondary-school level, where there is a weaker norm of mentoring. DOE has explored this option but is constrained by fiscal limitations, since the use of full-time-release mentors would incur greater costs to the program. To the extent that DOE moves to fund full-time-release mentors to gain the discussed benefits, care should be taken to address the concerns about proximity and constant program change.

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<sup>59</sup> *Vision 2015 Report*. (2006). Vision 2015 Steering Committee. (15). Retrieved on 4/26/07 from [www.vision2015delaware.org/resources/Vision2015report1-26.pdf](http://www.vision2015delaware.org/resources/Vision2015report1-26.pdf).

## **How can districts and schools move from individual, technical implementation to school integration and transformation?**

Hal Portner writes that “the induction and mentoring process itself must be ingrained into the culture of a school in order for it to continue to serve its purpose over time.”<sup>60</sup> As more and more districts and charters move beyond the introduction stage to full implementation, they will face issues of integration and transformation. That is, they will need to consider how to move from implementing the program to changing their system or school. Specifically, they will face questions such as the relationship of the program to other forms of professional development, how the assignment of new teachers relates to the availability of quality mentors, and how this program dovetails with other reform measures. Perhaps the state can work with the districts where the program is more fully implemented to help plan ways of addressing such matters in the districts and charter schools that will soon face these issues.

### ***Future Research***

Given the study results, suggestions for future improvement, and critical questions facing the program, the following future research could help to evaluate and improve the program:

- Determine new teacher retention rates and patterns for the state, school districts, and schools before and after the program’s implementation. (DOE has funded three University of Delaware researchers, led by Jeffrey Raffel, to begin this research in February 2007.)
- Examine the internal and external conditions that encourage or inhibit the development of teacher leadership throughout the state. (The Unidel Foundation has funded research led by Anthony Middlebrooks for this purpose.)
- Develop and apply a measure of program implementation across all districts in the state (such as the Stages of Concern configuration as developed by Gene E. Hall, Archie A. George, and William L. Rutherford)<sup>61</sup>
- Reexamine the implementation of the Assessment *for* Learning component after several districts and charters throughout the state have had at least two years of experience fully implementing it.

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<sup>60</sup> Portner, H. (2005). Embedding mentoring and induction into the school’s culture. In H. Portner (Ed.), *Teacher mentoring and induction: The state of the art and beyond*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. (75).

<sup>61</sup> George, A., G. Hall, and W. Rutherford. (1980). *Stages of concern about the innovation: the concept, verification, and implications*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Case Study Protocol:**

#### **Questions Asked of Each Participant Group**

## Questions for first-year teachers

### *Lead Question*

(Grade/subject taught, same for mentor)

1. Please describe how the mentoring/induction program works in your school/district.

### *Leadership and Administration*

2. Overall, who provides leadership for the program in this school/district?
  - In what ways do they provide leadership?
  - How supportive of the program are the administrators in your school/district?
3. What or who has been helpful during your participation in the program?

### *Context*

4. Does your school/district also have its own orientation, mentoring, or induction program that is different from the State's program?
  - What is included in your school/district's orientation or program?
  - How does the school/district's program relate to the State's program? (e.g., enhancements, redundancies, etc.)
  - How would you describe the priority that your district/school places on professional development?

### *Purpose and Goals*

5. What do you think are the mentoring/induction program's goals? (In other words, what is the program trying to do?)

### *Mentoring*

6. How well do you think you and your mentor are matched?
  - Describe your ideal mentor.
7. Describe the strengths of your mentor. (To what degree have the mentors provided quality support, assistance, feedback, and suggestions?) Examples?
  - Any weaknesses of your mentor? Examples?
8. What would have made the experience with your mentor a better one?
  - How might new teachers be better prepared for the mentoring experience?
9. How often do you and your mentor meet? For how long? When do you meet (common planning time, after school, other)?



10. When you and your mentor get together, what topics are usually discussed? (What did you discuss the last time you saw your mentor?)
11. What kind of an impact has the Pathwise part of the program had on you, if at all?
  - How has the Pathwise curriculum been beneficial to you, if at all, in terms of teaching and classroom management?
  - Has Pathwise changed the way you teach or interact with your students in any way? If so, how? Examples?

*Evaluation*

12. Overall, how do you think the program is going?
  - What are the program's greatest strengths and weaknesses?
  - What helps the program succeed here?
  - How would you improve the mentoring/induction program?
13. Please describe any concerns you have about the program either with your personal involvement, the school/district's implementation, or anything else.
  - What kinds of barriers to successful implementation of the program have you experienced?
14. Describe the overall impact, if any, that this program has had on you.
  - What have you learned, if anything, from the program?

*Final Question*

15. Is there anyone else you think I should talk to?

## Questions for second-year teachers

### *Lead Question*

(Grade, subject taught, same for mentor)

1. Please describe how the mentoring/induction program works in your school/district.

### *Leadership and Administration*

2. Overall, who provides leadership for the program in this school/district?
  - In what ways do they provide leadership?
  - How supportive of the program are the administrators in your school/district?
3. What or who has been helpful during your participation in the program?

### *Context*

4. Does your school/district also have its own orientation, mentoring, or induction program that is different from the State's program?
  - What is included in your school/district's orientation or program?
  - How would you describe the priority that your district/school places on professional development?

### *Purpose and Goals*

5. What do you think are the mentoring/induction program's goals? (In other words, what is the program trying to do?)

### *Mentoring*

6. How well do you think you and your mentor were matched?
  - Describe your ideal mentor.
7. Describe the strengths of your mentor from last year. (To what degree have the mentors provided quality support, assistance, feedback, and suggestions?)
  - Any weaknesses of your mentor? Examples?
  - How might new teachers and mentors be better prepared for the mentoring experience?
8. What would have made the experience with your mentor a better one?
9. How often did you and your mentor meet? For how long? When did you meet (common planning time, after school, other)?

10. When you and your mentor got together, what topics were usually discussed?
11. What kind of an impact has the Pathwise part of the program had on you, if at all?
  - How has the Pathwise curriculum been beneficial to you, if at all, in terms of teaching and classroom management?
  - Has Pathwise changed the way you teach or interact with your students in any way? If so, how? Examples?
12. What kind of an impact has the Assessment for Learning part of the program had on you, if at all?
  - What typically happens when your group meets with the lead mentor? How long did you usually meet, and where? How often? What would you discuss?
  - Has Assessment for Learning changed the way you teach or interact with students in any way? If so, how?

*Evaluation*

13. Overall, how do you think the program is going?
  - What are the program's greatest strengths and weaknesses?
  - What helps the program succeed here?
  - How would you improve the mentoring/induction program?
14. Please describe any concerns you have about the program either with your personal involvement, the school/district's implementation, or anything else.
  - What kinds of barriers to successful implementation of the program have you experienced?
15. Describe the overall impact, if any, that this program has had on you.
  - What have you learned, if anything, from the program?

*Final Question*

16. Is there anyone else you think I should talk to?

## Questions for mentors

### *Lead Question*

(Grade/subject taught, same for latest protégé. How long a mentor?)

1. Please describe how the mentoring/induction program works in your school/district.

### *Leadership and Administration*

2. Overall, who provides leadership for the program in this school/district?
  - In what ways do they provide leadership?
  - Do the leaders have any structure and regular meetings?
3. What or who has been helpful during your participation in the program? (e.g. release from other duties, extra training, time to meet with new teachers, etc.)
  - How supportive of the program are the leaders and administrators in your school/district – fiscally, practically, emotionally?

### *Role of Respondent*

4. Generally speaking, how are mentors selected? How were you selected as a mentor?
  - What is the process and what criteria are used?
  - Is there competition for the positions?
  - Has your role changed at all since you started?
5. How are mentors matched with new teachers? (What is the process and what criteria are used?)
  - How does the timing of the process work, i.e., hiring of new teachers, selection of mentors, matching, orientation, training?
  - How do your site coordinator and lead mentor help you in your role as a mentor?
  - Do you work with any other administrators, such as principals or human resources?
  - What does the lead mentor do for you in your role as a mentor?

### *Context*

6. Does your school/district also have its own orientation, mentoring, or induction program that is different from the State's program?
  - What is included in the school/district's program?
  - How does the district's program relate to the State's program?
  - Did the school/district have a mentoring program prior to the current one? How much change has been necessary from the old program to the new?

7. How does the mentoring/induction program relate to other professional development programs? (Do they enhance/conflict?)
  - How would you describe the priority that your school/district places on professional development?

### *Purpose and Goals*

8. What do you think are the mentoring/induction program's goals?

### *Mentoring*

9. How often do you and your protégé meet? For how long? When do you find time to meet?
10. What topics are usually discussed when you and your protégé get together? What did you and your new teacher discuss the last time you met?
11. Describe the mentor training. How well do you think you are trained to be a mentor?
  - How might mentors be better prepared for the mentoring experience?
12. What kind of an impact has the Pathwise part of the program had on you, if at all?
  - Has Pathwise changed the way you teach or interact with your students in any way? Examples?

### *Evaluation*

13. Overall, how do you think the program is going?
  - What are the program's greatest strengths and weaknesses?
  - What helps the program succeed here?
  - How would you improve the program?
14. Describe the overall impact, if any, that this program has had on you.
  - What have you learned, in anything, from the program?
15. Please describe any concerns you have about the program, either with your personal involvement, the school/district's implementation, or anything else.
  - Have you experienced any barriers to successful implementation? If so, have you been able to overcome them? How?

### *Final Questions*

16. Where do you see the program in five years?
17. Is there anyone else you think I should talk to?

## Questions for lead mentors

### *Lead Question*

(How long have you served as a lead mentor?)

1. Please describe how the mentoring/induction program works in your school/district.

### *Leadership and Administration*

2. Overall, who provides leadership for the program in this school/district?
  - In what ways do they provide leadership?
  - Do the leaders have any structure or regular meetings?
  - How supportive of the program are the leaders and administrators in your school/district?
3. What or who has been helpful during your participation in the program? (e.g. release from other duties, extra training, time to meet with 2<sup>nd</sup>-yr. teachers)
  - How adequate are the resources for this program from the State or school/district?

### *Role of Respondent*

4. Generally speaking, how are mentors selected in this school/district?
  - What is the process and what criteria are used?
  - Is there competition for the positions?
5. How are lead mentors selected? How were you selected as a lead mentor?
  - Has your role changed at all since you started?
  - How does your site coordinator help you in your role as a lead mentor?
  - Do you work with any other administrators, such as principals or human resources?
  - Are any types of supports given to lead mentors such as release from other duties, extra time to meet with new teachers or mentors?
6. How are mentors matched with new teachers?
  - How does the timing of the process work, i.e., hiring of new teachers, selection of mentors, matching, orientation, training?

### *Context*

7. What was the school/district's new teacher mentoring program like before the new program?
  - How much change has been necessary from the old program to the new?

8. Does your school/district also have its own orientation, mentoring, or induction program that is different from the State's program?
9. How does the mentoring/induction program relate to other professional development programs? (Do they enhance/conflict?)
  - How would you describe the priority that your school/district places on professional development?

### *Purpose and Goals*

10. What do you think are the goals of the mentoring/induction program?
  - How well aligned would you say these goals are with the school's/district's goals?

### *Mentoring*

11. How is the implementation of the Assessment for Learning teams progressing?
  - What kind of an impact has the Assessment for Learning program had on you?
  - Has Assessment for learning changed the way you teach or interact with students in any way? If so, how?
12. Tell me what typically happens when your group meets.
13. How well do you think you are trained to be a lead mentor?
  - How knowledgeable do you feel about Pathwise and Assessment for Learning?
  - What are some strengths and weaknesses of mentors?

### *Evaluation*

14. Overall, how do you think the program is going?
15. What kinds of barriers to successful implementation of the program have you experienced? Have you been able to overcome them? If so, how?
  - What would you improve about the program?
16. Please describe any concerns you have about the program, either with your personal involvement, the school/district's implementation, or anything else.
17. Describe the overall impact, if any, that this program has had on you.

### *Final Questions*

18. Where do you see the mentoring/induction program in five years?
  - What are the key elements needed to get it there (professional development, leadership, program development)?
19. Is there anyone else you think I should talk to?

## Questions for site coordinators

### *Lead Question*

(How long have you been a site coordinator?)

1. Please describe how the mentoring/induction program works in your school/district.

### *Leadership and Administration*

2. Overall, who provides leadership for the program in this school/district?
  - In what ways is leadership provided?
  - Do the leaders have any structure or regular meetings?
  - How supportive of the program are the administrators in your school/district?
  - How adequate are the resources for this program from the State or school/district?
  - Has the School Board, superintendent, or other administrators expressed interest in the program?

### *Role of Respondent*

3. Generally speaking, how are mentors selected?
  - What is the process and what criteria are used?
  - Is there competition for the positions?
4. How are lead mentors selected?
  - Have the lead mentors' role changed at all since you started?
5. How did you become a site coordinator?
  - What are your duties as site coordinator?
  - Do you work with any other administrators, such as principals or human resources?
6. How are mentors matched with new teachers?
  - How does the timing of the process work, i.e., hiring of new teachers, selection of mentors, matching, orientation, training?
  - Are any types of supports given to mentors such as release from other duties, extra time to meet with new teachers?

### *Context*

7. What was the school/district's new teacher mentoring program like before the new program? How much change has been necessary?
  - Overall, how does the State's program fit with the district – its priorities, organization, culture, philosophy, and operations?



8. Does your school/district also have its own orientation, mentoring, or induction program that is different from the State's program?
9. How does the mentoring/induction program relate to other professional development programs? (Do they enhance/conflict?)
  - How would you describe the priority that your school/district places on professional development?

#### *Purpose and Goals*

10. What do you think are the program's goals?
  - How well aligned would you say these goals are with the school/district's goals?
  - How would you describe the communication between DOE and the school/district about the program?

#### *Mentoring*

11. What are some strengths and weaknesses of mentors and lead mentors?
  - How could more and better mentors be recruited?
12. How is the implementation of the Assessment for Learning teams progressing?

#### *Evaluation*

13. Overall, how do you think the program is going?
  - What are the program's greatest strengths and weaknesses?
  - What helps the program succeed here?
14. What kinds of barriers to successful implementation of the program have you experienced?
  - What would you improve about the program?
15. Are there provisions in the collective bargaining agreement that affect the program?
  - If so, how are these addressed (if they are addressed)?
16. Please describe any concerns you have about the program, either with your personal involvement, the school/district's implementation, or anything else.
17. Is the school/district conducting its own evaluation of any aspect of the program?

#### *Final Questions*

18. Where do you see the program in five years?
19. Is there anyone else you think I should talk to?

## Questions for principals

### *Lead Question*

1. Please describe how the mentoring/induction program works in your school/district.

### *Leadership and Administration*

2. Overall, who provides leadership for the program in this school/district?
  - In what ways is leadership provided?
  - Do the leaders have any structure or regular meetings?
  - How adequate are the resources for this program from the State or school/district?

### *Role of Respondent*

3. Generally speaking, how are mentors selected?
  - What is the process and what criteria are used?
  - Is there competition for the positions?
  - How are mentors matched with new teachers? Process and criteria?
  - How does the timing of the new teacher hiring/mentor selection/mentor-protégé matching, orientation process occur?
4. How are lead mentors selected?
  - How does the timing of the process work, i.e., hiring of new teachers, selection of mentors, matching, orientation, training?
  - Are any types of supports given to mentors such as release from other duties, extra time to meet with new teachers?

### *Context*

5. What was the school/district's new teacher mentoring program like before the new program? How much change has been necessary?
6. Does your school/district also have its own orientation, mentoring, or induction program that is different from the State's program?
  - If so, what does the school/district add to the existing program?
  - How does the district's program relate to the State's program?
7. How does the mentoring/induction program relate to other professional development programs? (Do they enhance/conflict?)
  - How would you describe the priority that your school/district places on professional development?
  - To what extent are new teacher assignments related to the mentoring/induction program?
  - What does the district do, if anything, to support or enhance the State's program?

### *Purpose and Goals*

8. What do you think are the goals of the mentoring/induction program?
  - How well aligned would you say these goals are with the school/district's goals?
  - How would you describe the communication between DOE and the school/district about the program?

### *Mentoring*

9. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the mentors in your school.
10. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the lead mentors in your school.

### *Evaluation*

11. Overall, how do you think the program is going?
  - What are the program's greatest strengths and weaknesses?
  - What helps the program succeed here?
12. What kinds of barriers to successful implementation of the program have you experienced? Have you been able to overcome them? If so, how?
  - What would you improve about the program?
13. Are there provisions in the collective bargaining agreement that affect the program?
  - If so, how are these addressed (if they are addressed)?
14. Please describe any concerns you have about the program, either with your personal involvement, the district's implementation, or anything else.
15. Is the district conducting its own evaluation of any aspect of the program?
  - If so, how is it evaluated? How are the results translated into program improvements?

### *Final Questions*

16. Where do you see the program in five years?
  - What are the key elements needed to get it there (professional development, leadership, program development)?
17. Is there anyone else you think I should talk to?

## Questions for informal leaders

### *Lead Question*

1. Please describe how the mentoring/induction program works in your school/district.

### *Leadership and Administration*

2. Overall, who provides leadership for the program in this school/district?
  - In what ways is leadership provided?
  - Do the leaders have any structure or regular meetings?
  - How adequate are the resources for this program from the State or school/district?
  - Has the School Board or superintendent expressed interest in the program?

### *Context*

3. What was the school/district's new teacher mentoring program like before the new State program? How much change has been necessary?
  - Overall, how does the State's program fit with the school/district – its priorities, organization, culture, philosophy, and operations?
4. Does your district also have its own orientation, mentoring, or induction program that is different from the State's program?
  - If so, what does the school/district add to the existing program?
5. How does the mentoring/induction program relate to other professional development programs? (Do they enhance/conflict?)
  - How would you describe the priority that your school/district places on professional development?
  - To what extent are new teacher assignments related to the mentoring/induction program?

### *Purpose and Goals*

6. What do you think are the mentoring/induction program's goals?
  - How well aligned would you say these goals are with the school's/district's goals?
  - How would you describe the communication between DOE and the school/district about the program?

### *Evaluation*

7. Overall, how do you think the program is going?
  - What are the program's greatest strengths and weaknesses?
  - What helps the program succeed here?

8. Is the school/district conducting its own evaluation of any aspect of the program?
  - If so, how is it evaluated? How are the results translated into program improvements?
9. What kinds of barriers to successful implementation of the program have you experienced? Have you been able to overcome them? If so, how?
  - What would you improve about the program?
10. Are there provisions in the collective bargaining agreement that affect the program?
  - If so, how are these addressed (if they are addressed)?
11. Please describe any concerns you have about the program, either with your personal involvement, the district's implementation, or anything else.

*Final Questions*

12. Where do you see the program in five years?
  - What are the key elements needed to get it there (professional development, leadership, program development)?
13. Is there anyone else you think I should talk to?

## Questions for superintendents/higher administration

### *Lead Question*

1. Please describe how the mentoring/induction program works in your district.

### *Leadership and Administration*

2. Overall, who provides leadership for the program in this school/district?
  - In what ways is leadership provided?
  - Do the leaders have any structure or regular meetings?
  - How adequate are the resources for this program from the State or school/district?
  - Has the School Board or others expressed interest in the program?

### *Context*

3. What was the school/district's new teacher mentoring program like before the new program? How much change has been necessary?
  - Overall, how does the mentoring/induction program fit with the district – its priorities, organization, culture, philosophy, and operations?
4. Does your school/district also have its own orientation, mentoring, or induction program that is different from the State's program?
  - If so, what does the school/district add to the existing program?
5. How does the mentoring/induction program relate to other professional development programs? (Do they enhance/conflict?)
  - How would you describe the priority that your school/district places on professional development?
  - What does the district do, if anything, to support or enhance the mentoring/induction program? (E.g., inducements/incentives, grants, capacity building)
  - To what extent are new teacher assignments related to the mentoring/induction program?

### *Purpose and Goals*

6. What do you think are the mentoring/induction program's goals?
  - How well aligned would you say these goals are with the school/district's goals?

### *Evaluation*

7. Overall, how do you think the program is going?
  - What are the program's greatest strengths and weaknesses?
  - What helps the program succeed here?
8. Is the school/district conducting its own evaluation of any aspect of the program?
  - If so, how is it evaluated? How are the results translated into program improvements?
9. Are there provisions in the collective bargaining agreement that affect the program?
  - If so, how are these addressed (if they are addressed)?
10. Please describe any concerns you have about the program, either with your personal involvement, the school/district's implementation, or anything else.
  - How would you improve the program?

### *Final Questions*

11. Where do you see the program in five years?
  - What are the key elements needed to get it there (professional development, leadership, program development)?
12. Is there anyone else you think I should talk to?

**Appendix 2**

**Mentoring Dyads in One Delaware School:**

**Examples of Variance**



A common problem for relatively standardized programs of any sort, as noted earlier, is that they are changed along the way by cultures, localities, and the people who are charged with carrying out their requirements. This report illustrates some of the various ways that districts and charter schools have implemented the new teacher mentoring/induction program. Appendix 2 is meant to present examples of how various types of mentor-protégé relationships can lead to diverse ways that the program is carried out one-on-one even in one school.

*“By the book”*

One mentor-protégé dyad works closely on Pathwise in a step-by-step approach. When asked about Pathwise, this mentor immediately found it on her shelf, turned to key pages, and was specific about where her protégé was in the manual. Interestingly, this mentor described how she prepared for her meetings with the new teacher. She was the only teacher to answer questions about Pathwise with specific answers:

Basically what we do is, we follow the book...We focused on classroom management last year....And by the end of the year we had completed event two. The focus of event two, with my protégé, was classroom management. This year we started working with each other in January with the second semester. And we continued with event three. We are currently in event four, with the intent to finish up to event six in May, and to do the reflection in June. That was the plan. We took a month for each event....We should be able to complete a majority of this by the end of the year, with the intent to do the assessment component next year, as the third year requirement.

The mentor had served in this role at her previous school and was happy to play this role at this one. The protégé had her Pathwise manual with her during her interview. She reported that she and her mentor met 20 minutes each week to go over the assignments. They share a planning period, the result of luck instead of design, and this greatly eases the problem of finding the time to work together. However, generally they preferred to meet before or after school. The protégé found the impact of the program to be substantial; she was now “improving my teaching a lot on my own.” She had discussed and learned how to better engage her students, moving from direct instruction to involving students in a successful group project.

*“Free spirit”*

At the other extreme are a mentor in one field and a teacher in a special subject. They neither share a subject, same grade-level students, a planning period, nor personal characteristics. They have a looser relationship and do not work in a detailed manner on Pathwise. The mentor acknowledges he is very busy and wishes he had release time to participate more fully in the mentoring program. The protégé has concluded that she needs subject-based help and has received help from the other special teacher in her subject in her school and observed a teacher in her subject in another school. She reports

to have been greatly helped by these observations and considers the informal mentor a valuable resource. However, she does appreciate the availability of her formal mentor and has received tips from him on classroom management, various ways of teaching, and how to reach students. When asked if Pathwise had impacted his teaching, he gave a simple “No.” This dyad had trouble finding time to meet, generally relying on informal drop-ins, during which he asked if she needed anything.

### *“Team”*

In this case the mentor and protégé are actually team teaching several classes each day. The mentor is an experienced teacher and former administrator who is committed to mentoring. The protégé is also experienced and appreciates the professional assistance of the mentor. However, he does not think Pathwise “has had much of an impact” because he has taught for five years. He is “sure it helps new teachers,” but not him because “there is nothing that is new to me.” Pathwise serves as a checklist, but he said he would do these things anyway. His conversations with his mentor have included issues such as cross-curriculum ideas such as how to use math in a special assignment and advice on paperwork. While they are both busy, they do manage to meet once a week or so for 10-15 minutes to go over Pathwise domains. This occurs before lunch, after school, on early dismissal days, or at in-service days. Whenever they meet, the protégé is thankful for having a mentor who is experienced, knowledgeable, and willing to voice his ideas. “I value his opinion,” he said.

The mentor is also pleased with their relationship and stated that “I give him constant feedback and I learn from him.” He has developed what he terms a “hands off” or resource-based mentoring style, allowing the protégé to take from him what works. He cited a number of instances of “teachable moments” with his protégé on topics such as parental involvement through integrating lessons across subjects.

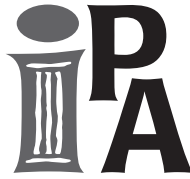
### *“Colleagues”*

The fourth dyad includes an experienced mentor who was favorable toward the mentoring and induction program but not toward Pathwise. She found it somewhere between incomprehensible and busywork, “not very user-friendly.” Her protégé agreed. She called Pathwise “too much trouble” and all the “paperwork a problem.” “It’s so convoluted, hard to follow, hard to tell what form is needed,” said the new teacher. But they did use Pathwise as the framework within which they had professional discussions about teaching. Their discussions have centered on classroom-management topics such as seat arrangements and classroom administrative issues such as tracking absent students as well as substantive topics such as writing lesson plans and using state standards. But this protégé also appreciated having a had mentor from the first in-service before school began. “It was great to have someone at the start of the year who could address questions such as ‘Where do we keep the transparencies?’” she said. She judges the mentoring program as “great,” declaring, “I am a better teacher.”

This new teacher views her mentor as “perfect.” She teaches the same subject and grade level, is also a busy mom juggling many activities, is enthusiastic, organized, supportive, and helpful. She also appreciates the flexibility of the mentor in changing their meetings as needed. While they take advantage of time during in-service days to meet, they also meet after school, talk in the hall, and email a good deal. The mentor also found the relationship a helpful one. She respects the new teacher and her experience at a different level of teaching. They have worked together on planning lessons, more like colleagues than a mentoring relationship might imply.

*“Idea-bouncing”*

The fifth dyad is composed of two experienced teachers. The new teacher has previously taught in two parochial schools and one public school. While he is positive about his relationship with his mentor, he thinks the program would be much more helpful for younger and less experienced teachers. But “there is something in the mentoring program for everyone,” and he has gotten “the opportunity to bounce off ideas from experienced, seasoned veterans to see whether they think there’s anything useful from what you are doing—would that work, would it not work?” He appreciates the ability to be able to get “an informed opinion from someone who is qualified.” An informal chat in the hall led to his working through cross-curriculum ideas that proved valuable in his teaching. Since he is an experienced teacher, he does not need to focus on classroom-management issues. He meets with his mentor “15 minutes here, 15 minutes [there]...But we didn’t have the same free period, so a lot of times it was right before lunch. So it was just whenever you could grab a moment with him. But he was always receptive to help[ing] me.”

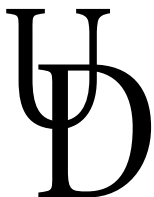


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