

NEW TEACHER INDUCTION: PERSPECTIVES FROM PARTICIPANTS OF A NEW  
TEACHER MENTORING PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT  
NEW TEACHER INDUCTION: PERSPECTIVES FROM PARTICIPANTS

The purpose of this study was to gather the perceptions of stakeholders in the new teacher mentoring program. These perceptions could help Apple Grove better understand the new teacher mentoring program in its current iteration related to specific program goals. Apple Grove could also learn about the influence of the new teacher mentoring program on hired new teachers in the district, specifically, whether the program has influenced the desire of new teachers to remain in the field of teaching. The research questions directing this study established a focus for the study.

Data sources included interviews of new teachers, mentors, and administrators engaged in the Apple Grove mentoring program as well as a document. These data sources revealed much about the program goals as well as the influence of this program on new teachers and their decision to remain in the field of teaching.

According to participant perceptions, mentors are supporting their mentees in many ways in Apple Grove. Participants also perceived program goals to be that of familiarization to curriculum and processes. Allowing mentors and mentees the time to work together during Mentor Days seems to be of value to mentors and mentees. Results from Apple Grove suggest that mentees are given support by their mentors, that they become familiar with both curriculum and processes, and that they are being given time to collaborate with one another. As such, findings suggest that perceived program goals are aligned to the current iteration of the new teacher mentoring program at Apple Grove.

In review of this new teacher mentoring program as an influence for new teachers to stay in the field, the common theme of relationships emerged. New teachers identified two kinds of relationships which supported them in their first years: that of mentee/mentee and mentor/mentee. However, these relationships and the just-in-time support offered by resources within the new teacher mentoring program could be further complicated by more senior teachers warning away novice teachers before they even graduate.

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## **Introduction**

### **Chapter 1: Statement of the Problem**

#### **Context**

Teacher attrition, when teachers decide to leave the field of teaching, is an ongoing concern for school districts across the United States. Costs related to attrition such as recruitment, hiring new teachers, and the requisite training averaged \$2.2 billion in 2012 (Callahan, 2016). One common reason new teachers report for leaving the profession is lack of support (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). In the field of education, mentoring is one way new teachers may receive the necessary support they require as they develop within their first years.

Mentoring is frequently defined as a mentor taking responsibility for a new teacher's induction to the building and the profession (Dag & Sari, 2017). A mentor is meant to offer guidance related to common needs of new teachers (mentees) including classroom management and instructional delivery. Effective mentoring programs are designed to meet the needs of each new teacher as an individual (Dag & Sari, 2017).

Apple Grove School District (pseudonym) is located in Michigan where mentoring programs are required by section 1526 of the revised school code, commonly known as Act 451. Requirements under this legislation stipulate that new teachers engage in a mentoring program for the first three years of employment as a classroom teacher. Additionally, new teachers must be assigned a mentor teacher. This mentor can be any master teacher (current or retired) or a college professor who mentors new teachers in their first years. New teachers must participate in at least 15 days of professional

development (PD) with at least some of the PD directed specifically at classroom management and instructional delivery.

New teacher mentoring is a current initiative in Michigan. According to the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) Top 10 in 10 Strategic Plan (2016), Goal 3 directly relates to growing and developing a strong workforce of Michigan teachers. One strategy within that goal communicates an intention to develop a new system of induction for teachers and to focus on the role of the mentor in this induction process. As such, the desire of Apple Grove School District to review the currently enacted new teacher mentoring program is a step toward meeting the goal provided by the MDE. A review of the new teacher mentoring program will allow Apple Grove School District to consider the perceptions of stakeholders engaged for the purpose of analyzing the program. Additionally, Apple Grove was interested in learning how the new teacher mentoring program influences new teachers and their desire to remain in the field of teaching.

### **Purpose of the Study**

New teacher mentor programs are employed for the purpose of supporting the transition from preparation programs to the classroom environment. New teachers are expected to complete the same amount of work as more seasoned teachers. A study by Ingersoll and Strong (2012) found that, when novice teachers participated in a mentoring program, they showed higher retention than peers who did not participate in a new teacher mentoring program. When high quality mentoring programs are implemented with high quality leaders, there is potential in positively impact new

teachers in the classroom according to each new teacher's specific needs (Kent, Green, & Feldman, 2012).

A review of applicable literature has revealed several qualities of successful district/school mentoring programs. Included in these qualities are the process of matching mentor to mentee, well-trained mentors, similarity in grade or subject assignment and proximity, funding, leadership qualities of mentors, program design and delivery, positive relationships, avoiding isolation in the classroom, and mentor leadership qualities (Callahan, 2016; Dag & Sari, 2017; Sparks, Tsemenhu, Green, Truby, Brockmeier, & Noble, 2017; Polikoff, Desimone, Porter, & Hochberg, 2015). New teacher mentoring programs can increase the positive influence on novice teachers by including these components.

Often, in enacting a planned program, much attention is directed to planning, preparation, and delivery. However, as discussed by Waters (2011), program evaluation can be a missed step, the consequence of which is that faulty programs can continue to be implemented. In an example offered by Waters (2011), a highly anticipated program was introduced and then later evaluated. This evaluation exposed implementation issues which revealed a less than effective program. Though the program was built as a result of a literature review, an evaluation showed stakeholders gaps in the program that demonstrated poor investment of time and resources. Additionally, stakeholders found gaps in program implementation and processes. As a result of this evaluation, these gaps could then be discussed and solutions could be found. Further, when systematic in nature, performance analysis offers organizations information about enacted programs (Rossett, 2009). As discussed by Rossett (2009),

a thorough performance analysis can expose issues, communicate participant feedback, and discover how elements within programs influence each other.

Apple Grove has implemented a new teacher mentoring program in compliance with section 1526. The program was designed with the expectation that the program components and the mentors would provide the support new teachers need for a smooth transition through their first years of teaching (J. Neilsen, personal communication, December 20). District administration is concerned about the current shortage of teachers and the possibility of needing to replace previously hired staff. Gathering perceptions from the stakeholders in the process can offer Apple Grove Public Schools the information they need to determine if the goals of the program are being met as well as to consider the influence the program has on new teachers and their desire to remain in the field of teaching.

The purpose of this study was to collect and analyze the perceptions of stakeholders in the new teacher mentoring program. These perceptions helped Apple Grove better understand the new teacher mentoring program in its current iteration related to program goals. Apple Grove also learned about the influence of the new teacher mentoring program on hired new teachers in the district, specifically whether the program has influenced the desire of new teachers to remain in the field of teaching. Resulting data helped identify areas of success as well as areas of need within the program. The research questions directing this study establish a focus for the study. Specifically, the research questions for this study are:

1. From the perception of the stakeholders of the new teacher mentoring program at Apple Grove, how does the mentoring program align with the program goals?

2. How do new teachers perceive their participation in the new teacher mentoring program to influence their desire to remain in the teaching profession?

This study reviewed the new teacher mentoring program within Apple Grove School District through the lens of alignment to program goals as well as from the perspectives of new teachers to determine the program's influence on their decision to remain teaching. As such, a document review of the currently enacted Apple Grove new teacher mentoring program documents showed how the program is currently structured as well as expectations from various stakeholders. Information gathered from the literature review and the program documents informed questions for stakeholder interviews.

Interviews were conducted with new teachers, their mentors, and district administration who are involved in the mentoring process. Each stakeholder provided information about perceived goals and processes of the mentoring program. In this study, interviews were used as the primary data source. Interviews were conducted with new teachers, administration, and the new teacher mentors. These interviews were semi-structured with questions focused on stakeholder perceptions of what the program goals are as well as how these goals are being enacted. Additionally, for new teachers, questions focused on new teacher perceptions of their experiences within the program, the specific needs they have as new teachers, and how they believed the program has influenced their decision to stay in the field of teaching. Interviews were conducted with mentors and with principals for the purpose of gathering their perceptions and contributions. Questions were focused on program goals, barriers to

implementation of processes within the program, and what needs they believe new teachers have in the classroom.

After interviews were completed, the results were compiled, analyzed, and presented to interview participants for member checking. Next, final responses were analyzed and communicated in the form of the dissertation.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **New Teacher Mentoring Programs Meet the Needs of New Teachers**

New teachers leave the field for a variety of reasons. The most frequently cited reasons include disillusionment, feeling overwhelmed and under-supported, and lacking in classroom management skills (Kent, Green, & Feldman, 2012). The ability to connect theory to practice and then to apply the implications of these theories and concepts can prove confounding for new teachers as they face the reality of teaching in practice. In a study from Petersen (2017) about the phase of liminality, ten new teachers explained their experiences and perceptions during their first years of teaching. Many concerns included navigating the new in-practice experience of teaching as opposed to the preparation program where multiple supports were frequent among participants. Additionally, several new teachers felt as though they were left alone to thrive or not without support. Only one new teacher from the study remarked that an administrator spent time working with him. A common feeling of being a beginner often thwarted new teachers from sharing their ideas, concerns, or questions with other school personnel. Adding to these concerns was the pressure of tracking and attending to student growth in their classrooms. Perspectives such as these highlight some of the specific needs of new teachers.

New teacher mentoring programs have served schools and teachers by supporting the induction of new teachers as they transition from the role of teacher education student to practicing teacher. These programs are needed to support new teachers who, fresh out of preparation programs, are expected to assume the same responsibilities as their more seasoned counterparts. The steep learning curve found in the teaching profession can seem an insurmountable hurdle for new teachers whose



fieldwork preparation was highly supported by their preparation program faculty and in-service teachers alike. When that support is suddenly removed without a replacement support, new teachers can feel isolated in their new journeys (Fry, 2009). Liminality is defined as the period of time between a new teacher's preparation program and the individual time it takes for a new teacher to become more capable in their classrooms (Petersen, 2017). It is during this phase when new teacher mentoring programs can support new teachers most.

Retention is a primary goal of new teacher mentoring programs because new teacher attrition is a costly sacrifice for districts. Costs related to attrition such as recruitment, hiring new teachers, and the requisite training averaged \$2.2 billion in 2012 (Callahan, 2016; DeCesare, Workman, & McClelland, 2016). With an increase in retention of previously filled positions, districts can incur less of these expenses. New teacher mentoring programs hold the hope of reducing attrition and keeping teachers in their classrooms. Thus, investing in comprehensive and high quality programs has the potential of reducing recruitment and hiring costs while also supporting new teachers in their positions.

In order to be effective, new teacher mentoring programs should include attention to the distinct issues novice teachers face in an effort to prevent negative feelings from escalating. Ingersoll and Strong (2012) indicated that, when new teachers participated in a mentoring program, they showed more commitment, seemed more satisfied, demonstrated more command of high leverage teaching practices, increased student achievement, and remained in the field as compared with new teachers who did not participate in induction programs. New teacher mentoring programs are employed for

the purpose of supporting the transition from preparation programs to the live classroom environment. New teachers are expected to complete the same work as more seasoned teachers. When high quality mentoring programs are implemented with high quality leaders as mentors, there is much potential for positively impacting new teachers in the classroom (Kent, Green, & Feldman, 2012).

A study by Ingersoll and Strong (2011) suggests that new teacher mentoring programs have the potential to improve the effectiveness of new teachers. These improvements can provide the opportunity to impact the learning of their own students. Further, mentoring programs can reduce new teacher attrition by offering supports directed to meet the needs of new teachers. When programs are well-designed, structured, and focused on meeting the needs of new teachers, retention can be improved (Nielsen, Lundmark, & Addison, 2006). Findings from a multi-year study demonstrated that teachers valued professional development that was specifically designed to assist them in managing challenging experiences in the classroom (Nielsen, Lundmark, & Addison, 2006). Effective mentoring programs should include support for new teachers according to the most highly cited reasons for new teacher attrition as an important first step in preparing a meaningful program. Additionally, programs should be of high quality, extensive, multi-year experiences for new teachers in order to help reduce the rate of new teacher attrition (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

New teacher perspectives of ongoing or past mentoring programs can inform the creation of new programs as well as the modification of current programs. New teachers frequently share feelings of being a novice in a challenging environment and feeling limited in their ability to contribute to the school at large (Nielsen, Lundmark, &

Addison, 2007; Petersen, 2017; Yirci, 2017). Thus, supporting new teachers as well as listening to their concerns and verbalized needs assists them in recognizing resources, learning how to cope, and understanding their work. New teachers often identify elements of collaboration and engagement with mentors as part of the most valued parts of their mentoring programs (Neilsen, Lundmark, & Addison, 2007; Petersen, 2017; Yirci, 2017).

### **Roles within New Teacher Mentor Programs**

There are several roles within a new teacher mentoring program (see Table 1). The role of the mentee is primary in the new teacher mentoring process. Normore and Loughry (2006) recommend several behaviors for new teacher/mentee's during their new teacher mentoring programs. For example, mentees should embrace reflective practice. In doing so, they consistently think about their teaching practice. They consider what teaching decisions they made and how those decisions influenced the resulting delivery and reception of the lesson. Reflective practitioners can more readily communicate with their mentors about their teaching practice. This dialogue can allow mentors to better support their mentees because they can understand how and why their mentees made instructional decisions. Another recommendation from Normore and Loughry (2006) is for mentees to commit to the mentoring process and to foster a positive and collaborative relationship with their mentors. Mentees should develop an attitude that welcomes feedback from their mentors and deeply considers how any feedback might apply to enhancing their instruction.

Mentoring is frequently defined as a mentor taking responsibility for a new teacher's induction to the building and the profession (Dag & Sari, 2017). Thus, a mentor is intended to offer guidance related to many issues that are common needs of new teachers including classroom management and instructional delivery. Mentors are intended to serve as an advisor, a model of good teaching, an advocate, and a developer (Lloyd, Wood, & Moreno, 2000). Mentors can help new teachers anticipate issues and navigate potential obstacles (Callahan, 2016).

Effective mentoring is designed to meet the needs of each new teacher as an individual so it is important that attention be paid to better understanding each mentee's needs (Dag & Sari, 2017). Mentors who have sufficient time to meet with their mentees during the day experience higher quality interactions (Polikoff et al., 2015). This time can be used for activities such as observation, feedback, question-answer sessions, and dialogue about requirements. The proximity of mentor to new teacher allows more opportunity for interaction (Polikoff et al., 2015).

Mentors should help new teachers set goals for their first years in teaching. Collaboration should be at the centerpoint of goal setting with ample dialogue about what the new teacher needs as an individual. In preparation for this kind of assistance, additional professional development directed at how to help new teachers set professional goals should be offered to mentors (Hudson & Hudson, 2016). Goals should be directly related to the observed and revealed individual needs of the new teacher. A requirement for new teachers in Michigan is to attend fifteen additional days of professional development outside of the required five days for all teachers annually (Act 451 of 1974, Revised Michigan School Code, 1996).

Administrators play a significant role in the effectiveness of new teacher mentoring programs. As leaders of the school, administrators guide and foster school culture. A culture of continued learning and growth that supports all teachers and mentors can provide the groundwork for an effective new teacher mentoring program (Callahan, 2016). Further, administrators can create space and time for new teachers to meet with mentors and assist with matching mentors to mentees (Long, 2010). This intentional matching can be a significant issue in determining the effectiveness of the new teacher mentoring experience (Polikoff et al., 2015). New teachers defer to administrators to help them define their new roles and to better understand the specific expectations that principal might have for all teachers. Often, the principal has been the only person with whom the new teacher has had contact throughout the hiring process. As such, new teachers seek guidance from these leaders in their school (Roberson & Roberson, 2009). Roberson and Roberson (2009) suggest administrators follow through with the following two strategies to support new teacher success; professional development meetings with new teachers and offering meaningful, instructive feedback. In meeting new teacher expectations of administrators, principals can support the integration of new teachers to the existing school environment.

Table 1. *Roles of stakeholders within new teacher mentoring programs.*

Stakeholder	Role
Mentee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Recipient of mentor advice and feedback (Normore &amp; Loughry, 2006)</li> <li>● Requires active participation in the process, embraces reflective practice, open to communication and feedback (Normore &amp; Loughry, 2006)</li> </ul>
Mentor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Adviser, role model of good teaching (Callahan, 2016; Hudson &amp; Hudson, 2016, Lloyd, Wood, &amp; Moreno, 2000)</li> <li>● Completes observations, sets goals, offers feedback, attends professional development to build mentoring skills (Callahan, 2016; Dag &amp; Sari, 2017; Hudson &amp; Hudson, 2016, Polikoff et al., 2015)</li> </ul>
Administrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fosters school culture of continued growth, supports process (Roberson &amp; Roberson, 2009)</li> <li>● Offers time for mentors and mentees to meet, matches mentors and mentees, open to communication (Roberson &amp; Roberson, 2009)</li> </ul>

### **Critical Qualities of Successful New Teacher Mentoring Programs**

A review of applicable literature has revealed several qualities of successful district/school mentoring programs. Included in these qualities are multi-year induction, mentor selection and training, the process of matching mentor to mentee, administrator support, collaboration, frequent dialogue, funding, program design and delivery (Callahan, 2016; Dag & Sari, 2017; Polikoff et al., 2015; Sparks et al., 2017). These critical qualities are present in literature about successful new teacher mentoring programs and their roles in the development and induction of new teachers can be found in Table 2.

Table 2. *Critical qualities of new teacher mentoring programs.*

Critical Qualities	Support for New Teachers
Multi-year induction	Offers new teachers consistent support through the first years of teaching (Petersen, 2017). Section 1526 requires 3 years.
Mentor/Mentee Matching	Mentor/Mentee matching based on proximity, similar content, schedules, and personalities when possible. Matching provides more opportunities for interaction between mentor and mentee (Lozniak, 2016; Polikoff et al, 2015; TTMAC, 2015; Zembytska, 2016)
Mentor Selection	Mentor selection based on leadership skills, exceptional instructional practice, and willingness to mentor. Careful selection of mentors offers mentees the highest caliber of teachers from whom mentees can learn and grow (TTMAC, 2015; Gagen & Bowie, 2005)
Mentor Training	Mentor training supports the mentor with a better foundation from which to guide mentees. Professional Development should be about program processes, collaboration, andragogy, etc (Dag & Sari, 2017; Lloyd, Wood, & Moreno, 2000; Polikoff et al., 2015; Callahan, 2016)
Collaboration and Dialogue	Frequent opportunities to collaborate and dialogue allow mentors and mentees to set goals and discuss progress (Kardos & Johnson, 2010; Neilsen, Lundmark, & Addison, 2007; Petersen, 2017; Yirci, 2017)
Administrator Support	Consistent administrator support offers a third party for collaboration and someone to intervene when necessary (Ingersoll, 2004; Teague & Swan, 2013)
Funding	Sufficient funding provides for financial support of the program including mentor pay, professional development, supplies, and substitute teachers (TTMAC, 2015; Villar & Strong, 2007)
Program Design	Program design should be thorough (ADDIE) and should include attention to district-specific needs as well as needs common to most new teachers (Azano & Stewart, 2016; Cross, 2016; Waddell, 2013)

### **Multi-Year Induction.**

New teachers should be involved in new teacher mentoring programs for their first three years of teaching. This multi-year induction offers them a chance to receive support as their needs change during the phase of liminality (Petersen, 2017). During liminality, novice teacher needs change as they grow and develop. Continued support that grows with new teachers allows them to receive appropriate support when it is needed beginning with orientation to the building and procedures and through their development of more effective teaching practices. This quality of successful programs is required by the Revised Michigan School Code, section 1526, commonly referred to as Act 451. Under this legislation, requirements stipulate that new teachers engage in a mentoring program for the first three years of employment as a classroom teacher.

### **Mentor/Mentee Matching.**

Mentor/mentee matching happens when a mentee is matched with a mentor based on a previously decided upon set of characteristics (TTMAC, 2015; Zembytska, 2016). According to Lozniak's 2016 study of perceptions about mentor/mentee matching, several characteristics of matching were seen as valuable to participants. All participants in that study agreed that proximity of mentor and mentee as well as similarity of content area and grade level are important considerations. Proximity to a mentor can allow easier access to one's mentor. Additionally, the ability to freely discuss similar content areas and content-specific strategies and vocabulary can allow mentees to further their own proficiency in instruction within their own content areas. Notably, matching mentor and mentee schedules can allow for more frequent opportunities to meet with one another, thereby creating a space for dialogue. When



there is an opportunity to match mentors and mentees based on similar or complementary personality traits, mentors and mentees to begin to forge trusting relationships. This can be difficult during times when a mentee is so new to a district that his/her personality traits are difficult to identify.

### **Mentor Selection and Training.**

Mentor selection, another essential component found in many successful programs, offers new teachers a chance to have mentors who have been identified as the best and brightest in their districts. Several characteristics present in teachers of this caliber, such as leadership, exceptional instruction skills, and interpersonal skills, offer new teachers a chance to see these characteristics being modeled, and, thus, the opportunity to mirror these characteristics in their own teaching (TTMAC, 2015). Teacher evaluations and other observations of mentors can offer insights into whether candidates demonstrate these characteristics. Mentor training should be done with sufficient forethought in developing mentors in the areas of coaching, instructional delivery, classroom management, andragogy, goal setting, and student engagement (TTMAC, 2015). Separate from simply relying on a mentor's knowledge of pedagogy and child development, this kind of training includes attention paid to working with peers and adults in general. Knowing how to foster and grow new teacher skills in the classroom can support a mentor's development of his/her mentee's burgeoning skills.

Much research has communicated the importance of mentor training in producing effective mentors for new teachers (Callahan, 2016; Dag & Sari, 2017; Lloyd, Wood, & Moreno, 2000; Polikoff et al., 2015). Though some districts rely on experience alone as sufficient training for mentors (Gagen & Bowie, 2005), more formalized programs exist

to help mentors grow their mentoring skills through training (Zembytska, 2016). In formal mentor training approaches, mentors engage in both individual and collaborative development activities. Training is often ongoing and includes topics such as andragogy, communication, coaching, relationship building, current research, and professional reflection (Zembytska, 2016). TTMAC (2015) recommends that mentors should receive training in coaching, instructional delivery, classroom management, andragogy, and student engagement. Separate from simply relying on a mentor's knowledge of pedagogy and child development, this kind of training includes attention paid to working with peers and adults in general. Knowing how to foster and grow new teacher skills in the classroom can support a new teachers' burgeoning skills.

One issue in communication between a mentor and a mentee is that of changing vocabulary over time from when the mentor attended a preparation program to the vocabulary used in the preparation program of the mentee (Gagen & Bowie, 2005). Without a common vocabulary, fluid communication can become disjointed. Mentor training can provide mentors with an updated set of vocabulary from which common understandings can grow. Similarly, training can assist mentors in learning current research-based strategies that might be different from what they use but which the new teacher might use with proficiency (Gagen & Bowie, 2005). In a survey conducted by Gagen and Bowie (2005), mentors indicated a need for training to learn how to be an effective mentor and to simply learn the adopted processes within the district. The inclusion of focused professional development for mentors can allow them to better support new teachers who have less instructional experience. Encouraging

the skills of the mentor and highlighting impactful adult instructional strategies can better prepare mentors to serve their mentees.

Mentor training can be offered in different formats. One suggested format from Gagen and Bowie (2005) is that of a workshop approach in which mentors engage in initial and ongoing development throughout the mentoring experience. During these sessions, new and practiced mentors are able to collaborate, share experiences, and offer support to one another. Training prior to the onset of the mentoring experience can help prepare mentors for the work they will do while ongoing training can support the work as it occurs. Another approach varies the formats in which a mentor will engage. Mentors engage in workshops, self-instruction, and collaborative sessions in order to gain the initial and ongoing support from which a mentor can benefit (Zembytska, 2016). Though mentor training is frequently promoted as an appropriate step in preparing mentors to work with mentees, in many cases this is not happening (DeCesare, Workman, & McClelland (2016). A study completed by DeCesare, Workman, and McClelland (2016) revealed that only 32% of the 70 district respondents reported offering mentor training at all. Another study, however, demonstrated that 80% of mentors received some type of training (Polikoff et al., 2015).

A study by Neilsen, Lundmark, and Addison (2007) revealed new teacher perceptions of the most valuable components of a new teacher mentoring program according to their specific needs as new teachers. Interestingly, the prevailing theme of mentor support was of utmost importance to new teacher participants. In the studied program, mentors observed, offered feedback, fielded questions, and remained mentor/mentee teams for three years of continued support. A second theme of

collaboration emerged from the study. Collaboration, which promoted sharing ideas and experiences, brainstorming, and the opportunity to vent, was valued. When met with challenges, new teachers explained that they sought support from their mentors and worked in collaboration with colleagues.

### **Collaboration and Dialogue.**

Attention to collaboration and dialogue can support new teachers as they grow in their roles (Kardos & Johnson, 2010). Of note is that new teachers often identify the elements of collaboration and engagement with mentors as the most valued parts of their mentoring programs (Petersen, 2017; Neilsen, Lundmark, & Addison, 2007; Yirci, 2017). Collaboration can also foster the intentional development of goal setting and consequent professional development for the new teacher. When a mentor and new teacher set goals together, they can then create an appropriate plan for meeting those goals within the school year.

### **Administrator Support.**

Administrator support identifies the active role principals should take related to the induction of new teachers. When administrators support new teachers, their mentors, and the fidelity of the program, the induction program can be more effective. Lack of administrator support has been lamented by new teachers who have shared feelings of being perceived as unimportant (Teague & Swan, 2013). Administrators can support new teachers by checking in with them, by ensuring that they are consistently supported by mentors, and by participating in goal setting (Ingersoll, 2004; Teague & Swan, 2013).

## **Funding.**

As part of the planning process, sufficient funding should be allotted that will allow seamless functioning of the program. Funding would support the offering of professional development, paying mentors for service, classroom release time for observations and mentor/mentee meetings, and program materials (TTMAC, 2015). Funding is an important consideration for all planned programs. Within new teacher mentoring programs, funds should be set aside according to the needs derived from a prescribed plan. Costs related to mentor training, evaluation of the program, time spent from participating individuals, materials, supplies, substitute teachers, and new teacher professional development should all be considered and subsequently provided for in a planned new teacher mentoring program (Villar & Strong, 2007).

## **Intentional Program Design.**

Intentional program planning and preparation allows for each district to identify the elements specific to the population of new teachers as well as potential mentors within their communities. Adding components that will support the appropriate integration of new teachers to existing environments can provide a smoother transition. For example, new teachers in urban environments can benefit from development related to teaching students in urban environments and their specific needs (Cross, 2016; Waddell, 2013). Similarly, rural districts have specific needs related to teaching their student population which may not have been covered in enough depth during teacher preparation programs (Azano & Stewart, 2016). New teacher mentoring program creation that involves all program participants and considers the specific needs within the district can allow for a more individualized approach to induction.

## **New Teacher Mentoring Programs Implementation**

The freedom of states and districts to define new teacher mentoring programs in ways they deem reasonable while meeting legislative requirements has produced a wide variety of programs with varying requirements and components (DeCesare, Workman, & McClelland, 2016). As such, the creation, sustenance, assessment, and evaluation of a new teacher mentoring program lies a responsibility of the districts and states. Attention to current research-based components of effective programs can offer districts a positive step in reaching the goal of retaining new teachers in their schools.

New Teacher Center, a non-profit organization dedicated to the induction of new teachers in the field, reviewed state policies related to induction as were current in 2012. The policy paper identified ten criteria exemplifying ideal induction program standards (New Teacher Center, 2012). These criterion frame the basis of effective induction programs by including emphasis placed on all teachers and administrators having access to mentoring support for their first two years of service, standards which inform the design of the induction program, mentor selection, training, and caseload, funding, accountability at both the educator and program levels, and, finally, minimal requirements for contact time, formative assessments, and observations. The criteria included in the policy paper match the qualities often found in successful programs. The element of mentor selection, for example, is frequently cited in literature and was a criteria by which programs were reviewed.

State programs vary widely in the implementation of these qualities in their own regulations related to teacher induction. New Teacher Center's 2012 review of state policies demonstrate that twenty-seven states required teacher induction programs but

only seventeen states funded those programs. Further, only three states including Connecticut, Delaware, and Iowa required multi-year induction support for new teachers, required induction to progress in certification, and funded those mandates (New Teacher Center, 2012). Most states do not require new teacher mentoring programs to include characteristics found to be present in high quality and effective programs. The lack of these requirements offer districts the opportunity to implement programs that may not be as effective, thereby leaving more new teachers under-supported and more at risk for leaving the field.

A wider analysis of new teacher experiences with mentoring, found in Kardos and Johnson's (2010) study, detailed the wide variance in experiences of new teachers in several different settings from three different states. While mentoring was present in most programs, the mentoring experience varied. First, mentor matching, a quality present in effective programs, was not frequently included as part of the process. As such, mismatches of new teachers to mentors who were in different grade levels, content areas, and even schools were found. Additionally, the frequency of conversations between mentor and mentee as well as observations and feedback were inconsistent in many of the programs. In schools identified as low-income, new teachers were less likely to have a mentor. This could be because of the typically high turnover in low-income schools which could prevent the availability of a more senior mentor (Robinson & Lloyd, 2017). Kardos and Johnson's (2010) study also revealed that less than 41% of mentors observed their mentees. Without observation, individualized feedback and goal setting could be difficult to formulate. Further, as related to the important quality of conversations about classroom management,

curriculum, and instruction, only 58% of new teachers had even three conversations with their mentors. A lack of dialogue between mentors and mentees would remove the potential for continued growth as a result of the mentor's feedback and contributions. Thus, having a mentoring program in name alone does not mean that the components of high quality programs are present in all mentoring programs.

### **Evaluation of a Current New Teacher Mentoring Program**

The state of Michigan requires all school districts to have implemented a mentoring program for new teachers (Act 451, 1996). The mentoring program at Apple Grove School District includes such specified requirements as assigning new teachers with a mentor and observations. New teachers are assigned a mentor for the first three years. Additionally, as required by the state, new teachers receive intensive professional development in the areas of classroom management and instructional delivery. New teachers track and log their professional development. Apple Grove then submits the logged hours to the Michigan Department of Education.

In 2016 and 2017, Apple Grove hired approximately 10 new teachers (J. Smith, personal communication, November 26, 2018). This influx of new teachers presented an opportunity for an evaluation of the program in an effort to retain these new teachers. Evaluation of this program has not been conducted to date. Performing an evaluation of this program helped Apple Grove better understand how the new teacher mentoring program meets the needs of the new teachers in the school district.

Apple Grove is not unlike other school districts with a relatively high poverty rate at 75.5% in 2019 (Michigan Department of Education, 2019). A recent study conducted by Robinson and Lloyd (2017) shows that schools like Apple Grove have typically



higher teacher attrition rates than other schools. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to complete a document analysis of the components of the mentoring program at Apple Grove and to determine how the program meets the requirements of section 1526 as well as qualities found to be effective according to literature. Further, perceptions from participants demonstrated the fidelity of implementation of new teacher mentoring program components. Resulting data helped identify areas of success as well as areas of need within the program.

This literature review has identified several critical components for new teacher mentoring programs. Those critical components include the following multi-year induction, mentor/mentee matching, mentor selection, mentor training, collaboration and dialogue, administrator support, funding, and program design. Further, this review has included case studies that demonstrate wide variation in implementation of programs. This review has concluded with a description of Apple Grove School District and its intent to evaluate their existing program.

## **Chapter 3: Method**

This study reviewed a new teacher mentoring program from the perspective of the participants. As new teacher mentoring programs are frequently the main support for new teachers as they enter their teaching practice, reviewing this program revealed perspectives from participants. More specifically, learning about the perspectives of participants in one program could uncover how participants within a new teacher mentoring program such as this perceive the program as matching the intended program goals. Additionally, this study had the potential to provide information regarding stakeholder perceptions of alignment between the new teacher mentoring program and the program goals.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this study:

1. From the perception of the stakeholders of the new teacher mentoring program at Apple Grove, how does the mentoring program align with the program goals?
2. How do new teachers perceive their participation in the new teacher mentoring program to influence their desire to remain in the teaching profession?

### **Participants and Setting**

According to the staff directory for Apple Grove (2019), the district has 114 teachers on staff. There are four buildings in the district. The Early Elementary School (pseudonym) consists of kindergarten and first grade. Twenty-one teachers serve there. Cardinal Elementary (pseudonym) includes 35 teachers who instruct second through fifth grade students. Apple Grove Middle School employs 27 teachers serving grades six through eight. Finally, the high school building includes grades nine through

twelve as well as 31 teachers. In all, 2, 068 students attend Apple Grove. In this district, 75.5% of students qualify as economically disadvantaged. Student diversity is as follows: 63% white/non-Latino, 18% African American, 9% Hispanic/Latino, and 8% two or more races (Michigan Department of Education, 2019).

Multiple perspectives of stakeholders in the process provided insider information for the purpose of better understanding the implementation of this new teacher mentoring program. As stakeholders in this study, participants included new teachers, mentors, the superintendent, and one district principal. Table 3 includes information specific to participants in this study. All participants in this study were white/non-Latino. Eleven participants were female and one was male.

Table 3. *Description of participants.*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Grade Level/Content</b>	<b>Experience in Years</b>
<b>Jeff</b>	Administrator	Superintendent	33
<b>Hope</b>	Administrator	Elementary Principal	25
<b>Shelly</b>	Mentor of Teresa	2nd	34
<b>Whitney</b>	Mentor of Cristy	3rd	12
<b>Marsha</b>	Mentor of Becky, Cheryl, and Amanda	4th	20
<b>Lucy</b>	Mentor of Stacey	7th/8th Special Education	13
<b>Teresa</b>	Mentee of Shelly	2nd	3
<b>Cristy</b>	Mentee of Whitney	3rd	3
<b>Becky</b>	Mentee of Marsha	4th	2
<b>Cheryl</b>	Mentee of Marsha	4th	1
<b>Amanda</b>	Mentee of Marsha	4th	1
<b>Stacey</b>	Mentee of Lucy	7th/8th Special Education	3

New teachers who were within their first three years of teaching and who were included under the Michigan new teacher mentoring statute contributed to the study (See Appendix A). Those teachers no longer engaging in the mentoring program were excluded since they could have had outdated input regarding the mentoring program. New teachers shared their perception of what the program goals are, whether those goals match their experiences, and what influence the new teacher mentoring program has had on their decision to remain a teacher.

Mentors were selected based on recency of engaging directly with the mentor process. Only those who have mentored a new teacher within the past 3 years were selected to contribute to this study. Those who have been out of the mentoring program for longer than three years could be subject to forgetting or misremembering perceptions and requirements from their past mentoring experiences. Additionally, the study was meant to focus on the most recent iteration of the mentoring program. Including those mentors who have been out of the mentoring process for more than three years could offer perspectives from older practices, some of which might no longer be used in the district. Mentors offered their perception of what the program goals are, whether those program goals match their experiences with the program, and what they have heard from their mentees about potential influences the program had on their decision to stay in the field of teaching.

Administrators were selected based on experience with the new teacher mentoring program. A principal who has not had to hire a new teacher within the last three years was not included. Additionally, a principal who was new to the district and has not had experience enacting the new teacher mentoring program was

excluded. The superintendent was included as he has been with the district for more than the past three years.

Administrators, including one principal and the superintendent, discussed their perceptions about how the new teacher mentoring process is being implemented from an administrative standpoint and whether that process matched their perception of the program goals. They provided information about their perceptions of the official process as included in the associated mentor program documents, mentor selection, perceptions reported from mentors and new teachers, and how they believe the program influences new teachers and their decisions to stay in the profession of teaching.

#### **Role of the Researcher.**

During the time of this study, I worked as Program Director of Teacher Preparation at a college close to Apple Grove School District. Apple Grove is one of several local schools where my program places students for field experiences. Since I have a Site Coordinator who places students in their practicums, I am familiar with members within the district but not directly with these participants with the exception of one new teacher who graduated from my program. In an effort to establish trustworthiness and a researcher/participant relationship, this mentee and I met prior to the beginning of the study. I requested that she consider me a learner in this setting as opposed to her former program director. Additionally, I asked her to extend this message if approached by other participants.

Further, prior to the beginning of the interview process, I met with each participant to explain the purpose of the study and how I planned to keep his or her

responses confidential and protected. This happened through use of a letter and an in person meeting.

### **Description of Mentoring Program.**

Apple Grove's New Teacher Mentoring Program is detailed in the Apple Grove Public Schools Mentor/Mentee Handbook (2007). Included within the handbook are defined roles for both the mentor and mentee, definitions of each role, tips for new teachers, information about new teacher needs, Professional Standards for Michigan Teachers, district specific requirements, the Master Agreement, and forms for use during the program. The professional standards included in the handbook as well as the SB-CEU form as outdated because Michigan has approved a new set of standards and no longer used the SB-CEU form of continuing education units for teachers.

In the Master Agreement of the Mentor/Mentee handbook (2007), a series of duties and obligations are included. Some mentor duties mentioned in the description of the role of the mentor include being an emotional support and offering assistance. The mentor role is described as voluntary. Additionally, in this document, new teachers are referred to as "bargaining unit member" for the duration of induction. In Apple Grove Public Schools, mentoring opportunities are posted no later than May 1. Only tenured teaching staff within ten or more years of teaching and satisfactory evaluations for the most recent five years may be selected and there are no guarantees that a mentor will be selected.

All mentors are selected through collaboration between the administration and the Apple Grove Education Association, the teacher union at Apple Grove. Applicants are selected according to need within twenty working days from the date of hire of a

mentee. Mentors are matched to mentees of similar content area and within the mentee's buildings when possible. A mentee does not work with more than one mentor but a mentor may work with up to two mentees. Once matched, mentors and mentees work together for one year before they meet for a review with the administration to determine whether the match should continue. All must mutually agree for the assignment to continue. Mentors are offered one half day to one full day each month for work with a mentee. This time is intended to be used to observe the mentee and work with the mentee within his/her teaching assignment. Substitute teachers are employed for mentees and mentors during this time. Mentor Days are not mandatory but mentor/mentee teams are required to meet and interact.

Mentors are compensated at Apple Grove. They are given \$1,000 for the first year of work with the mentee, \$750 for the second year, and \$500 for the third year of mentoring. The district will consider paying for professional development a mentor might need in order to proficiently perform mentorship duties.

According to the Mentor/Mentee handbook (2007), a mentor is an "experienced teacher," "veteran teacher," "positive role model," or "master teacher." Further, a mentor is intended to be a person who helps new teachers navigate their first years as a teacher in Apple Grove. The handbook includes identified benefits for mentors of new teachers in the district. The benefits include satisfaction of helping others, professional rewards of preparing the incoming group within the field of teaching, and a chance to make a difference for others.

The Mentor/Mentee handbook (2007) outlines the role of the mentor in terms of relational support including professional growth of the mentee, encouraging positive

self-concept, and providing emotional support. Job related support of a mentor includes that of helping with procedures and policies, assisting with understanding how to work with parents, identifying resources, encouraging reflection, and record keeping assistance. Further, the mentoring program role obligations include regular meetings to address concerns, introductions to other staff, assistance with extra help for children with different needs, as well as observation of the new teacher with feedback.

The list of duties is not intended to be exhaustive or prohibitive. A note at the bottom of the section communicates the different needs of new teachers and the potential for more or less as needed by the teacher. A checklist is included in the handbook that includes minimum responsibilities of the mentor. The checklist is intended to be used for the three years duration of the program with less responsibilities as the years increase to year three. Of note, the Master Agreement in the handbook is for years 2007-2010.

The role of the mentee is explained in the Mentor/Mentee Handbook (2007) as a new teacher who has been through a preparation program but who still needs support to navigate the first years of teaching. The benefits include orientation support, assistance in the “liminality” phase as discussed by Peterson (2017), guidance with classroom management, and attaining assistance to understand the school culture. As explained in the handbook (2007), mentees must familiarize themselves with the requirements for new teachers in Michigan and perform all required duties. Further requirements include participation and follow through with all in-service obligations of the district or intermediate school district, regular meetings with the mentor teacher,



professional participation in the observation/evaluation process, and regular upkeep of a professional development record to be turned in by May 31 of each year.

The Mentor/Mentee Handbook (2007) includes tips for new teachers. Tips include expectations for veteran teachers, parents, and principals, ideas for working with parents, and relationship building suggestions. These tips encourage new teachers to step out and ask questions, to visit other classrooms to observe, and to be active in their growth and development as new teachers. Another helpful section is related to the phases of a typical first year teachers growth and development. These phases, uncited in the handbook, are echoed in New Teacher Center's *New Teacher Development for Every Inning* (2016). Five phases that span the first year of teaching are intended to help new teachers better understand the highs and lows of the sometimes tumultuous first year. These phases include (1) the anticipation phase, (2) the survival phase, (3) the disillusionment phase, (4) the rejuvenation phase, and (5) the reflection phase.

### **Study Design**

This descriptive case study is framed as applied theory. Applied theory focuses on practical and applicable findings (Bickman & Rog, 2009). The primary goals of this research were to review an existing new teacher mentoring program holistically from the perspectives of participants and their perspectives of program strengths and weaknesses, to describe whether program participants believe the program is being implemented in the manner in which it was envisioned, and to describe the influence of the program on a new teacher's desire to remain in the field of teaching from the perspective of the new teacher. The practical, real-world application of this study

makes it particularly well suited for applied research (Bickman & Rog, 2009). As such, applied research provided an opportunity to review an in-practice program and to gather perceptions from stakeholders of the program.

Case study methodology as explained by Yin (2003) began with the literature and revealed constructs about new teacher mentoring programs to build an understanding from which to design the components of the study. The study of relevant literature reveals propositions that can then direct the attention of the research within the study. In this study, the propositions would be the components of successful new teacher mentoring programs as discussed in the literature. Next, the unit of analysis was identified as a result of its relation to the research questions. For this study, the new teacher mentoring program was the unit of analysis. The use of interviews with various stakeholders in the program allowed for a deeper understanding of how this data relates to the discovered propositions.

A typical sample was selected for the purpose of informing the perspectives of the various groups within the study including new teachers, mentors, and administrators (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). In this sample, representation from each group was encouraged to participate in order to ensure that the voice of each group is represented. A snowball sampling method could help encourage participants without coercing them. In following this sampling method for participants, one participant was nominated as an appropriate interviewee. From there, more participants were recommended from each interview (Lewis-Beck, Bryman, & Futing Liao, 2004). A homogenous sample of mentors and administrators was interviewed in order to represent perspectives from these groups.

Table 4 includes a summary of the study design. Data sources and resources, specific to each research question are included.

Table 4. *Summary of study design.*

<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Data Sources and Resources</b>	<b>Analysis Procedures</b>	<b>Notes</b>
From the perception of the stakeholders of the new teacher mentoring program at Apple Grove, how does the mentoring program align with the program goals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● New teachers</li> <li>● Mentors</li> <li>● Administrators</li> <li>● Semi-structured Interviews</li> <li>● Apple Grove Public Schools Mentor/Mentee Handbook</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Thematic analysis, predetermined set of codes against interview data</li> <li>● Document review to reveal program goals and processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Member checking will be completed for all interviews</li> <li>● Determine whether there are other versions of the handbook used in specific schools in the district.</li> <li>● Reveal program specific vocabulary.</li> </ul>
How do new teachers perceive their participation in the new teacher mentoring program to have an influence on their desire to remain in the teaching profession?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● New teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Thematic analysis, predetermined set of codes against interview data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Member checking completed for all interviews.</li> </ul>

### **Data Sources**

Several data sources were included in this study. A document review of the Apple Grove Mentor/Mentee handbook was used to better understand the existing

structure, expectations, and processes within the currently enacted program. Information from the handbook along with the literature will inform the creation of interview questions (see Appendix B). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with new teachers, their mentors, and Apple Grove administration. Responses from these data sources were used to better understand research questions one and two with a goal of informing Apple Grove School District through the lens of these two questions.

In this study, I employed interviews for data collection as well as one document review outlined in Table 4 according to the research questions. The document review served as a resource and was conducted in order to provide constructs and propositions of the framework for the new teacher mentoring program as it was intended to be implemented (CDC, 2009). Further, the document review offered insight into the background information regarding the program. The handbook contained information about who is intended to participate in the process, what their roles are, and how those roles are defined. Additional information might include observation and consultation schedules, required forms, program costs and how those costs are addressed.

Prior to conducting the document review information, a check was conducted to ensure that the handbook is, in fact, the correct and most up to date version used in the district. In the case that other versions of the document were being used by specific schools, these handbook versions would have been acquired and would have informed comparisons specific to each individual participant. Additionally, the existence and use of other versions of the handbook would have been noted in the results. No other version was being used in the district at the time of this study.

The document review included all documents related to the Apple Grove new teacher mentoring program. In particular, this could have included policy manuals, procedures, quality control devices, meeting agendas, meeting logs, professional development tracking notes, and forms. Policy manuals and procedures could demonstrate processes and expectations of participants within the mentoring program including the new teacher, the mentor, and administration. Quality control devices, if present, could show how the program and components within the program are evaluated. Meeting agendas, if available, could show what topics are discussed during meetings. Meeting logs could reveal perceptions, action items, and goal setting. Professional development tracking notes could show which topics are included in the professional development of administrators, mentors, and new teachers. Forms could show ways the process is tracked. This analysis will be reviewed against input from participants for the purpose of determining whether participants perceive that the program goals align with their experiences of the new teacher mentoring program.

Interviews were conducted with new teachers, mentors, and administrators. These interviews were semi-structured with questions focused on whether these groups perceive that the program goals are met in the current iteration of the new teacher mentoring program. Interviews were conducted at the convenience of each participant. As such, participants were not interviewed in a specific order such as mentee then mentor or mentor then mentee.

All interviews were conducted individually with the exception of the fourth grade mentees. This group requested to be interviewed as a focus group claiming that they

felt more comfortable being interviewed as a group as opposed to individually. Thus, a total of 10 separate interviews were conducted,

For new teachers, questions focused on the new teacher's perception of these qualities and their effectiveness as well as what each participant believes are the program goals. Additional questions focused on the new teacher's perception of the impact of the new teacher mentoring program on his or her decision to stay in the field of teaching. Interviews were conducted with mentors for the purpose of gathering perception information and contributions from this group related to the qualities of successful programs, what this group believes are the program goals, and whether they believe the program has influenced the decision of their mentees to remain in the field of teaching. For the administrator interviews, questions will be focused on the construction of the mentoring program and policies, what they perceive the program goals are, and whether they perceive that the program has an impact on new teachers and their decisions to remain in the field.

## **Procedure**

In conducting this study, a literature review provided a framework from which to derive definitions, critical components of new teacher mentoring programs, current implementation considerations, and perspectives from case studies. A document review of the current new teacher mentoring program provided a basis of understanding the program structure and participant roles.

From May 20-June 10, semi-structured interviews occurred with new teachers, mentors, and district administrators. Once the interviews were complete, they were transcribed. Transcripts were then reviewed in consideration of the research

questions. Once member checked, themes and codes were analyzed and then compiled.

To respond to research question one, I compiled participant responses of their perceptions of the new teacher mentoring program alignment with program goals. For research question two, I reviewed new teacher interview responses for times when they shared perceptions of the influence of the new teacher mentoring program on their desire to remain in the field.

## **Analysis**

Thematic analysis was used to interpret data from interviews. A set of thematic codes derived from the literature and document review was used to analyze the interview data (Belotto, 2018). Through accessing perspectives from multiple stakeholders in the new teacher mentoring program, a clearer understanding of how the program aligns with the program goals could be gained. Further, interviews with new teachers revealed their feelings regarding the influence of the new teacher mentoring program as it relates to their desire to remain in the profession.

Codes were used to gain an understanding of how participants perceive the program goals matched their experiences in the enacted mentoring program. Using thematic analysis, a separate set of codes could reveal times when new teachers identified the new teacher mentoring program as having impacted a desire to remain in the field of teaching or not (Boyatzis, 1998). Additional codes could emerge during the analysis of the interviews. If this happened, the new codes would be used to analyze all interviews where appropriate. Member checking would be completed for all interviews

to establish validity (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). A copy of the themes and ideas interpreted from interviews will be given to all participants for review.

Upon completion of analysis, the resulting dissertation from this study was given to Apple Grove School District for their review and use in decision making about the new teacher mentoring program within the district.

### **Validity and Trustworthiness**

Consistency among participant responses, once gained, can offer a more trustworthy set of perceptual data to compare against constructs in the handbook resulting in reliability. In cases when one participant's responses seemed emotionally fueled, it could be useful to conduct a second interview or request another interview time. Emotionally fueled responses can provide an unclear perception of the program in a case when a participant has had a negative experience and is still feeling upset about that experience. Offering time in between interviews can allow a cooling off period that will allow a participant to provide a more accurate description of the negative experience. However, these measures were not needed during the course of this study.

Member checking was conducted after themes and code have emerged from interview transcripts. Interview participants then had the opportunity to review and respond with any inaccuracies or misconceptions (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). Doing so can help ensure that the results as reported are accurate and appropriate according to participants.

Construct validity was gained by way of using the document review (Bickman & Rog, 2009). In establishing construct validity, the constructs present in the program handbook informed the creation of questions for stakeholder interviews. As such, the



document review was completed prior to any stakeholder interviews. The document review also provided the specific vocabulary to create a common understanding between the questions asked in the interviews and the later interpretation of stakeholder responses. Further validity was established by reviewing definitions with stakeholders prior to the interviews. Once common vocabulary had been agreed upon, the questions and the later responses provided more clarity in interpreting the responses of participants. Without this measure, participant responses could have been misinterpreted due to misunderstandings of vocabulary.

## **Chapter 4: Findings**

The purpose of this study was to gather the perceptions of stakeholders in the new teacher mentoring program. These perceptions helped Apple Grove better understand the new teacher mentoring program in its current iteration related to specific program goals. Apple Grove also learned about the influence of the new teacher mentoring program on hired new teachers in the district, specifically whether the program has influenced the desire of new teachers to remain in the field of teaching. Resulting data helped identify areas of success as well as areas of need within the program. The research questions directing this study establish a focus for the study.

This chapter will now present the findings related to the two research questions. Additional information that emerged from the study is also presented as is appropriate for informing Apple Grove and determining next steps for the new teacher mentoring program.

A qualitative study was conducted with participants representing three groups relevant to the new teacher mentoring program. Included in these groups are mentees, mentors, and administrators. Pseudonyms are included throughout to protect the identities of all participants and the district. First, background information about the new teacher mentoring program will be. Next, findings relevant to research question one and two will be presented. Responses from all groups are provided as is appropriate for the research question. Finally, participant suggestions about the new teacher mentoring program will be included. These comments can help offer insight into what participants believe would help the program become more successful. Specifically, the research questions for this study are:

1. From the perception of the stakeholders of the new teacher mentoring program at Apple Grove, how does the mentoring program align with the program goals?
2. How do new teachers perceive their participation in the new teacher mentoring program to influence their desire to remain in the teaching profession?

### **Apple Grove New Teacher Mentoring Program**

Apple Grove's new teacher mentoring program lasts for the first three years of experience for new teachers. This means that teachers hired with prior years of experience are provided with access to the mentoring program only until their year of experience as a teacher. Those teachers who are hired with three years or more of experience are not offered the new teacher mentoring program. The mentoring program at Apple Grove is compliant with Michigan requirements for new teacher induction under section 1526 (Act 451, 1996). Requirements under this legislation stipulate that new teachers engage in a mentoring program for the first three years of employment as a classroom teacher. Additionally, new teachers must be assigned a mentor teacher. This mentor can be any master teacher (current or retired) or a college professor who mentors new teachers in their first years. At least 15 days of professional development must be offered to the new teacher with at least some of it directed specifically at classroom management and instructional delivery.

Apple Grove's new teacher mentoring program includes the assignment of a mentor to a mentee. According to the Mentor/Mentee Handbook (2007), all mentors must be considered master teachers. Mentors must be tenured teachers with ten or more years of teaching experience as well as acceptable evaluations for the most recent five years. In order to become a mentor, a tenured teacher must apply for an

open opportunity. Administration decides whether a mentor would be a proper match for an available mentee. Mentor/mentee matching occurs as a result of determining whether there is an available mentee in the mentor's building or certification area.

### **Perceptions of Program Goals**

*RQ1: From the perception of the stakeholders of the new teacher mentoring program at Apple Grove, how does the mentoring program align with the program goals?*

Interview questions related to research question one sought to gather perceptions of whether the mentoring program aligns with the program goals. Since the Mentor/Mentee Handbooks does not articulate program goals, participant perceptions of the program's goals provided the basis for understanding whether participants responded with similar goals. Therefore, all participants were asked what they perceived the program goals to be. If a mismatch occurred between understandings among participants, then program implementation can be affected. Participants offered several interpretations for what the program goals are. Responses were similar enough to be categorized. Categories that emerged from participant responses are as follows: familiarization with curriculum, familiarization with building and state required processes and procedures, opportunities for collaboration, support for mentee questions, and to attend to common new teacher needs.

**Mentors.** A total of nine comments referred to one program goal as that of offering mentees a contact person to whom questions can be directed. Two mentees stated that they viewed their mentors as a person who can answer their questions. For example, Stacey referred to a mentor as, "...a support system, someone to go to with questions, someone to help with the transition from college to teaching." One mentee,

Cristy, claimed that she would have felt uncomfortable asking other teachers her “silly questions” but that her mentor always validated and helped answer her questions. When prompted to identify what a “silly question” was, she identified building processes as silly questions. More specifically, Cristy said, “Where things are, where to keep slips of paper, who to ask for what.” Having a common person to ask these questions reduced her anxiety about asking these questions. Mentor Lucy claimed that one goal was to develop confidence in new teachers and, further, “... not being afraid to ask a question because usually those are the ones that should be asked.”

When asked about mentors, mentees commonly referred to support and relationships. For example, Stacey said:

“My new mentor, who I have been with for two and a half years has always made sure she’s there for me. She’s always asking me, you know, is there anything I can help you with? How can I support you? We bounce ideas off each other. So just having someone to collaborate with is great. So that’s made my transition a lot easier.”

Cristy’s following disclosure demonstrated that her mentor’s encouragement helped her through a difficult situation. She said:

“After my first year, I was really unsure whether this was the right fit. I had a really rough group of kids. She really kind of kept putting in my ear that this isn’t how all groups of kids are going to be. Then, the next year wasn’t much better but she kept encouraging me and reminding me. She told me, ‘You’re here for a reason.’”

During Cristy’s explanation of her mentor’s support, her eyes filled with tears. Afterward, I asked her to tell me about her mentor. As soon as I asked that question, she smiled and explained, “My mentor has really gone above and beyond to make sure that it [new teacher mentoring program] was a positive experience. She’s super available to me.”

All groups emphasized mentors as a support to help mentees with new teacher needs in general as a primary program goal. Jeff, an administrator, remarked, “One goal is to help new teachers know what it’s like to be a first year teacher in a building. All those expectations that come with the duties of being a teacher.” Other needs mentioned by all groups include that of understanding how to talk to parents and receiving encouragement to keep trying when mentees feel stress. Shelly, Teresa’s mentor, discussed:

“[The new teacher mentoring program provides] support through a lot of things like parent conversations, parent phone calls, discipline, talking to someone with experience who, you know, can give them insight, but also to say, ‘This too shall pass. I know it feels like a huge deal right now, but...’ and that advice and support along the way through those kinds of things.”

Of parent communication, mentee Becky said, “... especially parents, that is kind of a frightening situation. You’re not sure what you can or can’t say. Communication is essential.” When a mentor can communicate what he/she has learned about parent communication as well as other important new teacher needs, mentees can grow from those experiences, leveraging the advice of their mentors to the benefit of the new teacher.

**Familiarization of the curriculum.** One common perception of the new teacher mentoring program goals was that of familiarization of the curriculum. Participants from all groups including mentees, mentors, and administrators made a total of sixteen separate comments about familiarization to curriculum. Mentees spoke mainly about needs to be trained in district adopted curricular programs. Two mentee comments referred to the need to not only learn the procedures within an adopted curricular

program but also to have continued opportunities to discuss specific approaches to teaching concepts. Cristy, a mentee, explains:

“I think the biggest is the training... we have so many programs at our school that I walked into that started within the last three to four years. Everyone assumes you already have that but you have no way of having that training before working here.”

Mentor Marsha’s perspective was similar:

“...curriculum can be overwhelming and there have been a lot of times where I’ve been trained on something but, as new teachers come in, they’re not. So I think it helps us to overall be consistent among the grade level. We also brainstorm.... what are some things that worked? What are some things that didn’t work? What would we try next time? So many times I get learning out of it as well.”

One mentee, Stacey, echoed the value of working together by saying, “...going back and forth with content and curriculum, all the stuff that we need to talk about that you don’t get the time to in a normal day has been helpful.” Two mentors and one administrator identified learning all processes and content within the curriculum to be “overwhelming” and that having a mentor can support mentees to better understand and deliver required curriculum. For example, one mentor said, “Curriculum. The curriculum can be overwhelming for somebody who has been teaching for 20 years, let alone somebody just walking in.” By working together with other mentees and their mentors, new teachers have an opportunity to not only familiarize themselves with curriculum but also to engage with others in collegial discussions and to share teaching ideas.

**Familiarization to processes.** Familiarization to building and state required processes was another common perception of program goals. Nine comments from mentees, mentors, and administrators included the importance of understanding how processes and procedures are run within the school district. All groups referred to the

importance of learning required processes. Some identified building level processes including, "...school policies, something as simple as a fire drill," "...where things are, where to keep slips of paper, who to ask for what..." and, more broadly, "... how things are run in our building." Seven mentee comments referred to the need to understand "how to..." These "how to" processes involved assessments, inputting data, small group activities, how to hand out breakfast to students, how to best support their own students, using Power School, the phone system, and from one mentee, "...how to survive." Stacey shared that she did not have someone who told her those processes and reported that not knowing how to do those things was, "...very scary." Some mentees identified state required processes including how to input district provided professional development (DPPD) clock hours as well as how to apply for a professional teaching certificate and how to state current with state requirements. For example, Cristy said, "... what, as a new teacher, you need to do to work towards your professional certificate. Keeping track of all that." Without an understanding of how to complete these processes and the many more that were not mentioned, mentees can be left feeling overwhelmed and, "...out of the loop." As one mentee reported, "As a new teacher coming in, all those new little things, you know, add up."

**Opportunities to collaborate.** Mentees identified opportunities to collaborate more frequently than administrators and mentors. Four mentee comments included references to having time to collaborate built in to the program. This time was commonly referred to as "Mentor Days." These Mentor Days are built in to the program schedule and occur with decreasing frequency as mentees grow from year one to year three. Mentor Days were mentioned a total of eleven times. New teachers mentioned



Mentor Days eight times and mentors mentioned Mentor Days three times. Two mentees, Cheryl and Becky, shared respectively, "...every time after one of those days, I feel refreshed" and "...we feel refreshed." Becky, in her final year of the new teacher mentoring program, admitted, "When I don't have them anymore, I'll have to sneak in." Cheryl summarized her thoughts as, "We need it, mentally, physically, emotionally... I usually have a countdown timer, next Mentor Day... how many Mondays?" Another mentee, Becky, shared her feelings about Mentor Day, " I really think and feel that being supported, feeling like we have a purpose, like we know what we're doing for a hot minute" and about fellow mentees, "I just really feel spoiled by them and spoiled by my Mentor Days. It gives you hope so you know that you made it through." Mentee Amanda shared, "Our school is kind of good at it." One mentor, Whitney, acknowledged, "I'm given the time outside of the classroom to be able to work on whatever the probationary teacher needs. It's an absolute gift from the district." Another mentor, Marsha, appreciated Mentor Days as a way to, "...kind of stay on track so we think ahead about what we need to discuss and what the questions are. So I think that's helpful."

During Mentor Days, the activities include collaboration, discussions about requirements, curricular work, and as one mentee stated, "...assessments, strand chairs, there's no [other] way we would have known that." Two mentees discussed that collaboration with other mentees was a support. When they engaged in Mentor Days, they were able to discuss instructional approaches with fellow mentees and then brainstorm new ways to approach curriculum. One mentee, Amanda, shared an experience regarding an approach to helping fourth graders learn about the concept of

the quantity of a million. She shared that her fourth graders made a “million wall,” “...I tried a million wall with my kids. It was insane. [Fellow mentees] said, ‘How did it go?’ and I was like, ‘Don’t do it, just come see the wall.’” She went on further to explain that it did not have the impact she wanted with her group but that other fourth graders and her fellow mentees might learn from it. Amanda’s example of the million wall offered a good example of mentees working together on curriculum. As she told the story, she had a smile on her face. Mentee Cheryl mentioned the support of working with fellow mentees, “There is still so much that they’re throwing at us, CA-60’s, stickers, turn this thing in. We wanted to do it together so we could get all that done.”

### **New Teacher Attrition**

*RQ2: How do new teachers perceive their participation in the new teacher mentoring program to influence their desire to remain in the teaching profession?*

Interview questions regarding attrition were solely asked of mentees as they are the only participants who truly know the influence the new teacher mentoring program has had on their decision to remain in the field of education. Mentees responded to one direct question about the program and their decision to remain a teacher. Additionally, mentees were asked three indirect questions regarding their first years of teaching and how the new teacher mentoring program met their needs as new teachers.

Mentees articulated the influence of the mentoring program on their decision to remain in the field of teaching in different ways. Mentees responded with a total of twelve comments regarding attrition. Of those comments only one mentee, Teresa, disclosed that the program had minimal influence on her desire to remain a teacher. As she explained:

“I guess I don’t know that the mentoring program is what has made me want to stay a teacher. I chose to be a teacher because I like kids and I like teaching. My mentoring experience has certainly been positive, it’s not like it has discouraged it or anything, but I don’t think that’s the only reason I wanted to stay in teaching.”

Another mentee, Amanda, said, “It’s essential. I can’t imagine life without it. I would have left, I’m going to tell you, I would have left. I think about my friend who left and I think, ‘That would’ve been me.’”

Four mentees disclosed that they felt the desire to leave the field at some point in their first years of teaching. One mentee, Amanda said, “...and then one day, I was just done with my kids, like I’m about to leave. I called Cheryl and I was like, ‘I need you to come into my room for a minute.’” After Cheryl attended to Amanda’s students for a short break, Amanda was able to come back to her classroom. Amanda shared this story as an example of how her fellow mentees support her. Amanda also discussed new teachers with whom she graduated, “I’ve already had teachers that I graduated with quit this year, their first year. They don’t have anyone, anyone, not a single person in their building.” Mentee Amanda also disclosed that other teachers warned her to get out of the field even during her student teaching, “When I was doing student teaching, teachers were like, ‘Get out now, just don’t teach’ so to have somebody that’s actually emotionally supportive makes a world of difference ‘cause I wouldn’t have made it through December.”

Mentee Cheryl discussed the role of Mentor Days as a support for her to stay teaching at Apple Grove, “There are just some days that I was like, ‘I don’t think I can do this’ but being able to talk about it and get a different perspective on things, it’s helped a lot.”

A third mentee, Stacey referred to the new teacher mentoring program:

“Honestly, it’s the reason I’m still here, I think. I think without a good mentor, I probably would’ve already burned out. Maybe I’d be at a, probably an easier school to work at. Not that this school is bad or anything, it’s a great place to be, but it’s difficult. So just having a support system, having her by my side helping me through everything has been, you know, the world.”

The fourth mentee, Cristy elaborated on her experience:

“After my first year I was really unsure whether that was the right fit. I had a really rough group of kids. [My mentor] really kind of kept putting in my ear that this isn't how all groups of kids are going to be. The next year wasn't much better but she kept encouraging me and reminding me. She said, ‘You're here for a reason.’”

As of the interview date, these mentees disclosed that they do not intend to leave the field of teaching at this time. Amanda’s story exemplifies a new teacher who thought about leaving the field of teaching at least two times during her first year of teaching. Her explanations of these experiences cited the new teacher mentoring program and a fellow mentee as reasons for her retaining her position.

The most common theme that emerged from participant interviews was that of relationships. Twenty-three comments from mentors and mentees referred to relationships as a support for new teachers. Mentors and mentees discussed two distinct relationships, mentor/mentee and mentee/mentee. Regarding her mentor, Stacey argued, “I think it’s really important to have a strong relationship between the mentor and the mentee. Honestly, I’m super happy with my mentor so I don’t think there’s anything missing between me and her.” Of her mentor, Cristy noted, “She’s very grounded and she said that keeps me grounded with her... to have somebody that’s willing to listen to you when those times come.. to keep you grounded and remind you that it will get easier... to give you advice that others might not be giving you.” Another new teacher, Becky, mentioned friendship, “I mean, we’re just very comfortable with

each other. We're friends, so it's like just a daily thing. We talk about how things are going and what we can do to help each other." One mentor, Lucy, referred to the role of relationship as, "it doesn't surprise me and I think it's essential for a new teacher to see it's okay to be human in the classroom." Another mentor, Whitney, also used the word "essential":

"Getting to know the probationary teacher as a person allows that probationary teacher to feel comfortable and come to the mentor teacher with any sort of question, knowing that they're not going to be judged and that that's the role of the mentor teacher to offer assistance and help and insight. So I think really establishing a relationship, much like we do with our students in class, I think that's essential."

A second relationship new teachers discussed was that of mentee/mentee. Mentees discussed being able to go through the first years with other people who are in their same position, other new teachers who are also new to the profession and who are learning how to function as full time teachers. Fellow mentees became a support for them and they learned together. They also discussed that they reminded one another of important required tasks. One group of three mentees, Becky, Cheryl, and Amanda, elaborated on their relationship and the influence their relationship has had on them during the school year. Becky, on medical leave during the beginning of the year, discussed the support of her two fellow mentees. She stated, "They would text me and tell me what they talked about in the meeting. I never felt left out. They even made copies for me." Cheryl and Amanda responded that they were glad to support Becky and said, "We are so close you know." Becky, Cheryl, and Amanda referred to a phrase they have as "our phrase" by saying, "We can do this. We could do this. We got this." Regarding their relationship, Cheryl said, "We all have strong personalities but we also have respect for each other." Becky summed up their

relationship as, "...a lot of figuring things out together and moving forward. Everyone has some sort of experience. We are bringing all of our ideas together. I think that we've really done well collaborating with each other." Amanda then admitted, "I don't think I could have survived without you guys. I would not have made it this year without these days and without you. You guys have kept me afloat and made it doable."

### **Participant Suggestions**

During the course of the participant interviews, many unsolicited suggestions for how to increase the effectiveness of the new teacher mentoring program emerged. Participants offered three common suggestions. The first is to include a selection of topics for new teachers to discuss with their mentors during their time in the program. The second is that of expanding the mentor program to include new to the district teachers for their first years in the district. The third is to increase the years of the mentoring program to five years.

#### **Include a selection of topics.**

Two mentees, two administrators, and one mentor suggested implementing a selection of topics that should be included in the program. This selection of topics was referred to as a "checklist," "pacing guide," and "menu of topics." One administrator, Jeff, elaborated, "I would anticipate a monthly checklist and, you know, kind of breaking that school year down beginning in August and in some of those things that, not only new teachers, but all teachers would be doing in August." Hope, another administrator, concurs:

"I think if there was a checklist of expectations or things for them to talk about or things for them to work on that might ensure that these needs are absolutely taken care of. Because a lot of times we look at the district needs and the curriculum and behaviors and that sort of thing. But sometimes forget about

some of the other things that new teachers need. Where do I go to find this? Or what kinds of supports are available for this and that. And, you know, I think that's a great suggestion."

Mentor Shelley suggests,

"I do think that there probably could be something more in place than there is right now as far as details because the way we're doing it is totally of our own creation to be honest. And so I think that... but it works. But it could not work if the two people weren't collaborating and if there, you know, cause I feel like the way we're doing it best fits her needs because we have this ongoing document and all of that. But it could not work if the two people weren't collaborating like that. So if you had a thing that kind of guided, if you didn't know how it was gonna look, that would help."

**Offer the program to new-to-district teachers.**

Three mentees and one mentor suggested that Apple Grove should offer a similar mentoring program for new-to-district teachers. Suggestions ranged for the duration of the proposed mentoring program but the reasoning behind the suggestion was similar among these participants. For example, mentor Whitney suggests:

"I hope Apple Grove starts a mentor program for teachers new to the district. We mentor brand new teachers within their first three years of teaching, but we don't offer a mentor program for teachers, maybe they've already been teaching for several years, new to our district. It would be nice to offer support for at a minimum of one year to teachers new to our building even though they've been teaching elsewhere."

Mentee Teresa agrees:

"They are still new to the district. They still could use a year or two years or whatever. There's still stuff you don't know like who's who and where to find things and how does this district compare to other districts?" Mentee Stacey adds, "I think there's parts of it that would be good for anyone new to the district, but there are definitely certain parts like the phone system, the attendance system that would be good for just new to teaching teachers. And I want to say they do have new teacher orientation here now, but they didn't when I started, so I don't know what it looks like here. Um, because I never had it."

Cristy, another mentee, said:

“And then, um, just the new teachers coming into our building that they're not in their first three years of teaching, but they're just new to our building in general, don't have that same support. And I can't imagine even if I've had 10 years of experience walking into this building and not having a specific person to guide me. So that was one of the things that I've always wondered why we don't have kind of that first year someone for whether you're an experienced teacher or not.

**Increase the amount of years the program is offered.**

Two mentees suggested increasing the program offering to five years for the purpose of further supporting new teachers. For example, Teresa said, “My husband’s school does, I think, four or five years of mentoring and I think that could be more beneficial with possibly less support each year.” Becky agrees, “I almost kind of think that planning five years instead of three years would be awesome.”

**Summary**

These findings communicate the perceptions of participants related to the Apple Grove new teacher mentoring program. Findings were described according to each research question. Then, participant suggestions followed.

Research question one sought to better understand how the new teacher mentoring program at Apple Grove aligned with the program goals. All participants were asked what they believed the program goals to be. Common perceptions emerged from interviews with participants. First, many participants shared a belief that one of the program goals was intended to be mentees having a mentor as a support person. This support extended from functional building level process orientation to emotional support. Another shared program goal was that of familiarization to curriculum. Some participants, mentors and administrators, identified that learning new curriculum can be overwhelming for new teachers. A third shared perception of program goals was that of familiarization to processes. Included processes were both



at the building level as well as at the state level. Finally, a shared perception of offering opportunities to collaborate emerged as a program goal. Apple Grove currently offers time to collaborate for mentors and mentees. Common activities during this time include collaboration, discussion, and question/answer sessions between mentors and mentees.

Research question two addresses the influence of the new teacher mentoring program on the desire of mentees to stay in the teaching profession. Four mentees shared that they felt the desire to leave during their first years of teaching. Commonly, mentees identified relationships as the influence that helped them decide to ultimately stay. Two supportive relationships from the new teacher mentoring program were identified. One relationship was between mentees. The other relationship was between a mentee and mentor. These relationships offered mentees a support person to turn to when they disclosed their feelings.

A total of three participant suggestions emerged as a result of the interviews. One suggestion was to include a list of topics that could be used by mentors and mentees to guide their discussions for the purpose of including topics most new teachers would need to cover during their first years. Another suggestion was that of extending the program offering to include teachers who were new to the district even if they had been teaching for more than three years. The reasoning behind this suggestion was that new teaching faculty would also need assistance in learning building and district level processes and could benefit from support from more senior staff members within their new school setting. A final suggestion was to extend the

program offering to five years. This suggestion was offered by two mentees who were nearing the end of their mentoring program access.

These results can be interpreted through the lens of each research question. The analysis of these results is presented in the next section.

## Chapter 5: Analysis

The purpose of this study was to gather the perceptions of stakeholders in the new teacher mentoring program. These perceptions helped Apple Grove better understand the new teacher mentoring program in its current iteration related to program goals. Apple Grove also learned about the influence of the new teacher mentoring program on hired new teachers in the district, specifically whether the program has influenced the desire of new teachers to remain in the field of teaching. Resulting data helped identify areas of success as well as areas of need within the program.

This chapter will now discuss the results of the study as related to each research question. Further discussion will include results that emerged from participant interactions. Findings related to each question will be included for clarity and cohesion. Next, recommendations for Apple Grove will be discussed. Finally, a discussion of the limitations and potential opportunities for future research is included.

**RQ1: From the perception of the stakeholders of the new teacher mentoring program at Apple Grove, how does the mentoring program align with the program goals?**

As a result of the discussion from all participants in the new teacher mentoring program at Apple Grove, participants perceived the goals of the mentoring program to be fourfold. First, a goal of mentors as a singular support was identified. Next, participants seemed to share a perception of familiarization to curriculum as a program goal. Third, participants shared a perception of familiarization to processes as a program goal. A final perception of a program goal of opportunities to collaborate was

discussed by participants. By explaining these program goals, participants not only shared their perceptions of what the goals actually were but also how those goals were being met according to their experiences.

The Mentor/Mentee Handbook does not clearly articulate program goals. Additionally, only four participants including one mentee and three mentors refer to the handbook as being included in their contracts. The remaining participants had not seen a handbook. Without clearly articulated program goals to compare participant responses, program goals were surmised from the perceptions of the participants.

### **Interpretation.**

#### ***Mentor as support person.***

Many participants discussed the importance of a mentor as a support person within the new teacher mentoring program. During times when participants identified mentors as a program goal, there were often stories or further elaboration about how that was happening. For example, Stacey, a mentee, identified her mentor as "...a support system, someone to go to with questions, someone to help with the transition from college to teaching." She then elaborated on this idea by discussing how this program goal was being met.

"My new mentor, who I have been with for two and a half years has always made sure she's there for me. She's always asking me, you know, is there anything I can help you with? How can I support you? We bounce ideas off each other. So just having someone to collaborate with is great. So that's made my transition a lot easier."

The findings suggest common ideas about how mentors support their mentees. Mentees offered examples of mentors encouraging them and advocating for their further training. In turn, mentors offered examples of how a mentor supports a mentee. For example, from Shelly's description:

“Support through a lot of things like parent conversations, parent phone calls, discipline, talking to someone with experience who, you know, can give them insight, but also to say, ‘This too shall pass. I know it feels like a huge deal right now, but...’ and that advice and support along the way through those kinds of things.”

Administrators shared common perceptions. For example, Jeff’s description of mentor support is as follows, “One goal is to help new teachers know what it’s like to be a first year teacher in a building. All those expectations that come with the duties of being a teacher.” These findings indicate that the participants in the program share a common understanding of the kinds of support a mentor is intended to offer. Further, these descriptions closely mirror the expectations outlined in the Mentor/Mentee Handbook. Therefore, participants are acting in line with the expectations by way of gaining understanding from the handbook, their contract descriptions, or elsewhere.

According to a study conducted by Lozniak (2016) during which the mentor/mentee matching process was specifically studied, new teachers and mentors reported a positive relationship when mentors were selected based on leadership qualities as well as personality particularly suited to potential mentees. Further, new teachers reported a positive feeling of their first years of teaching and the new teacher mentoring program overall. A study conducted by Gholam (2018) reported similar perspectives of new teachers who claimed to have benefitted from mentors who were recognized by school staff as inspirational, encouraging, and collaborative.

Findings such as these offer examples of common understandings among the various contributors of this perceived program goal as it aligns to the new teacher mentoring program at Apple Grove. These common understandings allow participants to work together, where all understand the intentions of this first common goal.

### ***Familiarization of the curriculum.***

Participants from all groups perceived one program goal to be that of familiarizing novice teachers to the established and new curriculum. According to the perceptions of participants, they are referring to curriculum as including units, lesson plans, activities, assessments, and curricular materials. All groups discussed the importance of new teachers being trained in curriculum that is new to them.

Three mentees shared an example of a time when they worked together with their mentor to dialogue about new curriculum. They discussed how their mentor brought them up to date on the intentions of the curriculum. Another mentee discussed how her mentor advocated for her to be able to attend training, something she noted she was uncomfortable advocating on her own.

Administrators discussed two ways that mentors could support mentees with curriculum. One discussed that mentees could benefit from how curriculum is delivered as well as how to communicate that curriculum to students. The other administrator identified that mentors and mentees need time they can use for, "...digging into the curriculum."

Mentors acknowledged that curriculum can be overwhelming. One described familiarizing mentees with curriculum as one of the, "two biggies." Another mentor identified that it can be a problem when the rest of the staff was trained in something prior to the mentee joining the team. In cases like that, she believed it was important for mentors to seek out opportunities for their mentees to be able to have that same training.

Contributions from all groups offer a better understanding of how important curriculum can be for a mentee. Without sufficient support with new curriculum, described by mentors, mentees, and administrators as “overwhelming,” mentees may be left feeling as though they do not understand the curriculum they are tasked to teach. This feeling of being overwhelmed was also identified by new teachers in a similar study of new teacher mentoring programs in Australia (Hudson, 2012). During this study, new teachers reported feeling concerned about how to teach curriculum within district time constraints while also managing students with special needs. Mentors supporting them by bringing them in to ongoing discussions, dialoguing with them, and sharing ideas may reduce this feeling of being overwhelmed. Several studies support the use of new teacher mentoring programs to help new teachers grow in their command and integration of curriculum. Mahboob (2014) suggests the new teachers should be engaging with their mentors in a collaborative work about curriculum and, further, that this collaboration should include inquiry and ongoing discussions especially when curriculum changes. Kardos and Johnson (2010) identify curriculum as a “critical aspect” and “central component” of a new teacher mentoring program (p. 27).

***Familiarization to processes.***

Participants discussed many different ways the new teacher mentoring program could introduce mentees to processes. Some processes were building level and included knowledge of how and when to submit required paperwork, how to operate machines within the building, and specific responsibilities of various staff. Other processes were related to certification. Participants described the importance of informing new teachers of these processes.

According to Callahan (2016) mentor teachers can support new teachers by helping them integrate themselves as contributing members of the school community by becoming engaged in the school environment and compliant with district and building processes. Offering mentees this kind of support encourages new teacher confidence and reduces negative feelings associated with the first years of teaching. One of the main objectives for mentoring programs is to assist mentees in meeting legal mandates as well as the challenges of everyday life in schools (Rienbauer, Deisiebner, & Stock, 2017). Findings from a 2013 study conducted by Smeaton and Waters of a new teacher mentoring program demonstrated that new teachers needed support in the area of grading and building level processes due to the absence of these components in traditional universities. Without onsite support in this area, new teachers are left without a base of knowledge from their preparation programs from which to continue growing.

***Opportunities to collaborate.***

Mentees mentioned opportunities to collaborate more frequently than mentors or administrators. This could be because they value and desire time to collaborate. These opportunities were frequently referred to as Mentor Days. Two mentees described their feelings after each Mentor Day as feeling “refreshed.” One mentee stated that she employed a “countdown timer.” Another mentee described feeling “spoiled” by her Mentor Days claiming that “our school is kind of good at it.” Mentors also described the time they are given during Mentor Days as “helpful.” These responses offer insight into the perceived importance of time to collaborate among mentees and their mentors.

One mentor claimed that collaboration was not always happening and shared that it was hard to connect with her mentee due to their specific roles in the



school. Collaboration is an important quality of effective new teacher mentoring programs. In a multiyear study of new teacher mentoring programs, Nielsen, Lundmark, and Addison (2007) found that programs with collaboration increased retention of new teachers as compared to teachers who did not engage in a mentoring program. Further, teachers viewed collaboration as a key component in the program and spoke positively about collaboration. Yirci (2017) identifies collaboration as one part of creating a supportive environment for new teachers. Further, time should be dedicated to offer new teachers time for collaborating with others. The findings from the Apple Grove New Teacher Mentoring Program study support the need and desire for opportunities to collaborate among mentors and mentees. A feeling of being refreshed as claimed by participants in this study can encourage new teachers when they feel overwhelmed. Offering this time is important for mentees and mentors even when there are difficult scheduling limitations.

### **Summary.**

In summary, the perceptions of participants demonstrate ways in which the mentoring program is meeting the perceived program goals. By contemplating examples of the program meeting the perceived program goals, alignment can be better understood.

According to participant perceptions, mentors are supporting their mentees in many ways in Apple Grove. Mentees reported emotional support in the form of encouragement from their mentors. They also reported support to better understand processes, curriculum, and best practices of teaching. As new teachers develop and grow in their first years, participants from all represented groups discussed that one

program goal was for mentors to support mentees. For this perceived program goal, participant examples demonstrate that the program in its current iteration is aligned with meeting this goal. As such, mentors are supporting their mentees in both emotional and practical ways.

Participants also perceived program goals to be that of familiarization to curriculum and processes. Allowing mentors and mentees the time to work together during Mentor Days seems to be of value to mentors and mentees. During these days, mentors and mentees collaborate and discuss curriculum as well as processes. They seem to also use this time for encouragement and building relationships with one another.

By way of using participant perceptions of program goals, inferences can be drawn regarding whether those perceived program goals are aligned with participant experiences. Results suggest that, at Apple Grove, mentees are given support by their mentors, that they are becoming familiar with both curriculum and processes, and that they are being given time to collaborate with one another. As such, findings suggest that perceived program goals are aligned to the current iteration of the new teacher mentoring program at Apple Grove.

**RQ2: How do new teachers perceive their participation in the new teacher mentoring program to influence their desire to remain in the teaching profession?**

Mentees responded to one direct question and two indirect questions regarding attrition. Many mentees explained occurrences when they were overwhelmed or when the needed support. Several offered stories that elaborated on these issues. One

theme that emerged around stories the mentees decided to share was that of relationships.

Of the six mentees, four explicitly mentioned that they thought about leaving the field at some point during their first years of teaching. One mentee in particular disclosed that she was ready to leave on at least two occasions during the last school year. All four mentees cited relationships with other mentees or their mentor as particular reasons they eventually chose to stay in the district and in the field.

Relationships remained a common theme among mentees. There was no direct question about their relationships within the mentoring program. Typically, comments were offered in response to the question, "What else do you think I should know about the new mentoring program here?"

Amanda discussed a time when she was ready to leave during one particularly tough school day. After she disclosed this feeling to a fellow mentee with whom she had become friends, this peer came in immediately and took over Amanda's class without hesitation while she regrouped. Amanda also said that she, "...couldn't imagine life without..." the new teacher mentoring program. She discussed her friendship with two mentees in particular and how she too supported them. She also mentioned a feeling of being refreshed after working with her fellow mentees and her mentor. Amanda's disclosure of her relationship with her fellow mentees and her mentor offered insight into how important the relationship was at a time when she thought about leaving the school and even the profession. Cheryl also mentioned her relationships as a support during times when she thought, "I don't think I can do this." Cheryl added that, "...being able to talk about it and get a different perspective on things, it's helped a lot."

Since both Amanda and Cheryl mention fellow mentees as a main support for a time when they felt like leaving, it can be deduced that, without these relationships, they could have continued to think about leaving or even chose to leave.

Stacey and Cristy shared their mentors served as the main support when they felt the need to leave. Stacey argued that without, "...having her by my side helping me through everything has been, you know, the world." Cristy referred to her mentor's encouragement and reminders to persevere. Without mentors, these novice teachers could have continued to struggle without a ready resource with experience in what they were dealing with and who would encourage them to stay. They might have ultimately elected to leave the field of education.

Interestingly, one mentee (Amanda) mentioned two outside sources who influenced her decision to remain in the field. She shared that other teachers with whom she graduated the prior year had already left the field of education. She mentioned that she attempted to encourage these former peers by suggesting moving to another school setting and by assuring them that more support might be available at other school districts. Amanda also discussed some advice she received as a student teacher. Other teachers within the school building told her she should leave the field. When I asked Amanda why she thought they told her this, she said that she didn't know but that it was probably because being a teacher can be difficult. Amanda told these two stories in succession after being asked about how the Apple Grove new teacher mentoring program influenced her decision to stay a teacher. When she told the stories, her face became red and she spoke passionately, with a lifted voice.

Amanda's story reveals some important information. Her story of her advice for fellow first year teachers suggests that there are times when new teachers are reaching outside of the jurisdiction of the new teacher mentoring program for outside advice sometimes. Amanda's discussion of other new teachers leaving within the first year can offer more information about why she perceives that other teachers are leaving. She noted that she attempted to encourage them to stay by assuring them that support could be found in other districts if it was not present in their own districts. She claimed, "They didn't have anybody to talk to or to support them." In this statement, Amanda is offering a perception that new teachers need support and encouragement from their peers and from others in the field. Amanda's story also suggests that her peers could have felt that they had no one to support them in their respective first year of teaching and that Amanda had perhaps found this support within her own district.

Additionally, teacher candidates might be receiving advice to leave the field by more senior teachers even before they leave their preparation programs. Amanda was still thinking about this advice one year into her professional teaching life. During times when Amanda felt like leaving, she might have remembered this feedback, which could have led her further consideration of leaving education. If more senior teachers are warning novice teachers away from teaching, new teachers might experience negative feelings about his/her chosen field.

### **Summary.**

In review of this new teacher mentoring program as an influence for new teachers to stay in the field, the common theme of relationships emerged. New teachers identified two kinds of relationships, which supported them in their first years:

that of mentee/mentee and mentor/mentee. Two mentees disclosed that they felt the desire to leave in their first years but that mentee/mentee relationships offered them support when they needed it. Two other mentees shared that their mentor supported them by encouraging them during low points in their first years. However, these relationships and the just-in-time support offered by resources within the new teacher mentoring program could be further complicated by more senior teachers warning away novice teachers before they even graduate.

### **Recommendations**

Moving forward, Apple Grove can use the information learned within this study to make improvements to the new teacher mentoring program. The table below outlines findings and corresponding recommendations for Apple Grove School District. More discussion regarding findings and recommendation specifics is presented after the table.

Table 5. *Recommendations*

Findings	Recommendations
<p>Mentor/Mentee Handbook</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• outdated, from 2007-2010</li> <li>• outdated teacher standards</li> <li>• not all teachers were aware of the handbook</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Update the handbook to include new teacher standards.</li> <li>2. Periodically review and update the handbook.</li> <li>3. Distribute the handbook to all participants.</li> </ol>
<p>Program Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not formally created nor communicated</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Involve program participants in the creation of formal program goals (Waters, 2011).</li> <li>2. Communicate the program goals yearly (Lozniak, 2016; Waters, 2011).</li> </ol>
<p>Relationships were supportive for both mentors and mentees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mentor/mentee relationships</li> <li>• mentee/mentee relationships</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create opportunities for program participants to create supportive relationships in and among themselves (Billingsley, 2003; Ingersoll &amp; Kralik; Sparks, 2017; Wong, 2004).</li> <li>2. Participants could work collaboratively with those performing similar job roles within the program (Lozniak, 2016; Neilsen, Lundmark, &amp; Addison, 2007).</li> </ol>
<p>Participant Suggestions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a list of topics that must be discussed.</li> <li>• Expand the program to include new to district teachers.</li> <li>• Extend the program to last five years instead of three years.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore the financial and logistical impact of participant suggestions.</li> <li>2. Implement suggestions as deemed necessary.</li> </ol>

The first recommendation is to update the Mentor/Mentee Handbook. The year span communicated on the Master Agreement within the handbook is 2007-2010, nine years prior to this study. Further, the teacher standards included in the handbook are outdated and are no longer used by the Michigan Department of Education. Thus, those should also be updated. As a part of the next steps process, regular and planned updating of the handbook as well as distribution of the handbook would allow all

participants access to the most up-to-date information regarding the program as well as state mandates involving new teachers and their mentors.

This study showed that Apple Grove's new teacher mentoring program participants share many cohesive ideas about the program goals. Moving forward, Apple Grove might benefit from formalizing the goals of the programs and then communicating them within the Mentor/Mentee Handbook. While many of the participants had similar ideas, all participants were not able to communicate the same perception of program goals. Further, involving the voices of participants in the creation of the goals can offer a more broad understanding of what participants need and want out of the program. In following through with this recommendation, Apple Grove would be integrating guidelines communicated in U.S. Department of Education (1998). These guidelines reinforce the importance of establishing clear goals and communicating them with participants and stakeholders.

In consideration of new teacher attrition, new teachers identified two relationships within the mentoring program as motivating factors for remaining in their teaching positions even when they felt like leaving. These relationships, mentor/mentee and mentee/mentee should be offered to new teachers who enter the district. During times when mentees have no fellow peers within their building setting, perhaps mentees could build relationships with mentees in other buildings or in the larger county area. Building such relationships could offer opportunities for mentees to get the support they need as the mentees in this study found. As discussed by Sparks (2017), supportive relationships can reduce feelings of isolation for new teachers. Similar to this study, findings from the Sparks (2017) study demonstrated that new teachers cited positive



relationships as a reason they chose to stay in their positions. These positive interactions have been promoted as positive influences for teachers and retention (Billingsley, 2003; Ingersoll & Kralik; Wong, 2004).

Apple Grove's program might consider the three suggestions offered by participants in this study. Incorporating these suggestions is a recommended step to, "...help maintain the trust and involvement of these groups with the program" (U.S. Department of Education, 1998). First, a selection of topics relevant to new teacher needs as well as building and district needs should be created by including both research and participant contributions. Next, Apple Grove could consider the financial and logistical impact of extending the offering of the program to teachers new to the district with perhaps different goals and processes. Finally, participants suggested extending the offering of the program. Apple Grove could consider the financial and logistical impact of extending the program duration.

## **Limitations**

Readers of this dissertation should be aware of the following limitations of this study due to potential internal and external validity:

1. District selection: Only one district was included in this study. The results of this study limits generalizability. A wider study of demographically diverse districts could increase generalizability.
2. Participants: All participants were white/non-Latino. All but one participant were female. A study including more participant diversity could increase generalizability.

3. Grade level: At the time of this study, all new teachers worked at the elementary level with only one middle school new teacher participating in this study. Consequently, readers should be cautious when trying to use results to make inferences about secondary new teachers.
4. Program requirements: Apple Grove's new teacher mentoring program has program requirements and processes that may be different from other programs. The results presented in this study are reflective of only this program and participants. Readers should be cautious when attempting to generalize these results.
5. Self-reporting: Results were obtained through self-reported perceptions of participants. Responses from interview participants could be dishonest or potentially inaccurate due to fear of backlash from administration or mentors, incorrect perceptions, emotionally fueled perceptions, the sensitive nature of one's personal decision to stay or leave a job position, and misinterpretations of steps in the process of the new teacher mentoring program.
6. Broad interpretation- While the Michigan Department of Education requires certain components for new teacher mentoring programs, districts are able to develop and implement their program with broad interpretation. The results of this study are reflective of this district's interpretation of those requirements and the implemented program.

### **Opportunities for Future Research**

This study offers insight for potential areas for future research:

1. Expanding this study to include districts of varying demographic and socio-economic diversity could offer the opportunity for more generalizability. Further, additional insights could reveal more information about what participants value in new teacher mentoring programs as well as what factors prompted a decision to stay a teacher.
2. A study of new teachers at the secondary level might offer more understanding of participants at that level. Only one new teacher at the secondary level participated in this study. A study that included more middle and high school teachers could offer valuable information regarding these grade bands in particular. Results from a study such as that might also offer an opportunity to compare implementation of new teacher mentoring programs in elementary schools to that of secondary schools.
3. This study offered insight into the perceptions of four new teachers who considered leaving within their first three years of teaching. A wider study that included more new teachers could help reveal more information about the reasons new teachers might choose to leave education.
4. This study revealed that participants in the Apple Grove new teacher mentoring district cited relationships as positive supports for new teachers. Two relationships were discussed in this study: mentor/mentee relationships and mentee/mentee relationships. A study of mentor/mentor relationships might expose benefits to including opportunities for this type of relationship in new teacher mentoring programs.

5. New teachers in this study explained which factors influenced their decision to remain in their teaching positions even when they contemplated leaving. Reviewing these insights and dispersing them can inform positive practices in new teacher mentoring program (See Appendix C).
6. Apple Grove could re-evaluate the program periodically to gather participant perceptions. Doing so could offer valuable information that could prompt changes within the program.

## **Conclusion**

Apple Grove School District has implemented a new teacher mentoring program for all new teachers within their first three years of teaching. All participants from the 2018-2019 iteration of the new teacher mentoring program engaged this study which included interviews meant to capture the perceptions of all participants. Two research questions provided the basis from which the findings were analyzed.

The first research question, regarding program outcomes, suggested that although there were no formalized goals, most participants perceived that the program had similar goals. This finding suggested that participants engaged in the program with a similar set of perceived goals and that the program was being implemented in similar ways. The most commonly perceived program goals were that of mentors supporting their mentees both emotionally and practically, that of familiarizing new teachers to curriculum and processes, and offering new teachers opportunities to collaborate.

The second research question, regarding the new teacher mentoring program as an influence for new teachers to stay in the field, suggested that there were some participants who considered leaving within their first years of teaching. The most

common reason for staying was that of relationships. Participants described two different supportive relationships: mentor/mentee and mentee/mentee.

During this study, participants offered three unsolicited suggestions for improving the program. The first suggestion was to create a list of topics to be discussed during the new teacher mentoring program. This suggestion also included details such as pacing the topics by month and year. The second suggestion was that of expanding the program to include teachers who were new to the district but who were not new teachers. Finally, two mentee participants suggested extending the program to last five years instead of three.

This study provided perception information about a new teacher mentoring program that is ongoing in a district in Michigan. Participant responses revealed times when the group demonstrated common ideas about program outcomes. Additionally, new teachers shared stories of times when they felt as though they should leave the field of teaching. This information can be used by Apple Grove School District to improve their new teacher mentoring program. It can also be used to encourage future research about new teacher attrition and new teacher mentoring program.

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**THE REVISED SCHOOL CODE (EXCERPT)**  
**Act 451 of 1976**

**380.1526 Teacher in first 3 years of employment; assignment to master teacher; intensive professional development induction.**

Sec. 1526.

For the first 3 years of his or her employment in classroom teaching, a teacher shall be assigned by the school in which he or she teaches to 1 or more master teachers, or college professors or retired master teachers, who shall act as a mentor or mentors to the teacher. During the 3-year period, the teacher shall also receive intensive professional development induction into teaching, based on a professional development plan that is consistent with the requirements of section 3a of article II of Act No. 4 of the Public Acts of the Extra Session of 1937, being section 38.83a of the Michigan Compiled Laws, including classroom management and instructional delivery. During the 3-year period, the intensive professional development induction into teaching shall consist of at least 15 days of professional development, the experiencing of effective practices in university-linked professional development schools, and regional seminars conducted by master teachers and other mentors.

**History:** Add. 1993, Act 335, Imd. Eff. Dec. 31, 1993 ;-- Am. 1995, Act 289, Eff. July 1, 1996

**Popular Name:** Act 451

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## Appendix B: Interview Questions

### **New Teacher Interviews**

#### Process and Procedures

- What are the program goals?
- How do these program goals relate to your experiences with the new teacher mentoring program?
- Experiences and perceptions
- Were you given a copy of the manual?
- What impact is it having on your first years as a teacher?
- How often do you see your mentor?
- Quality of interactions?

#### New Teacher Needs in the Classroom

- Articulate which needs you have as a new teacher.
- How are those needs being met with the new teacher mentoring program?

#### Mentoring as a Means to Reach Retention

- As you think about the mentoring program, what might be missing or in need of improvement?
- As you think about the mentoring program, what is supportive of your growth?
- How do you feel about your first year of teaching?
- In what ways has the mentoring program influenced your decision to remain a teacher?

### **Mentors**

#### New Teacher Mentoring Process and Procedures

- What are the program goals?
- How do these program goals relate to your experiences with the new teacher mentoring program?
- Can you articulate the processes?
- Are there barriers to your implementation of various steps?
- How were you matched?

#### New Teacher Needs in the Classroom

- What needs do new teacher have in the classroom?
- How are those needs being met with the new teacher mentoring program?

### **Administrator Questions**

#### New Teacher Mentoring Process and Procedures

- What are the program goals?
- How do these program goals relate to your experiences with the new teacher mentoring program?
- How were procedures and processes communicated to you?



- What are some barriers to full implementation?
- How are participants (new teachers, mentors, administrators) held accountable?
- What can be done to improve the program?
- What is going well?

#### New Teacher Needs in the Classroom

- What needs do new teacher have in the classroom?
- How are those needs being met with the new teacher mentoring program?

## Appendix C: New Teacher Comments about Retention

### **Introduction**

In 2019, a study reviewed an ongoing new teacher mentoring program. During this study, new teachers shared their feelings about leaving their teaching positions and what ultimately led them to stay. Of the six new teachers who were interviewed, four disclosed a desire to leave their positions in the preceding year. When asked why they ultimately decided to stay, all four new teachers cited relationships as the most influential reason they stayed. Two relationships emerged from the study: mentor/mentee and mentee/mentee. Included below are some of their thoughts about the relationships that saved their teaching jobs.

### **Relationships**

Amanda and Cheryl cited fellow mentees as the most influential relationships that led them to decide to stay.

Amanda: "...having that support because I've already had teachers that I graduated with quit this year, their first year because they don't have anyone... anyone, not a single person in their building. So yeah I definitely feel like that's kept us going and have us like have hope."

Cheryl: "There are just some days that I was like, 'I don't think I can do this' but being able to talk about it and get a different perspective on things, it's helped a lot."

Stacey and Cristy identified their mentors as integral relationships.

Stacey: "Honestly, it's the reason I'm still here, I think. I think without a good mentor, I probably would've already burned out. Maybe I'd be at a, probably an easier school to work at. Not that this school is bad or anything, it's a great place to be, but it's difficult. So just having a support system, having her by my side helping me through everything has been, you know, the world."

Cristy: "After my first year I was really unsure whether that was the right fit. I had a really rough group of kids. [My mentor] really kind of kept putting in my ear that this isn't how all groups of kids are going to be. The next year wasn't much better but she kept encouraging me and reminding me. She said, 'You're here for a reason.'"

### **What works**

- 1- New teachers need support and encouragement. Offering opportunities for new teachers to develop and maintain supportive and positive relationships can help them avoid feelings of isolation (Petersen, 2017).
- 2- New teachers often identify elements of collaboration and engagement with mentors as part of the most valued parts of their mentoring programs (Neilsen, Lundmark, & Addison, 2007; Petersen, 2017; Yirci, 2017).
- 3- Mentors should serve as an advisor, a model of good teaching, an advocate, and a developer (Lloyd, Wood, & Moreno, 2000). Mentors can help new teachers anticipate issues and navigate potential obstacles (Callahan, 2016).

# Angela Leuchtmann

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Professional Work Portfolio: <https://amleuchtmann.wixsite.com/portfolio>

## Education

**Indiana University- Bloomington** **October 2019**

**Doctor of Education in Instructional Systems Technology**

GPA: 4.0

Dissertation topic: Evaluation of an Induction Program

**Badges** **2015**

- Learning Analytics
- Learner Analytics and Personalization
- Academic Analytics
- Systemic Improvement

**Academic Honor Society: Pi Lambda Theta**

**Grand Valley State University** **2007-2010**

**Master of Education, Reading Specialist K-12**

Thesis topic: Implementing a Research Based RtI Reading Framework at the Elementary Level

Graduated GPA: 4.0

## Related Certifications and Trainings

- Adobe Dreamweaver
- Adobe Illustrator
- Articulate Storyline
- Data Analysis
- HTML Essential Training (Lynda.com)
- Dreamweaver CC Essential Training (Lynda.com)
- Articulate

## Professional Affiliations

- International Literacy Association
- Directors and Representatives of Teacher Education Programs (DARTEP)
- Michigan Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (MACTE)
- Michigan Independent Educator Preparation Institutions (MIEPI)

## **Professional Experience**

### **Baker College of Muskegon**

#### **Program Director of Teacher Preparation**

**2013-Present**

- Lead all faculty and students in the Teacher Preparation Program
- Direct Muskegon campus and Cadillac campus
- Develop relationships with community members as Advisory Board Administrator
- Design curriculum and assessment
- Interpret data and create actionable next steps
- Adapt Reading Assessment Course for online delivery
- Schedule and staff all Teacher Preparation courses
- Assist in obtaining and maintaining National Accreditation (TEAC, CAEP)
- Hire and evaluate Teacher Preparation faculty
- Teach classes (all courses utilize Blackboard and/or Canvas shells)

#### **Adjunct Faculty**

**2010-2013**

COL 115- College and Career Preparation, Developmental Reading, Writing, Math

- Piloted COL 115 in the Spring, Summer and Fall quarters of 2012
- Provided feedback and data regarding student success for this new course offering

ENG 098B- College Reading and ENG 091- English Review

- Planned, Modeled and Instructed students in higher academic reading and writing skills and strategies using research-based techniques

### **Grand Rapids Community College**

#### **Adjunct Faculty**

**2011-2013**

RD 098- College Reading

- Planned, Modeled and Instructed students in higher academic reading skills and strategies using research-based techniques

### **Grand Rapids Child Discovery Center**

**2009-2012**

**Rtl Coordinator/Interventionist**

**Curriculum Coordinator**

**School Improvement Committee**

#### **Teacher**

**2004-2009**

- 1<sup>st</sup> grade
- 2<sup>nd</sup> grade
- 3<sup>rd</sup> grade