The Five-Year Mark: New Teacher Support and Retention in Chicago Public Schools

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# Table of Contents

Abstract .............................................................................................................. 2  
Question ............................................................................................................ 3  
Rationale ........................................................................................................... 4  
**Literature Review** .......................................................................................... 6  
  The Importance of Quality Teachers .............................................................. 8  
  Why Teachers Leave ....................................................................................... 11  
  The Affect of Teacher Turnover and Attrition ............................................. 18  
  Retention Strategies ....................................................................................... 19  
**Data Collection** ............................................................................................ 32  
  Data Sources .................................................................................................. 32  
  Methods and Instruments .............................................................................. 32  
  Consents Secured ........................................................................................... 35  
  Ethics Statement ............................................................................................. 35  
**Data Summary** .............................................................................................. 36  
  Artifact Analysis ............................................................................................. 36  
    *Department of Human Resources Teacher Attrition Rates* ...................... 36  
  New Teacher Surveys ...................................................................................... 39  
    *Teacher Training* ...................................................................................... 40  
    *New Teacher Support Programs and Resources* .................................... 41  
    *Attitudes Toward Teaching* ...................................................................... 47  
  Administrative Interviews ............................................................................. 50  
**Data Interpretation** ....................................................................................... 57  
  Retention Is Not the Key Issue, Support Is .................................................. 58  
  The Importance of Diversity and Classroom Management Training .......... 59  
  CPS Needs a Comprehensive Induction Program ....................................... 62  
**Conclusion** ................................................................................................... 67  
  Implications of the Research ........................................................................ 67  
  Limitations of the Study .............................................................................. 68  
  Lessons Learned ............................................................................................ 69  
  New Questions/Next Steps .......................................................................... 70  
**References** .................................................................................................... 71  
**Appendix** ...................................................................................................... 73
Abstract

This project is designed to provide information concerning new teachers support and retention in urban school districts, specifically Chicago Public Schools, and analyze strategies and methods that may support new teachers and increase new teacher retention.
Research Question

How can Chicago Public Schools retain and support its teachers during their first five years as teachers?
Rationale

This study’s question was born of frustration and a feeling of helplessness with a school system that consists of a bureaucratic board of education, an unsupportive administration and an era of teacher “accountability” that places paperwork, pressure and an imbalanced amount of responsibility upon teachers. From my own experience and many of my colleagues’ experiences (who were also new teachers), I believe that too many beginning teachers are left isolated and struggling to survive in an educational system that insists the art of classroom management is innate and that teachers can figure out how to teach by being placed and usually isolated in a classroom.

When I spoke with my colleagues, I realized I was not alone in feeling frustrated and helpless. Many of them were also considering their futures in urban education and wondering whether they were going to continue teaching. One art teacher, who is in her fourth year of teaching, said she was leaving the field because of the disorganization. She stated that she felt secluded because there was no network of resources for her and no representation for art teachers within the school district. Another teacher told me that she was considering leaving teaching because of the accountability placed upon teachers.

Teacher retention and support seemed not only to be questions I was asking myself, but pervasive questions and issues many beginning teachers were asking themselves. If beginning teachers do not get the support they need, many leave urban education – what kind of affect does this have?

Teacher retention and support in urban public schools have been topics of much public interest in the past few years. However teacher support and retention in Chicago Public Schools from the perspective of new teachers have not been heavily researched.
The National Education Association estimates that in the next five to seven years fifty percent of the teachers currently teaching will retire or leave the profession. If urban districts want highly qualified teachers that continue to develop professionally, they need teachers who will stay in the field and in urban schools.

This study is designed to provide data specific to Chicago Public Schools concerning new teachers, their experiences in an urban school district and the support or lack of support they feel at their jobs. I would like to build on the current literature on teacher retention by suggesting that new teacher support is a key factor in retention. This study will investigate what types of support CPS currently has in place, what types of extra support new teachers may need, and current retention trends in CPS for beginning teachers. This study hopes to provide a beginning teacher’s perspective on support and retention in order to provide more insight as to what support new teachers need.
Literature Review

Introduction

The lack of qualified teachers in public schools is a topic of much public and political interest. Professional and dedicated teachers are central links to providing the nation’s children with quality education. There is no doubt that a good teacher can make a profound impact on a student’s academic performance and overall achievement. Urban, public schools with high poverty rates and low student achievement are most in need of highly qualified teachers – however they are the schools least likely to retain them. Urban public schools with high poverty rates suffer most from high teacher turnover – some high poverty schools have turnover rates of 50% or higher. High teacher turnover rates cost schools financially and in the learning environment they create for students. Most research supports that accomplished veteran teachers are most effective in the classroom. Beginning teachers have to be constantly recruited, trained and supported, which results in time, energy and money for schools to continuously train new teachers. High teacher turnover results in fewer new teachers staying in the profession and ultimately an overall lack of veteran teachers. Research has shown that beginning teachers and teachers who are academically talented are most likely to leave. The Alliance for Excellent Teaching reports that 14 percent of new teachers leave by the end of their first year; 33 percent leave within three years; and almost 50 percent leave in five years (AEE 2004).

If the nation still believes in quality public education this means we must provide access to qualified teachers to every child. High-risk students at failing schools most need quality and caring teachers who have the know-how to reach them. Because teacher
shortage is and has been recognized as an important issue, there is a wealth of empirical literature that investigates teacher retention and attrition. The researcher would like to build on this literature by suggesting that new teacher support is a key factor in keeping quality teachers teaching.

The first section of this report will define and discuss the importance of high quality teachers. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2002 attempts to help children reach high academic standards by requiring that every class is taught by a “highly qualified teacher”. Because the term “high qualified” can easily become a political buzzword – it is important that the term be clearly defined and this report go beyond the NCLB definition of “highly qualified” in analyzing the factors that qualify a teacher. With teacher turnover rates at 50%, teacher retention is a key factor in the success or failure of urban schools.

Why are so many teachers leaving their jobs? Most people become teachers out of a real desire to make positive changes to their students’ lives. Teachers at urban, high-poverty schools are leaving their schools and their professions at a detrimental rate. This report will explore the factors that affect urban school teachers in the first five years of teaching that cause them to abandon this desire.

The next section will discuss how teacher turnover and attrition affects students, teachers, schools and communities. Teacher turnover and attrition rates vary widely throughout the nation’s many school districts. Thus this report will analyze teacher turnover and attrition in other major urban cities and also as a localized crisis, focusing solely on the City of Chicago District 299 – Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and the impact that teacher turnover makes on this city.
Retention strategies currently in use in CPS include induction and mentoring programs; this section will explore how effective induction and mentoring programs are and what types of programs give teachers most support. There is also a wealth of research on the topic of financial incentives and whether financial incentives can raise quality teacher retention rates in urban cities. Finally, many new teachers claim to leave because of their frustration level with their working environment. This report will weigh the current research on the effects of an urban school’s working environment on a new teacher and strategies that may help better prepare teachers to deal with urban school learning environments.

To make certain that the terms used in this report are clear, turnover will refer to the percentage of teachers who leave a particular school either to another school or to another profession. Attrition will refer to teachers who leave the teaching profession and retention will refer the percentage of teachers who stay in the teaching profession.

The Importance of Quality Teachers

The current federal administration educational policy, No Child Left Behind, states that nothing is more important to a child’s success than having highly qualified teachers. NCLB defines a highly qualified teacher as one with full certification, a bachelor’s degree and demonstrated competence in subject knowledge and teaching (US Department of Education, 2006).

The Office of Educational Research and Improvement is more specific in defining characteristics of effective teachers. It states that teacher effectiveness is related to the number of college courses in subject and the number of subject-related education courses
the teacher has completed (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000). The Alliance for Excellent Education (AEE) research attests that new teachers require three to seven years of teaching experience to become effective teachers (AEE, 2004). Many studies support the AEE that student achievement improves noticeably as a teacher’s years of experience increase, adding that teachers with high scores on the SAT or ACT verbal tests are also more effective in helping students to achieve well (Claycomb & Hawley, 2000).

In this report, the NCLB definition of a highly qualified teacher will be used with the understanding that the more years of experience teachers have in the field, the more effective and “qualified” they become. The connection between teacher retention and highly qualified teachers is the concerns that as teachers leave urban schools, they take with them the knowledge and experience needed to consistently improve student learning.

Teacher shortage has held a strong focus in the media; however, the real problem is not necessarily a teacher shortage, but the fact that schools are losing existing teachers faster than they can take in new ones. The AEE refers to this as the “leaky bucket” syndrome. The teacher-staffing problem as been defined the wrong way, according to a 2003 Associated Press article. There is a shortage of bodies because not enough teachers stick with it (Associated Press, 2003). Beginning teachers leave before they can become the high-quality teachers who can improve student learning. High rates of attrition mean that for every two new teachers an urban school district hires, one of them will completely drop out of the profession in five years – just at the time they are able to consistently improve student achievement (AEE, Alliance, for, Excellent, & Education, 2004).
In 2003, NCLB loudly proclaimed its goal that every state should have a well-prepared teacher in every classroom by 2005 (U.S., Department, of, & Education, 2006). The 2005 Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) report card for the City of Chicago School District 299 reported that 11.2 percent of the school district’s classes were not taught by highly qualified teachers. More significant is the fact that the number of classes not taught by highly qualified teachers is on the rise from 9.7% in 2004 and 7.6% in 2003. A few CPS schools in the city’s poorest neighborhoods reported that over 60% of its teachers were not highly qualified.

The Office of Educational Research and Improvement predicted that the nation would not meet the challenge of ensuring that all students would have a highly qualified teacher – especially low-performing and poor children. In a report released in 2000, it declared that while states collectively prepare sufficient numbers of teachers, a significant number of those teachers are not qualified to teach high-need subjects and/or do not want to teach in high-need locations. As a result subjects such as special education, bilingual education, mathematics, science and communities with high poverty rates fail to supply high-quality teachers to its students.

Research has also shown that in public school teaching, the better, smarter, teachers may be the ones that leave (Wenders, 2003). A September 2005 Education Commission of the States reports a study that found the probability of remaining in teaching declined more rapidly over time for teachers in the high SAT group versus those in the low SAT group (Allen, 2005). It is important to note that the relationship between intellectual proficiency and teacher attrition is a topic that has just begun to be studied and more research is needed to truly qualify any relationship.
As the result of high teacher attrition and turnover, poor, urban and mostly minority children are taught by inexperienced teachers that do not stay long enough to become accomplished veteran teachers. Urban schools have proportionally greater numbers of teachers with less than three years of experience than affluent schools and are more likely to employ teachers who are not certified in the subject they teach (AEE, Alliance, for, Excellent, & Education, 2004). The nation has not met its goal. In the city of Chicago alone - 40,000 students are currently being taught by unqualified teachers, using NCLB’s definition of unqualified teacher. If the nation wants to reach the goal that NCLB has set forth, the nation needs to ensure that effective teachers stay in the profession and stay in the schools where they are most needed. Perhaps the first step should be to focus on the reasons so many teachers are leaving urban public schools.

Why teachers leave

When urban school districts think about how many teachers they need to hire in the fall they should be asking instead about how many left in the last school year – and why. In a report for the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Claycomb and Hawley use a cost-benefit approach in their strategic plan for retaining effective teachers for urban schools. When the costs of being a teacher are seen by teachers to exceed the benefits of teaching, teacher attrition rates are extremely high. The need to reduce costs and increase benefits is most urgent in high-need locations such as urban schools. According to Claycomb and Hawley, “teaching in an urban school has some of the greatest costs, and least benefits, for teachers in a profession that generally contends with a cost/benefit balance that deters many from entering and staying in teaching”
(Claycomb & Hawley, 2000). Because the Claycomb, Hawley cost/benefit model succinctly quantifies the reasons why teachers leave or stay in the profession, this report will use the term cost to refer to factors that cause teachers to leave such as poor working conditions and/or low salary and benefits as factors that cause teachers to stay such as good student results and/or supportive administration.

In a 2003 report, the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF) supported Claycomb and Hawley findings that, in the current educational climate, the costs of teaching outweigh the benefits of teaching by far. Furthermore, the NCTAF criticized existing responses to the problem of teaching attrition that simply replaced teachers who left without examining the reasons costs outweigh benefits. According to the NCTAF – replacing teachers with new teachers “…has destructive consequences for the quality of teaching in many schools. Why? Because these novice teachers flow through the schools so fast that they aren’t in their jobs long enough to become good at them” (NCTAF, 2003). The following chart graphs the national cumulative percentage of teachers who leave the field of teaching each year.

![Chart showing percentage of teachers leaving teaching each year](source: Richard M. Ingersoll, adapted for NCTAF from "The Teacher Shortage: A Case of Wrong Diagnosis and Wrong Prescription" NASSP Bulletin 86 (June 2002), pp. 16-31.)
It is important in citing the NCTAF report that we disclose that the NCTAF lobbies the government to give more federal and state money to education reforms. Jack Wenders of the Texas Education Review disputed the NCTAF report on teacher retention. Wenders noted that the NCTAF is not a government organization but a private organization dominated by the education establishment and warns that the NCTAF may be following its own agenda. However the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future is a nonprofit organization whose mission states that it is dedicated to providing every child with competent, caring, qualified teachers in schools organized for success. The Commission is co-chaired by Richard W. Riley, former U.S. Secretary of Education and Ted Sanders, past President of the Education Commission of the States.

This report will explore in more detail the specific reasons why teachers leave such as retirement, pregnancy, low salary and difficult working conditions.

*Retirement*

Since this report focuses on the retention rates of beginning teachers, those teachers with less than five years of experience, retirement will not be considered a factor.

*Pregnancy/Family*

Since teaching is a field dominated by females, a considerable percentage of teachers leave the field to raise a family. The New Jersey Education Association polled over 3000 early leavers and found that half left for personal reasons - usually to raise a family (Wollmer, 2000). It is most likely that a percentage of those may return to
teaching once their children are in school however there seems to be a lack of data on exactly what percentage that may be.

Salary

Relatively low wages are frequently cited throughout the empirical literature as a reason for teacher attrition. Teacher compensation is not uniform and according to a survey of salaries by the American Federation of Teachers, starting teacher salaries across the United States range from under $25,000 per year to over $37,000 per year (Allen, 2005). In a 2002 survey, teachers in California who are considering leaving the profession rank “salary considerations” as the most important factor driving their decision (Buckley, Schneider, & Shang, 2004). Similarly a 1996 study found compensation to be the most important influence on the decision to remain in the profession for male teachers (Gritz & Theobold, 1996).

The NJEA reported in 2000 that one quarter of New Jersey’s teacher attrition is caused by the salary discrepancy between the private sector and the teaching profession (Wollmer, 2000). Teachers between the ages of 22 and 27 earn nearly $8,000 less than their college-educated peers. As teachers age, the gap worsens. By the time they are 44, the discrepancy between teachers and others holding a master’s degree is greater than $30,000 (Wollmer, 2000). The cost of working in urban schools is even greater. According to the National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teaching (NPEAT), urban schoolteachers earned less than their counterparts in suburban counterparts. Moreover, the cost of living in urban areas is higher than in suburban areas. Salary competition from the private sector also causes teachers in high-need subjects such as a math and science to leave the profession. Non-teaching jobs may be more attractive
to academically gifted teachers (as measured by SAT scores) and male teachers, but not necessarily for the other teachers (Buckley, Schneider, & Shang, 2004).

There has been much debate in current research about the current teacher salary schedule. A teacher’s salary increases by a marginal amount every year they teach. The American Federation of Teachers reported that the range of average annual salaries for teachers with five years of experience start from just over $32,000 to just under $56,000 (Allen, 2005). Jack Wenders writes in the *Texas Educational Review* that the single-salary schedule is inflexible and fails to reward good teachers better than bad ones, because they are all paid the same no matter how well they perform (Wenders, 2003). High-need subject areas such as math and science that compete with private sector salaries may need to be compensated more. The Education Commission of the States reports that some experts insist pay-for-performance is a critical motivating factor while others believe salary is less important because teachers are motivated by a sense of idealism (Allen, 2005). The debate over pay-for-performance is inconclusive at this time but it is important to note that policymakers and school districts may need to think about a developing a variety of compensation-related policies.

Salary and compensation is a key issue in the reasons why teachers leave their schools and/or the profession. The NCTAF believes that in urban, high-poverty schools working conditions may override salary as the reason why teachers leave.

*Working Conditions*

Working conditions and salaries are both considerable reasons for why teachers leave, but the relative importance of either varies, depending on the teacher’s experiences, schools and locations. For example, the NCTAF 2003 report *No Dream*
Denied cited that poor administrative supports, lack of influence, classroom intrusions and inadequate time are mentioned more often by teachers leaving low-income schools where working conditions are often more stressful (NCTAF, 2003). Teachers leaving more affluent schools mention salaries somewhat more often. The following graphic is from the NCTAF 2003 report.

From the NCTAF data, it seems that working conditions trump salary for reasons why urban teachers leave schools. The authors Stansbury and Zimmerman quote one urban district superintendent, “We’d been a hiring a lot of new teachers, expecting a lot, then holding them accountable after the fact – when we evaluated them at the end of the year. The list of things new teachers are expected to know and be able to do has only grown in recent years, but they usually don’t get any support” (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000). Current research literature supports both the NCTAF and Stansbury &
Zimmerman. The AEE found that new teachers are placed in the most challenging
classrooms with little, if any, support and expected to perform like pros (AEE, Alliance,
for, Excellent, & Education, 2004).

Today’s new urban teachers have to address the needs of children of diverse
cultures, many of which are living at or below the poverty line. They are also expected to
serve all students equally well (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000). Kenneth Howey
identified common characteristics that teachers must contend with on a daily basis
(Howey, 2000):

• the physical and structural properties of neighborhoods
• identifiable variations in family structure
• both historical and contemporary racism
• expanding power and responsibilities of youth subcultures outside of
  school
• urban school districts that tend to be highly bureaucratic and political
  organizations and individual schools that are often lacking in facilities and
  resources as well as stable faculty and student populates.

Teachers are not receiving adequate support, supplies or resources to contend with
the changing student population. Policymakers have set standards high but have not
given teachers the resources they need to reach these standards. Paul Black and Dylan
William compare teaching to a black box – certain inputs enter from the outside – pupils,
teachers, other resources, management rules and requirements, parental anxieties,
standards, tests with high stakes, etc. – are fed into the box. Policymakers and
administrators expect certain outputs – high academic achievement, better test results,
and so on. Black and William question why there are so few studies about what is happening *inside the box* (Black & Wiliam, 1998). They ask, as teachers who are leaving the profession may have asked themselves, why is it that most education reform initiatives do not give direct help and support to the teachers in the classrooms?

**The Affect of Teacher Turnover and Attrition**

High teacher attrition and turnover rates mean wasted resources on the parts of the teacher, the school, the district and the government. The NCTAF reports that for the 1999-2000 school year, the nation’s schools hired 534,861 teachers, almost 16 percent of the national teaching force. But by the start of the next year a total of 539,778 teachers had left their schools (NCTAF, 2003). According to Stansbury and Zimmerman, “this revolving door creates a permanent core of inexperience teachers who are learning their craft by, essentially, practicing on the students before them” (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000). The nation cannot produce effective, accomplished veteran teachers if the bucket is constantly leaking.

There are the financial costs associated with teacher turnover and attrition. Every year American schools spend approximately $2.6 billion on teacher attrition (AEE, Alliance, for, Excellent, & Education, 2004). Using the most conservative industry model approved by the U.S. Department of Labor, the AEE determined that the cost of recruiting, hiring, and training a new teacher is approximately 30% of the exiting teacher’s salary – a cost that is not recoverable (AEE, Alliance, for, Excellent, & Education, 2004). A recent study in Texas, for example, estimated that the state’s annual turnover rate of 15.5 percent of its teachers, which includes a 40 percent turnover rate for
teachers in their first three years, cost the state a “conservative” $329 million a year (NCTAF, 2003). Other researchers price attrition anywhere from $13,000 to $50,000 per teacher, because any investment in teacher development is lost.

Whether the teachers are lost to a different school or leave the field there is the same disruption of the coherence, continuity, and community that are central to strong schools (NCTAF, 2003). Wenders claims that the problem in teaching may be the character of the attrition – the quality of those who stay vs. those who leave. High-poverty urban schools that lack teachers in the fall are likely to employ teachers who are on emergency waivers and who are not certified in the subject they teach. In the year 2000, urban, poor, and minority students in the United States had only a 50 percent likelihood of being taught math and science by a teacher with a college major in those subjects (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Poor schools have the most challenging working conditions prompting many teachers to move to other schools.

There are not just the financial costs to high turnover and attrition rates. Students learn more from experienced teachers and beginning teachers and teachers who are academically talented are most likely to leave urban schools (Claycomb & Hawley, 2000). Urban districts with high-poverty rates find it difficult to attract and retain high-quality teachers are likely to have low student achievement and must deal with the high costs of constantly finding and training new teachers. Because of these high costs of teacher turnover and attrition, there are many new strategies and methods being researched that may better support and retain beginning teachers.

Retention Strategies
In today’s urban education climate, the costs of teaching far outweigh the benefits. Most teachers enter the profession out of desire to help students achieve more, but half of these teachers are driven away from the profession. Urban schools with high poverty rates and high-need children especially need effective teachers. Policymakers and administrators need to concentrate on strategies and methods that minimize costs and provide teachers with the support they need to be successful and stay in the profession. This section will concentrate on the needs of urban schools and the strategies that may help urban schools retain high-quality teachers.

*Teacher Preparation*

A recent *New York Times* (Staples, 2005) editorial stated that the United States was soon to become a second-rate economic power unless it changed the way teachers were trained to teach. High performing countries like Japan train teachers by having them work cooperatively and intensely to improve their schools. Japanese teachers are constantly working together to support each other and revise lessons. In contrast, American novice teachers are presumed competent on Day One and placed into a classroom with little or no support there after. Teacher preparation programs in the United States also vary in quality. The National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teaching (NPEAT) found that most teacher preparation programs do not adequately prepare teacher candidates to work effectively with students from diverse racial and ethnic background or students with special needs (Claycomb & Hawley, 2000).

In order to have more urban teachers stay in their jobs, the nation needs to do a better job of preparing these teachers to be successful at their jobs. The first step may be to recruit competent individuals who want to teach at urban schools. The American
Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTF) Research About Teacher Education (RATE) studies over several years showed that only 1 in 8 teachers selected teaching in a highly diverse, urban setting as a preference (Howey, 2000). Since this report will focus on the retention of teachers who are already teaching, the researcher would simply like to note that the Education Commission of the States September 2005 report “Eight Questions on Teacher Recruitment and Retention”, stated that there were “simply few to no adequate studies” available that discusses the success of failure of programs and policies that states and districts have used to recruit teachers (Allen, 2005). Kenneth Howey’s 2000 report for the NPEAT similarly states that while there are a “host of strategies that are employed to recruit teachers”, none have shown great success (Howey, 2000). Howey suggest that there be a nationwide push to recruit more minority youth into teaching and that teacher preparation programs need to attract candidates who will teach in high-need locations and high-need subject areas after they complete the program.

There seems to be a gap in the amount of research and empirical data in the area of teacher recruitment strategies and methodology used by states and districts and this is a possible area for future research, since this researcher feels it is important to recruit teachers who have a desire to teach in urban districts. This report, however, will focus on strategies on how to keep teachers who have already chosen to teach in urban districts.

One strategy may be for teacher preparation programs to better prepare teacher candidates for the realities of teaching in high poverty, urban schools. The National Education Association’s guidebook on strategies to recruit and retain teachers states that
good teacher preparation can reduce attrition significantly among first-year teachers. The NEA’s guidebook suggests that teacher preparation programs need to “familiarize teacher education students with the challenges of teaching in low-performing schools; provide the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in these environments” (NEA, 2003). Wollmer’s NJEA article on teacher turnover quotes veteran teacher Rose Carreto as saying, “We really need to reach out to teacher training programs to give people more realistic views of what they’re going to face. Specifically they need to understand the kinds of children they’re going to be dealing with, and the kinds of families these kids come from. Our kids are really, really needy. They’re starved for love and attention” (Wollmer, 2000). The NEA recommends that teacher candidates get the opportunity to practice teaching to a diverse population, students with disabilities and students of different ages.

Most of the literature on teacher retention recommends in a general sense better teacher preparation programs, but for this researcher, the question does not revolve around whether or not the nation needs better teacher preparation programs (which should be an easy yes, because of course any program should become better) but rather specifically how teacher preparation programs can better prepare teachers for the practicalities and realities of teaching in urban contexts.

Howey writes that teacher preparation programs that are successful share the following characteristics:

- Teachers engage in frequent, continuous, and increasingly concrete and precise talk about teaching practices.
• Teachers are frequently observed and provided with useful (if potentially frightening) critiques of their teaching by one another.
• Teachers plan, design, research, evaluate, and prepare teaching materials together.
• Teachers teach each other the practices of teaching (Howey, 2000).

In their report for the NPEAT, Claycomb and Hawley agreed with the above characteristics, but adds universities should include clinical experiences in urban settings in which university faculty and teacher candidates deliberate together on urban student learning issues. Claycomb & Hawley cite the Urban Network to Improve Teacher Education (UNITE) as a teacher preparation program that partners colleges of education with urban schools to give teachers clinical experience in their teacher preparation program.

Alternative certification programs may be more successful because they often recruit minority candidates and career-switchers. There is limited evidence that programs such as the UNITE have had some success. The program recruits minority teachers and provides not only initial teacher preparation but also support extensions into the first few critical years of teaching. UNITE’s teacher candidates do not complete their degree program and step into a classroom, rather their teacher preparation program continues into the first few years of teaching and provides new teachers with the support and mentorship that they may not otherwise have. Other alternative certification programs such as Teach for America place teacher candidates in the classroom right away and provide teacher training and support as the teacher candidate teaches.

Raymond, Fletcher and Luque conducted a 2001 regression analysis study that compared 8,500 beginning and veteran teachers in the Houston public schools with 117
Teach for America (TFA) graduates who participated in the Houston Alternative Certification Program and were hired to teach between 1996 and 2000. The study found that TFA graduates were more likely than other new teachers to remain teaching in the district for at least three years (Allen, 2005). Teach For America, like the UNITE program may be better retaining teachers better because of the support they provide into the teacher’s first few years of teaching.

However, there is limited information on whether alternative certification programs are doing a better job of preparing teacher candidates for teaching in urban schools than traditional teacher education programs and no conclusions should be drawn until more research is completed on the topic. Alternative certification programs candidates are usually older, career-switchers, thus perhaps their candidates are simply more mature and focused. It is also possible that the support and mentoring that alternative programs provide teachers may be the leading factor that raises new teacher retention.

*Induction Programs & Mentoring Programs*

Novice teachers in urban districts have to face the high learning curve of the first year of teaching. Novice teachers are often expected to perform just as well as veteran teachers, but are left to their own devices and given little to no support. Effective new teacher induction mentoring programs may give new teachers the support and guidance they need to survive the first few years.

Claycomb and Hawley state that high-quality induction programs are very effective in retaining teachers because “they give new teachers the support they need in order to develop the particular knowledge and skills required of them on the job”
Dennis Spark’s 2002 article for the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) stated that the NSDC believes new teachers “are far more likely to remain in their positions when they feel supported by administrators, have strong bonds of connection to colleagues” (Sparks, 2002). Most literature and research support a quality induction program as a key factor in retaining teacher. This section will explore the components of a quality induction program.

The NEA defines “comprehensive induction” as a package of supports, development and standards-based assessments provided to beginning teachers during at least their first two years of full-time profession teaching. A quality comprehensive induction program contains the following:

- Structured mentoring
- Common planning time for new teachers
- Intensive professional development
- A professional network of teachers.

This report will use the NEA’s definition when it refers to an induction program.

Claycomb & Hawley cite two models of teacher induction that have shown remarkable success. The Albuquerque Public Schools/University of New Mexico Teacher Induction program and the Cincinnati Peer Assistance and Evaluation Program were both created in the mid-80s. Both programs had key induction component such as:

1. Professional development classes at no cost to teachers.
2. Veteran teachers were released from classroom teaching to provide full-time support inductees.

3. In-Service programs that connect new teachers from all over the district.

The results of both programs were very good. More than 80 percent of new teachers overall were still teaching after five years in the Albuquerque Public Schools/University of New Mexico Teacher Induction Program. Before the induction program was created, Cincinnati Public Schools were seeing about 20% of its new teachers leave the district within five years. After it’s Peer Assistance and Evaluation Program was introduced this percentage dropped to only 3% (Claycomb & Hawley, 2000).

The NJEA found that teachers who are assigned mentors tend to stay longer in the field of teaching. Wollmer’s article for the New Jersey Education Association stated that the state has just begun to pay for two years of mentoring for all new teachers. Stansbury and Zimmerman also stress the importance of mentoring for novice teachers and that mentor teachers be compensated either monetarily or with release time (released from their classroom duties) to fully concentrate on supporting new teachers. Mentors are expected to provide their expertise in such areas as classroom management and time management and most importantly act as a “cheerleader” providing emotional support (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000).

The Education Commission of the States emphasized the importance of a “quality” induction program in contributing to higher teacher retention however they warned that more research needs to conducted. They stated that while induction and mentoring are worthwhile programs in raising teacher retention, induction programs vary
widely from district to district and that “the research is not sufficiently robust to indicate confidently what features are critical to program success” (Allen, 2005).

Most research has found effective and quality induction programs to be successful in cutting attrition rates. A survey conducted in the fall of 2000 by the North Central Regional Education Laboratory found that 52 percent of Midwestern districts with induction programs found their induction programs to be very successful in reducing attrition (NEA, 2003). Anthony Villar of the New Teacher Center, University of California, Santa Cruz, found that comprehensive induction pays $1.37 for every $1 invested (AEE, Alliance, for, Excellent, & Education, 2004). Villar identified the three major benefits of induction as: reduced attrition, improved teacher quality, and improved student achievement. Teachers who experience all of the components of a quality induction program are more likely to remain in teaching and develop their professional skills. While quality teacher induction programs do seem to cut attrition rates, financial incentives for teachers who remain teaching may also prove to be a factor in raising teacher retention.

**Financial Incentives**

The NCTAF reported in 2001 that only 27 percent of beginning teachers in high poverty urban schools cited poor salary as a factor in dissatisfaction. However, the NCTAF also found that overall teacher salaries are about 20 percent below the salaries of other professionals with comparable education (NCTAF, 2003). This researcher speculates that most people become teachers knowing about the lower salary and choose to forgo salary for the bigger purpose of making a difference in the lives of their students.
However, the question remains, does the lower salary make a difference after a teaching a few years?

Jack Wenders of the University of Idaho believes that actual salary is not the key factor, rather it is the way the teaching professions salary grid that causes teachers to leave. The salary grid, which most urban districts use, is similar to a government salary, where employees are paid on a single-salary scale based on years of service and educational level.

Wenders states that “the salary grid insidiously wrings the best teachers out of public school teacher” (Wenders, 2003). Wenders believes that the salary grid favors older teachers and discriminates against new teachers and quality teachers because there is no financial incentive for those teachers who are more effective or work harder. He states that the grid also “produces shortages in specific fields because it fails to recognize that some subject areas, like math and science have different market conditions” (Wenders, 2003).

The NCTAF agrees with Wenders that length of service should not be only basis for pay increases in the teaching profession, “raising salaries alone is not the answer. We must also institute new staffing/compensation approaches, whatever the name given to them. Some, called pay-for-performance incentives, include pay for knowledge and skills and added pay for improved student achievement” (NCTAF, 2003). Denver Public Schools implemented a successful change in teacher compensation in the fall of 1999. Teachers in Denver are paid on a salary grid however the district and the union have agreed to the following financial incentives:

• Salary freezes for teachers whose performance is unsatisfactory.
• Additional pay for new teachers who hold full Colorado teacher’s licenses.

• Market incentives to attract and retain hard-to-recruit teachers in low-performing schools.

• Bonuses to teachers who meet measurable objectives based on improvements in student learning.

• Tuition supplements and extra pay for teachers with National Board certificates (NCTAF, 2003).

While it is too soon for research to be conclusive on the benefits financial incentives, administrators in Denver Public Schools have found retention rates and teacher satisfaction to be generally higher.

The NEA also accepts the concept of financial incentives as a strategy for attracting and keeping teachers. However, it questions how financial incentives can be implemented with tight state and local budgets. The NEA suggests that bonuses and in addition to cash payments, states can offer housing subsidies, tuition assistance and tax credits for teachers who are willing to work in hard-to-staff schools (NEA, 2003).

It is important that school districts, states and unions be open to changing the current salary grid that gives no incentives to talented new teachers. The American Federation of Teachers has concluded that “school systems must move beyond the ‘rigid hierarchy’ of the traditional salary schedule to compensate teachers as other professionals in our society are compensated” (NCTAF, 2003). School districts need to rethink how teachers might be compensated especially those who work in difficult working environments.
Improve Working Environment.

This section will equate working environment to three general categories: teacher autonomy and administrative support, class size, student factors such as attitudes, skills, discipline and diversity. While the researcher realizes that there may be many other factors that working environment may encompass, the size and scope of this report forces the researcher to choose three general categories to focus on.

A descriptive study of 50 public school teachers in Massachusetts found that 56% of teachers were dissatisfied with their schools and that the main reason for leaving teachers gave was a “feeling of ineffectiveness, which they attributed primarily to inadequate administrative support” (Allen, 2005). It is important for administrators to recognize and give support to new teachers while giving teachers the autonomy that makes them feel like the professionals they are. The NEA quotes Dominic Belmonte of the Golden Apple Foundation, “Leadership is all”, and explains that teachers will want to stay at schools with good leadership, but will “flee from schools with inadequate leadership” (NEA, 2003). School districts and states need to spend the time recruiting and finding good administrators that can provide this good leadership.

Conclusion

The low rate of new teacher retention is a serious problem. The AEE reports that the high school graduation rate in the United States is only 68 percent which means that 540,000 student fail to graduate each year (AEE, Alliance, for, Excellent, & Education, 2004). Urban and high-poverty schools are the schools most at risk. Recent research,
however, tells us that effective teachers can have an enormous impact on student learning and achievement - however, we need teachers to stay in the profession.

Teacher retention is a highly researched issue in terms of national standards. However, new teacher retention rates and the reasons why teachers leave are more recent topics. Teacher retention rates vary widely from district to district and city to city. Thus it is important when researching new teachers and the support they may need that we take into account local district policies, communities and teacher support programs or the lack there of. This study would like to add to the current data on new teacher retention by analyzing localized data on new teachers at urban schools –specifically Chicago Public Schools.
Data Collection

The data collected for this project was primarily qualitative. Three methods were used in triangulation to collect research data for this study. Those methods were teacher surveys, administrative interviews, and artifact analysis. Data collection was conducted throughout Chicago and a wide range of Chicago Public Schools (CPS) teachers and administrators were surveyed or interviewed. Teacher exit and retention data were also obtained through the CPS Human Resources Department and analyzed for this study.

Data Sources

This research focused on CPS, a large urban school system that consists of over 30,000 students and 10,000 teachers. As a primary focus a range of elementary through secondary teachers who had been teaching for five or less years were surveyed. 20 CPS teachers completed and submitted the survey in its entirety. Three interviews were conducted and those sources included a CPS orientation program administrator, a CPS union representative and a CPS mentor teacher. The artifact analysis consisted of a document from CPS human resources concerning teacher exit data and statistics from 1999 to 2005.

Methods/Instruments Used for Collection

*New Teacher Online Survey*

In this study, CPS teachers with five or less years of experience were electronically surveyed about their experiences and attitudes towards teaching and the support or lack of support they received. Any CPS teacher with five or less years of experience who received and submitted the survey was included in the study.
Participants had the option not to participate in the research by choosing not to submit the survey.

This survey was administered electronically through Quask. The survey was sent to teachers via Northwestern University’s School of Education and Social Policy Listserv. Teachers were sent an e-mail, which included a brief description of the project and an electronic link to the survey. The online survey began with a consent page, in which the participant was informed that there were no physical or psychological risks involved in this project other than a normal exploration of personal attitudes. Further, they were informed that all information would be coded to preserve confidentiality and that they have the alternative to choose not to participate by not submitting the online survey.

The new teacher survey consisted of 30 questions and four sections: teaching experience, participation in new teacher support programs, attitudes toward teaching and brief demographic information. In the section on teaching experience, new teachers were asked how long and where they had been teaching and what kind of training program(s) they completed to become a teacher. In the section on new teacher support programs, teachers were asked about what support programs they participated in and how adequate they felt these programs were. Teachers were also asked whether there were programs/support resources that could have been useful to them. In the section on attitudes towards teaching, new teachers were asked whether they plan to continue teaching for CPS and what factors may affect this decision.
Administrative Interviews

In this study three CPS administrators were interviewed about their experiences with new teachers and support resources/program in place for new teachers. Interviewees were given the interview consent form (see appendix) and the researcher explained the purpose and protocol of the interview process. Interviewees were informed that any physical, psychological or social risks were unlikely. They were also told that they could withdraw from the interview at any time and that participation in the study was confidential.

Interviewees were found through CPS and either their human resources department and/or new teacher orientation program. The interviews took place in the interviewees’ office. The interviewee’s signed a consent form prior to the interview. Prior to the interview, the researcher explained that the purpose of the interview was to learn more about the support new teachers need in an urban school setting.

The interview questions were designed to further explore factors concerning new teacher support and retention, orientation and mentoring programs in place and current CPS retention/attrition rates (see appendix for interview protocol).

Artifact: Teacher Exit Data

In addition to the survey and interviews, the researcher analyzed documents from the CPS Department of Human Resources concerning new teacher entry and attrition rates from August 19, 1999 to June 30, 2005. The documents were given to the researcher via an email attachment by an administrator in the department. These documents were important in that they gave teacher retention statistics specific to CPS. This allowed the researcher to compare CPS retention statistics to national retention
statistics. The documents also allowed the researcher to analyze past and current retention rates.

Consents Secured

All participants read a consent form in which they were informed that there were no physical or psychological risks involved in this study beyond a normal exploration of personal attitudes and teaching styles and that all information would be coded to preserve confidentiality. The consent form detailed the project’s purpose, their role in the project, any ethical concerns and informed participants that they could withdraw at any time (see Appendix). Survey participants were informed that by completing and submitting the online survey, they were consenting. They were also informed that they could choose not to participate by not submitting the online survey. Interviewees signed a consent form.

Ethics Considered

During this project, all participants were informed that they could choose not to participate and that could also withdraw from participation at any time. The Office for the Protection of Sponsored Researched approved the project, along with the survey questions, interview questions and consent forms. Participant data was coded to preserve confidentiality and no participant’s data was linked directly to name or any other identifying information. All research material was kept under the control of the researcher. Participation in this project involved no physical or psychological risks involved in this study other than a normal exploration of personal attitudes.
Data Results Summary

Artifact Analysis

Department of Human Resources Teacher Attrition Rates

Documents from the CPS Human Resources Department concerning new teacher entry and attrition rates from August 19, 1999 to June 30, 2005 were reviewed. The documents showed the numbers of teachers hired during August 19, 1999 to June 30, 2005, and tracked whether they resigned or continued to work for CPS in the subsequent years. Figure 1 demonstrates the percentage of teachers who resigned from CPS and compares those figures from 2000 to 2005 by the number of years the entering teacher worked for CPS before resigning.

Figure 1: Percentage of Teachers resigning from CPS 2000-2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>12.09%</td>
<td>6.98%</td>
<td>6.05%</td>
<td>3.80%</td>
<td>4.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage who resigned from CPS</td>
<td>12.48%</td>
<td>5.01%</td>
<td>5.44%</td>
<td>5.32%</td>
<td>4.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of Experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.56%</td>
<td>5.11%</td>
<td>7.05%</td>
<td>2.68%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.60%</td>
<td>1.44%</td>
<td>1.14%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.96%</td>
<td>1.56%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The term attrition refers to teachers who resigned from CPS. The word “hired” is used to identify all people who started their first non-substitute teaching position at CPS. The data ranges were defined by the first day of school through the last day of June the following year when considering the hiring of teachers. When looking at the resignation data, a full calendar year was used, from the first day of school to the day before the next school year began. This was to fully capture late summer resignations.

Figure 2 compares cumulative teacher attrition percentages from teachers who were hired in the school years 1999-2000 to 2004-2005 that resigned within two years of being hired.

Figure 2: Cumulative Second-Year Attrition Rates

![Cumulative Second-Year Attrition Rates](image)

Figure 2 demonstrates that teachers hired in 1999-2000 had a high attrition rate compared to the subsequent years. There appears to be a pattern of decline in attrition rates in the past four years. In order to investigate whether there is a continued pattern of decline, figure 3 compares cumulative teacher attrition percentages from teachers who were hired...
in the school years 1999-2000 to 2004-2005 that resigned within three years of being hired.

Figure 3: Cumulative Third-Year Attrition Rates

Figure 3 demonstrates again a high percentage of teachers resigning by year three amongst the teachers who were hired in 1999-2000. However, there again appears to be a declining pattern in the subsequent years. Figure 4 demonstrates the four-year cumulative attrition rates.

Figure 4: Cumulative Four-Year Attrition Rates
Figure 4 again demonstrates a high attrition percentage for those teachers hired in 1999-2000 and much lower attrition rates in the following years. Looking at Figures 2, 3, and 4, it does appear that the percentage of teachers resigning from CPS has been declining in the past five years.

New Teacher Surveys

Nineteen teachers completed and submitted the survey. It is difficult to give an accurate response rate because the survey was sent via the researcher’s peer teachers and also through the Northwestern University School of Education and Social Policy (SESP) listserv. The listserv sent the survey to approximately 340 people affiliated with SESP, however it is not known how many of those have experience as a new teacher for CPS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Grade Level taught</th>
<th>Subject Taught</th>
<th>Years Teaching at CPS</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nine</td>
<td>PreK-2</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ten</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleven</td>
<td>PreK-2</td>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twelve</td>
<td>PreK-2</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirteen</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourteen</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifteen</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixteen</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventeen</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eighteen</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>Special Ed</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nineteen</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Art</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Teacher Training**

The respondents worked at CPS schools located all over Chicago. The first series of questions focused on the teachers’ teacher training programs. Respondents were asked what teacher training program(s) they completed and given a short response question that asked how adequately they felt that program prepared them to teach in an urban school setting. Table 2 demonstrates the teacher respondents’ training programs a selection of responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of training program</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents</th>
<th>Felt program trained them to teach in an urban setting</th>
<th>Did you feel that your teacher-training program adequately prepared you to teach in an urban school setting? Why or why not?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Bachelors in Education   | 26.3%                    | Yes: 20% No: 60% Not Sure: 20%                       | • Yes and no. My undergrad program instilled a sense of calling and inspiration toward urban education, but I don’t think any training program can prepare someone to teach. You learn by doing.  
• No education program can really prepare you for teaching – it’s all just talk. You just need to get into the classroom, watch a great deal of experienced teachers, teach as many lessons as you can…  
• Not quite – I think that all teacher programs – whether preparing teachers to teach in an urban setting or not – should include less methodology and more management.  
• No! The bachelor’s of ed definitely did not. I feel that in an urban area, classroom management is key and that that was NEVER even addressed, nor was teaching students who are of a different ethnic background as the teacher. |
| Masters in Education     | 10.5%                    | Yes: 50% No: 50%                                     | • Yes. I had prior experience. I was a smart person.  
• No. I was not provided any insight into the management issues present in an inner city classroom, and the specific challenges of working with an entirely African American population. |
| Alternative certification | 52.6%                    | Yes: 20% No: 70% Not Sure: 10%                      | • No. It was very short and the summer student teaching was unrealistic.  
• No, the teaching learned in education facilities has very little to do with real world of teachers.  
• I did not feel adequately prepared because the 6-8 weeks... |
of “training” I had before entering a classroom on my own was jam packed with so many other requirements. In reality, the training came from daily experiences.

- If I was not familiar with urban schools prior to enrolling in my teacher training program it would not have sufficiently addressed the issues unique to the urban setting.
- Yes, I feel that it prepared me for most of the responsibilities that a teacher will have to face in an urban school setting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other (did not specify a teacher training program)</th>
<th>11.5%</th>
<th>Yes: 100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- Yes, I had many teaching experiences including observing, tutoring, mini-teaching (teaching one course) student teaching in both urban and suburban settings, in public and private school systems. I was born in Chicago, grew up and have lived all my life in Chicago.

Two of the nineteen responses did not specify a teacher-training program, but both responded yes explaining that prior experience with urban settings – either living or working in one before training to become a teacher adequately prepared them to teach in an urban setting. Over 50% of the respondents completed an alternative certification program. It is important to note that the researcher completed an alternative certification program, thus many of the researcher’s peer teachers who completed the survey also completed an alternative certification program. This connection may be why the majority of respondents completed an alternative certification program since many of the respondents were the researcher’s peer teachers and colleagues. Respondents who answered not sure on whether their teacher-training program adequately prepared them for an urban school setting seemed to feel that parts of their program helped prepare them, while other parts did not. The next series of questions focused on support programs and resources provided to the teachers after they had completed a teacher-training program and started teaching for CPS.
New Teacher Support Programs and Resources

Teachers were asked what programs and resources CPS and their school provided them as new teachers. They also were asked to rate these programs on a level from 0 to 3: 0 being not at all helpful, 1 being a little helpful, 2 being somewhat helpful, 3 being very helpful. Figure 5 demonstrates what percentage of respondents attended certain CPS programs. These programs include: individual mentoring by veteran teachers at their school, CPS Golden Teacher Orientation program, workshops or seminars provided by CPS for new teachers, peer teacher observation and feedback, and extra administrative support. It is important to note when looking at Figure 5 that the Golden Teachers Program was only begun 3 years ago, thus teachers who began teacher 4 or 5 years ago would not have had the opportunity to attend the Golden Teachers Orientation, otherwise it Golden Teachers Orientation is a mandatory program for all teachers new to CPS.

Figure 5: Percentage of respondents who attended CPS new teacher programs

**Percentage of respondents who attended CPS new teacher programs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extra administrative support from school</td>
<td>42.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer teacher observation and feedback</td>
<td>47.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops or seminars provided by CPS for new teachers</td>
<td>7.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPS's Golden Teacher Orientation Program</td>
<td>68.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual mentoring by veteran teachers</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The respondents were asked to rank the programs they attended by how helpful the programs were to them.

**Figure 6: Teacher ranking of level of support**

Of the 42% of respondents who checked that they received extra administrative support, approximately 64% found the extra support either somewhat helpful or very helpful. Teachers were given space in the survey to comment on each of the programs. Only one teacher commented on extra administrative support. The respondent wrote, “our principal is pretty good about letting teachers go to conferences/workshops of their choosing, that might be more valuable than standard CPS new teacher programs.” The
survey also asked what other programs and support resources they might have found helpful to them as new teachers. On the topic of extra administrative support, a respondent wrote, “It would have been helpful to have a full tour of the school, a clear presentation of hierarchy of authority (e.g. who do I go to for what).” Another respondent wrote that “an orientation at my school that included among other things guidance on how to handle the many administrative tasks required on a daily basis:

Forty-seven percent of respondents had peer teacher observation and feedback. Seventy-eight percent of those respondents that had peer teacher observation and feedback found it somewhat or very helpful. One respondent wrote “I actually had to lean on a fellow teacher who walked me through my first year.” Another wrote that they found observing other teachers most helpful as a support resource. One respondent suggested that a “support group of new teachers that meets on a regular basis would be helpful.” A respondent that works as a art resource teacher commented, “it would have helped me tremendously if CPS had programs specifically geared towards new resource teachers.”

Eighty-two percent of respondents who attended workshops or seminars provided by CPS found them either a little helpful or not at all helpful. Many commented that being able to choose subject specific workshops and seminars that interested them were most helpful. One respondent suggested that new teachers should be able to choose from a variety of classroom management workshops and focus on the areas they needed help with.
Fifty-four percent of the respondents who participated in the Golden Teacher Orientation Program found it not at all helpful. Most respondents wrote negatively about the program stating that there was too much extra paperwork and not enough follow up. “I do not feel that this orientation provided adequate support. The seminars were somewhat helpful, and the facilitators were helpful, but it all remained limited to the time of the orientation, and it did not get extended afterwards.” Many of the respondents wrote that the orientation was a “waste of time”. The Golden Teachers program includes both an orientation program and a mentor program. The survey also asked respondents about the mentoring program.

Fourteen out of the nineteen respondents participated in the Golden Teacher mentor program (five began working with CPS before the program was implemented).

Figure 7: Mentor Hours

Zero respondents who participated in the Golden Teacher program answered that they had spend more than three to four hours a month working with their mentor. Most participants stated that they only met with their mentors zero to two hours a month.
When asked the open-ended question “what other programs/support resources might you have found supportive for your role as a new teacher in CPS” many respondents suggested more time to spend observing and talking with fellow new teachers and veteran teachers. Many also suggested more workshops on classroom management and how to fill out paperwork such as attendance and special education service requests.

Table 3: Respondents suggestions for programs by category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program category</th>
<th>Respondent suggestions for future programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| New teacher support network       | • More observations of peers, more peer observations of me, more group meetings with other new teachers, social activities with new and veteran teachers.  
• I think a support group of new teachers that meets on a regular basis would be helpful. The conversations I had with other struggling teachers were the most helpful.  
• It would have helped me tremendously if CPS had programs specifically geared towards new resource teachers. I have been to one meeting/workshop meant specifically for CPS visual art teachers in the four years I have been working. |
| Help with paperwork               | • Resource packet to help with the nitty-gritty stuff  
• I would have liked someone to guide me through the Contract, the Uniform Discipline Code, and how to reach people at the Board (also who’s who at the board). Finally, it turns out that I have the wrong certification for my position and I would have liked to know that initially. |
| Mentor/Veteran Teacher help       | • A mentor that would have been helpful and wanted to help me.  
• Programs, requirements, paperwork, etc. only makes matters worse for new teachers. What really helps is a veteran staff who are encouraged to help out the new teachers and who are willing to take some initiative to help a new kid out. |
| Workshops & Seminars              | • I think workshops on how to do attendance, classroom management, parental communication, handling special ed students, networking/social would have been helpful. |
| Classroom management              | • I would have appreciated some helpful suggestions for more effective discipline other than “be creative” when there was no back up. Severe discipline problem students are rarely suspended or put in detention.  
• It would have been nice to have more support for dealing with social/emotional/counseling issues that urban kids/kids that live in poverty need. |
| School specific programs          | • An orientation at my school that included among other things guidance on how to handle the many administrative tasks required on a daily basis: attendance, lunch money, school culture, general pecking order.  
• It would have been helpful to have a full tour of the school, a clear presentation of hierarchy of authority (e.g. who do I go to for what). Although we were given an organizational chart, the procedures were not clear about how to use it. |
Attitudes Toward Teaching

A series of questions focusing on teacher’s attitudes towards factors in teaching in an urban school such as student interactions, administration, accountability and testing were asked. Respondents were asked to rate their attitude toward a list of factors involved with teaching in an urban school setting from 1, being very satisfactory, to 5, being very frustrating. The purpose of this question was to determine which factors new teachers struggled with the most.

Figure 8: Respondents rank factors in teaching

Figure 8 shows ranking averages. Factors ranked below three brought teachers some job satisfaction and would be considered benefits of teaching. Factors ranked above three were frustrating to teachers and would be considered as costs of teaching.
Figure 8 demonstrates that disruptive behavior was the most frustrating to respondents while leading and teaching lessons was most satisfactory to respondents. Respondents were given the opportunity to add any other aspects of teaching that they felt were either very satisfactory or very frustrating to them. Most respondents cited getting the students to understand a concept, working with students and peer teachers, and making a difference as very satisfactory to them. Administration and bureaucracy, paperwork, and feeling underappreciated were commented on as the most frustrating aspect of their jobs.

The survey asked respondents whether they thought they would continue to teach in CPS within the next one to three years. All nineteen respondents answered the question. Respondents were then asked to rank the importance of various factors that might affect their decision to continue to work for CPS.

Figure 9: Will they continue to teach in CPS?
Two open-ended questions followed that asked respondents what they felt to be the most difficult aspect and most rewarding aspect of teaching for CPS. Most teachers wrote about lack of support and recognition from parents, administration and the district were the most difficult aspects of teaching for CPS. “You are underappreciated, overworked (usually 3-4 hours of take home work per night), underpaid for the effort and amount of things I pay for out of pocket,” wrote one respondent. Most wrote that the students they taught were the most rewarding aspect of teaching for CPS. “I love my students,” wrote one respondent, “to see some of them succeed is an incredible feeling.
Even though many of them can be a challenge, they are why I continue to stay in teaching.”

Administrative Interviews

Three CPS administrators agreed to be interviewed for this research project. An administrator in the CPS Office of Learning and Development who works with the Golden Teacher Induction Program answered questions about both the orientation and the mentor program. A Chicago Teacher’s Union representative was asked questions pertaining to new teacher support by the union and in the current union contract. A lead mentor at a Chicago Public School located in the north side of Chicago answered questions about the Golden Teacher mentor program.

Table 4: Demographic Data for Interview Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Administrative Focus</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Golden Teachers Administrator</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Golden Teachers Lead Mentor &amp; veteran teacher</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>Chicago Teacher’s Union Field Representative</td>
<td>M</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Interviewee Red and Interviewee Green were both asked questions that focused on the Golden Teachers Program. The Golden Teachers Program was begun three years ago and is CPS’s primary new teacher induction program. Interviewee Red gave the researcher two program booklets as introductions to the program. One was entitled “Golden Teachers Induction and Mentoring Program: First Steps to Reflective Journaling” and the other was entitled, “Golden Teachers Induction and Mentoring
Programs: Program Guidelines.” The “Program Guidelines” booklet introduces the program:

Golden Teachers is a two-year induction program that emphasizes mentor and coach support and the use of reflective practice, goal setting, and analysis. Because CPS is committed to providing beginning teachers with critical support needed as they begin their profession, CPS mandates, as noted in Board Report 04-0825-P01, that all new teachers to the profession participate in the Golden Teachers Induction and Mentoring Program.

The Board Report 04-0825-P01 is then quoted:

All teachers newly hired by Chicago Public Schools (CPS), who are new to teaching, and who hold a Provisional or Initial State of Illinois Teaching Certificate, and who will have full-time classroom or school-based responsibilities, will be required to participate in an induction program. Specific induction requirements will be prescribed by CPS Golden Teachers Unit. Failure to comply with the induction mandate will be recorded on the given teacher’s personnel record and may jeopardize obtaining a Standard State of Illinois Teaching Certificate.

The brochure states in its Program Overview that “Golden Teachers is a state-approved induction and mentoring program, which means it meets the Illinois State Board of Education requirements.” All first and second year teachers new to CPS must participate in Golden Teachers. Golden Teachers mentors and coaches are defined as “exemplary teachers holding a Standard or Master Illinois Teaching Certificate. The brochure also states the program goals. Table 5 uses the information provided in the “Program Guidelines” and compares it to questions answered by Interviewee Red and Interviewee Green about the Golden Teachers Program. Survey respondents’ comments about Golden Teachers are also restated for comparison purposes.

Table 5: Program Goal: Welcome beginning teachers into the profession, district, and schools in a manner befitting their importance.
**Program Guidelines Brochure listed program goal:**
Welcome beginning teachers into the profession, district, and schools in a manner befitting their importance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Interviewee</strong></th>
<th><strong>Green’s comments</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Red’s comments</td>
<td>For the past three years we had a system-wide orientation that gave new teachers strategies for getting started. However, beginning next fall (fall 2006), the orientation will be the responsibility of the school.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>School orientations vary from school to school. There are a lot of positive things going on, but no one told really explains it to a new teacher. Most veteran teachers are willing to share, at my school it’s very open, at other schools – the door is closed. New teachers don’t understand the climate of a school – they come in not realizing that it’s harder to deal with a classroom than a corporate job.</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Survey Respondents Comments</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent 2:</strong> I don’t remember much about the program orientation, which to me means there wasn’t much useful there. It was something to check off the to-do list. I think they just explained how the Golden Teachers program worked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent 4:</strong> It helped address some logistical/administrative issues, but generally I did not find it that useful.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Program Guidelines Brochure listed program goal:**
| Support new teachers as they continue to develop as proficient, knowledgeable, and successful urban teachers working in diverse communities. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Interviewee</strong></th>
<th><strong>Green’s comments</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Red’s comments</td>
<td>The new teacher must earn 15 CPDU’s (Chicago Professional Development Units) in any area they want. Next year it will be mandated that teachers earn 10 CPDU’s in classroom management, community and culture, including Ruby Paine’s work on underdeveloped students and poverty, and additional five of what they want.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discipline and classroom management are the two concerns for new teachers. Colleges prepare teachers for curriculum and theory but there is no way you can feel a class atmosphere until you are there. Classroom management training should happen before teachers enter the classroom – they should observe what classroom training and management is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I don’t think support would make a difference – all the new teachers who have the innate skills have stayed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Respondents Comments</td>
<td>Respondent 16: The seminars were somewhat helpful, and the facilitators were helpful, but it all remained limited to the time of the orientation and it did not get extended after.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Respondent 18: Additional programs and workshops offered for CPDU’s have provided additional instructional methods for creating lesson plans which appeal to divers learning styles, strategies to help students prepare for ISATs, reading comprehension and math strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respondent 17: Our principal is pretty good about letting teachers go to conferences/workshops of their choosing that might be more valuable than standard CPS new teacher programs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Foster norms of collegiality, collaboration, and reflective practice among teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Guidelines Brochure listed program goal: Foster norms of collegiality, collaboration, and reflective practice among teachers.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New teachers work with somebody on the school staff with traditional new teacher issues. The principal is responsible for assigning that person. There is a new belief that the school is the unit of change. New teachers should be supported and welcome at the school level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New teachers must complete an Individual Growth Plan that documents individual goals they set. They are required to document and reflect on their growth as teachers throughout the year. There is a web-based system that records teachers’ logs and the paperwork is submitted to the Golden Teachers office.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee Red’s comments</th>
<th>Interviewee Green’s comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’ve been teaching at the same school for 32 years. I’ve always mentored teachers even before Golden Teachers existed. New teachers seek you out – just yesterday I showed a new teacher how to make vocabulary cards. You should be able to share.</td>
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<tr>
<td>There is teaming with Golden Teachers but only if the school participates. There’s a bunch of paperwork that seems useless because there’s no one there to look at it. They turn it in to the office and they put it away in a file and no one looks at it, so it seems useless.</td>
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</table>

| Respondent 17: It was a lot of extra work without much reward. My mentor and I were both required to do extra administrative work for the GOLDEN program that did not seem very purposeful. |
Table 8: Develop mentors and coaches as teacher-leaders to assist teachers new to the profession of teaching.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee Red’s comments</th>
<th>Program Guidelines Brochure listed program goal: Develop mentors and coaches as teacher-leaders to assist teachers new to the profession of teaching.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Golden Teachers provides a mentor for 3 years for new teachers. Mentors are supposed to meet with their teachers a minimum of six hours per quarter. Mentors observe the new teacher and the new teacher observes the mentor. Mentors give the new teachers constructive advice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentors are school-based and are paid a stipend of $500 per each new teacher.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A mentor logs each time they work with new teachers and are supposed to help build professional communities by organizing large group meetings.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee Green’s comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Last year, I was not even fully paid, there was some sort of miscommunication, but I would rather have time to work with new teachers than money, even once per quarter to have someone take my class so I could observe them.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I teach at a safe school – there are CPS schools that even I wouldn’t teach at. You try and take someone and put them in a neighborhood that is not safe – how long will they stay?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Respondents Comments</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent 4:</strong> My mentor teacher was a joke…she made up our meetings together and just did to get extra money.</td>
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<td><strong>Respondent 5:</strong> I was assigned a mentor, but nothing ever really happened with it.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent 12:</strong> The teacher that was chosen as my mentor had no interest in sharing tools of the trade with me. Since then, I have heard her referred to as a teacher who doesn’t know how to teach first grade, so why did they choose her to be my mentor?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent 13:</strong> I did not like the (Golden Teacher) program and did not feel it accomplished the goals it intended to. However, my mentor was very good and so her individual help was useful.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent 19:</strong> We met once a month and talked about classroom issues, but again, as I am a resource teacher and she was classroom, the help she could provide was only very general.</td>
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</table>
Interviewee Red was also asked about the successes and challenges of the current induction program. She said that the program is “successful when the new teacher works with somebody on the staff with traditional new teacher issues. However, the program is implemented at over 600 schools and it breaks down if no one is assigned a mentor.” When asked what happens when a mentor is not assigned Interviewee Red responded, “a principal is supposed to assign the mentors to new teachers, but each principal is different. Most principals are supportive but some aren’t. If a new teacher calls our office, we will contact the principal and work to assign a mentor.”

Interviewee Red stated that challenges to the program include funding and excessive paperwork. “Funding is inadequate,” she said. “Mentors aren’t relieved from their own duties to perform observations and conferences with new teachers. Our web-based management system is currently not working and there’s a lot of paperwork. Also, school-based implementation differs with each school and principal. It’s really the responsibility of the school to make sure Golden Teachers is supported and implemented.”

Interviewee Red added that the web-based management system would definitely be working by the fall.

Interviewee Blue is a Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) Field Representative. The researcher asked him questions focused on what kind of support the CTU provided for new teachers. He described some of the support resources the CTU provides for all Union teachers. “New teachers are insured (by the CTU) for a million dollars – we
support them legally if there is a legal dispute. Also, we are advocates for all salary increases, raises and benefits and everything.”

Interviewee Blue also described the current CTU contract with the City of Chicago and its affects on new teachers. “The proceeding CTU president, Deborah Lynch, signed a contract that states that a principal can get rid of a teacher until that teacher earns tenure. It takes four years, under the current contract, for a teacher to earn tenure. Well, if a principal doesn’t like what you’re wearing and you don’t have tenure, they can fire you. That’s sad, that’s pathetic. That’s hurting teachers across the board. In May (of 2006) 1100 teachers were fired and principals didn’t have to give any reason for it.”

Interviewee added that the CTU plans to change this part of the contract in the next contract negotiation. He said, “It keeps teachers afraid to move for fear of being fired. I wouldn’t invite new teachers to work for CPS, not under this current contract.”
Data Interpretation

New teacher support and retention in a large urban district such as CPS is a difficult and challenging issue that encompasses teacher training, school administration, district support and the teachers themselves. The NCTAF 2003 report stated that forty-six percent of teachers were leaving the field of teaching after five years of teaching. This report generated a flurry of media attention on teacher retention. The literature showed that factors such as a lack of teacher preparation, lack of support, working conditions and salary, are some of the reasons for high teacher attrition rates. The purpose of this study was first, to provide information concerning teacher retention in CPS and second, to explore strategies and methods that may better support new teachers. This investigation found that teacher retention did not seem to be a significant problem for CPS anymore. However, it found that new teachers still feel little or no support from both their district and school. After reviewing the data, several themes about how CPS can better support its new teachers emerged.

This first theme is that retention is not the key issue, but that new teacher support is. The data showed that retention rates have dramatically improved in the past few years, however the question remains whether retention rates will remain steady or drop again. The second theme focuses on teacher training programs and how teacher-training programs could better prepare teachers to teach in urban districts. A third theme suggests that CPS needs a comprehensive induction program, which includes a supportive and cost-efficient mentoring program and orientation program. The final theme explores the how to build a relationship between new teachers, school administration and district administration.
Retention Is Not the Key Issue, Support Is

The literature review showed that teacher retention was a topic of much debate and interest beginning in 1999. The NCTAF study on teacher retention rates showed that almost fifty percent of teachers left the field of teaching within five years. The AEE wrote about the “leaky bucket syndrome” in which beginning teachers leave before they can become the high-quality teachers needed especially in urban, high-poverty areas. The data collected for this study suggests that teacher retention rates were very low in the years 2000 and 2001. In fact of the teachers hired in 1999-2000, approximately forty percent had left CPS within five years, which is comparatively close to the forty-six percent cited by the NCTAF.

However, attrition rates dropped dramatically after 2000. Of the teachers hired in 2000-2001, the five-year attrition rate was only twenty percent. Second, third and fourth year attrition rates demonstrated a downward trend in attrition rates, leveling off at about twenty percent, which seems comparable to attrition rates in other professions and industries. Thus the data shows that attrition rates are normal and that retention may not be a critical issue for CPS. The researcher speculates that there may be a relationship between teacher attrition rates and the nation’s job market. 2000 and 2001 were the height of the dotcom boom and a strong job market. Subsequent years showed a much weaker job market.

Survey results demonstrated mixed results. When asked whether they would continue to teach in CPS in the next 1-3 years, seven out of the nineteen survey respondents wrote yes, and four wrote no. Eight out of the nineteen were unsure. The
answer to whether or not retention will be an issue for CPS in the near future seems to rest in the unsure.

There is evidence that if new teachers were given more help with accountability and testing and more administrative support, the unsure may be swayed to continue teaching for CPS. Respondents ranked accountability and testing and lack of administrative support as the top two factors that motivated them to resign from CPS. As stated in the literature review, policymakers are setting higher standards such as high academic achievement and better test results but not giving teachers the adequate support or resources needed to achieve these results (Black & William 1998).

The data showed that salary did not seem to be a key factor in teacher attrition. When asked to rank factors that affected their decision whether to stay or leave CPS, teachers ranked salary as neutral and not one teacher commented on salary as a factor or future change. The data seems to comply with the NCTAF report that found that only 27 percent of beginning teachers in high poverty urban schools cited poor salary as a factor in dissatisfaction. It is probable that since it is well known that teachers’ salaries are low, people who would be affected by salary may choose not to go into teaching as a career.

The Importance of Diversity and Classroom Management Training

The data collected for this study demonstrates that new teachers in urban schools need more diversity and urban culture training and more classroom management preparation. Of the seventeen respondents who specified a training program, eleven stated that they did not feel adequately trained to teach in an urban setting, two were unsure and only three stated yes.
The literature suggests that teacher preparation programs need to, “familiarize teacher education students with the challenges of teaching in low-performing schools” (NEA, 2003). Survey data supports the literature. Survey respondents consistently wrote that they needed classroom management training and diversity training. One respondent wrote that the Bachelors of Education program she completed did not prepare them to teach in urban district because, “I feel that in an urban area management is key and that was NEVER even addressed, nor was teaching students who are of a different ethnic background as the teacher.” Another wrote that he was not “provided any insight into the management issues present in an inner city classroom, and the specific challenges of working with an entirely African-American population.”

In contrast the three teachers who responded yes, that they felt their program trained to teach in an urban setting, wrote more about their own personal experiences with urban youth rather than their training program. Respondent Seven wrote that he felt prepared because, “I had prior experience. I was a smart person.” Respondent Five replied, “If I was not familiar with urban schools prior to enrolling in my teacher training program, it would not have sufficiently addressed the issues unique to the urban setting. Because I had experience in this setting beforehand, I was able to make the most out of the preparation period.” Their responses indicate that they were prepared to teach in an urban setting because of their familiarity with urban students, not because their training program prepared them. Only one respondent, Respondent Eighteen, wrote positively about how her teacher training prepared her to teach in an urban setting, “I attended (an Illinois university) and I had many teaching experiences including observing, tutoring, mini-teaching, student teaching in both urban and suburban settings, in public and private
school systems.” However, the respondent also includes her own experiences with living in Chicago by adding, “I was born in Chicago, grew up and have lived all my life in Chicago.” All three respondents who felt prepared to teach in CPS had prior experience and exposure to urban youth. As stated in the literature review, the NEA recommends that teacher candidates have opportunities to practice teaching to a diverse population. The evidence from this study supports the NEA recommendation and suggests that teacher-training programs give their students diversity and classroom training through opportunities to work with urban youth during their teacher training.

The American philosophy of an innate ability to teach was also addressed in the literature review and survey results found many new teachers to also believe that teaching cannot be taught. A *New York Times* editorial challenged American teacher preparation programs, where novice teachers are placed into a classroom with little or no support, by comparing it to Japanese teacher training where teachers work cooperatively to support each other. The data found many teachers who agreed with the American philosophy but who also feel that they needed more time to collaborate and observe peer teachers. Respondent Five wrote, “NO education program can really prepare you for teaching – it’s all just talk. You just need to get into the classroom.” However, when asked about what other programs/support resources he might have found supportive as a new teacher, Respondent Five wrote, “mostly observing other teachers and finding a friendly department with teachers who have time to collaborate.” Many survey respondents agreed that time for peer observations, feedback, and collaboration would have provided them with more support. Thus, this investigation suggests that giving new teachers both the time to meet with a peer network of collaborative teachers and also a peer network of
collaborative teachers would provide teachers with some of the support they needed. Whether teacher-training programs or school districts should provide this time and network should be open to more discussion and debate.

**CPS Needs a Comprehensive Induction Program**

From the literature review, the NEA defined a comprehensive induction as a package of supports, development and standards-based assessments provided to beginning teachers during at least their first two years of teaching. This study focused on mentoring and the orientation aspect of an induction program.

**CPS Mentor Program Needs to be Re-evaluated**

The data from this study showed evidence that the CPS Golden Teachers mentor program is not cost-efficient and that mentors need to be held accountable for the mentoring they are paid for. Interviewee Red, a Golden Teachers administration describe the program’s mentoring goals as, “mentors are supposed to meet with their teachers a minimum of six hours per quarter. Mentors observe the new teacher and the new teacher observes the mentor. Mentors give the new teachers constructive advice.” Interviewee Red also disclosed that mentors are paid a $500 stipend for each new teacher they mentor.

The survey results about the mentoring program were overwhelmingly negative. Out of the 14 survey respondents who participated in the mentor program, five (approximately thirty-six percent) responded positively about the program, stating that they met regularly with their mentor. However even the positive responses seemed lukewarm. Respondent Nineteen wrote that her mentor was limited in support because her mentor was a classroom teacher, while she was a resource teacher. Respondent Four
wrote that her mentor provided “some feedback and discussion when I brought issues up, however, my mentor was also my department chair, so I think it would have happened anyway.” Only three of the respondents seemed to have built supportive relationships with their mentors. Respondent Seventeen wrote that her mentor was very willing to help. Respondent Thirteen stated that she became good friends with her mentor over time.

However, nine of the respondents wrote negatively about the mentoring program. The negative responses are strongly negative in their comments. Some of these nine stated that they hardly saw their mentor, Respondent One wrote, “my mentor teacher was a joke…she made up our meetings together and just did it to get extra money.” Respondent Twelve wrote, “my mentor had no interest in sharing tools of the trade with me.”

If mentors are paid $500 per mentor teacher, and every first and second year teacher is provided a mentor, that means approximately 4000 teachers have mentors, because CPS hires about 2000 teachers every year. Doing the math, this means that CPS spends approximately two million dollars on the mentoring program each year. The data from this study showed that only thirty-six percent of the respondents found merit in the mentoring program. This means that approximately 1.3 million dollars is not being spent well. Mentors who meet regularly with their new teacher(s) and meet program regulations are perhaps not being compensated enough. In fact, Interviewee Green, a lead mentor, stated that she was not even fully compensated for her time last year. However for those mentors who fail to meet with their new teachers, it seems like a lot of
money lost. Can CPS have a better, more cost efficient, more supportive mentoring program?

The literature review stressed the importance of compensation either monetarily or with release time and this investigation did not show evidence that mentor teachers should not be compensated monetarily. However, this investigation did show evidence that CPS mentor teachers are not being held accountable for the duties they are being compensated for.

From Interviewee Red’s interview, it seems evident that lack of consistency in implementation of the mentor program may be the problem. Golden Teachers gives responsibility of assigning and overseeing mentors to principals. Interviewee Red stated that implementation of the program differs with each school and principal. Interviewee Green, a lead mentor teacher, agreed with Interviewee Red, stating that Golden Teachers works only if the school participates and adding that there is no one to look at the paperwork mentors and teachers fill out.

**The Importance of a New Teacher Orientation at the School-Level**

The data demonstrated that most survey respondents who attended the district-wide orientation program found it be not helpful. One respondent called it a “waste of time”. Interviewee Red stated in her interview that CPS would no longer hold a district-wide orientation, instead “the orientation will be the responsibility of the school.” The data for this study seems to support a new teacher orientation that takes place at the school-level rather than at the district.

Many teachers wrote about the largeness of the district orientation, Respondent Eighteen wrote that the orientation “was somewhat helpful to give a broad perspective of
CPS, but the population was large, and not very personalized or focused for particular regions/districts or neighborhoods.” When asked about what programs they would like to see for future new teachers, respondents suggested school-level orientations. One wrote, “an orientation at my school that included among other guidance on how to handle the many administrative tasks required on a daily basis: attendance, lunch money, school culture, general pecking order.” However, consistency and accountability for a school-level orientation is a concern. CPS consists of over 600 schools and implementation of a school-level orientation may differ greatly from one school to the next. Finding a method to coordinate and ensure that schools hold the school-level orientation that they are responsible for is suggested.

The Importance of Building Support Networks

The data showed a need for opportunities for new teachers to build supportive relationships with their peer teachers, veteran teachers and school administrative. The AEE found that new teachers are placed in the most challenging classrooms with little, if any, support and expected to perform like pros (AEE 2004). The NEA suggests that a quality comprehensive induction program contain a professional network of teachers and Claycomb & Hawley agree that in-service programs that connect new teachers from all over the district are an important part of a new teacher induction program. The data supported these suggestions and many respondents asked for more time to spend with their peers. When asked an open-ended question about suggestions for future programs, ten out of the nineteen respondents wrote about the need for teacher-to-teacher support networks. One wrote, “I think a support group of new teachers that meets on a regular basis would be helpful.” Another wrote that she wanted “more observations of peers,
more peer observations of me, more group meetings with other new teachers, social activities with new and veteran teachers.”
Conclusion

While retention rates for new teachers in CPS are not a concern, new teachers still need more support networks. The Alliance for Excellent Education found that new teachers require three to seven years of teaching experience to become effective teachers. Teachers in CPS are struggling with new higher standards of accountability and testing and not receiving the support they need to become effective teachers. Teacher-training programs need to prepare teachers to teach in urban settings by giving opportunities to work with diverse populations and also more classroom management training. CPS needs to re-evaluate its mentoring program for cost-efficiency and accountability. A lot of money is being lost over a program that should be helpful to new teachers. CPS also needs to provide opportunities for teachers to build networks both at their schools and across the district. The literature focused on high attrition rates and large turnover at schools, however this investigation found that teachers are not leaving CPS at alarming rates. However, it did find that many new teachers are struggling and feel as if they have little or no enough support from their schools and their districts.

Implications of the Research

This study contributes to our understanding of what kinds of support new teachers for CPS need and gives suggestions as to what CPS can do to help new teachers become the efficient teachers the district needs. For new teachers, this study is a place where their concerns and needs are addressed. New teachers wrote about feeling isolated with no support, it is recommended that if they are not given the support networks they need, that they try to establish some themselves through colleagues and peer teachers at their
schools. For school administrators, this project can help them better understand the needs of new teachers. Assigning mentors who are willing to support new teachers and establishing a school-level orientation program are not very expensive or time consuming endeavors, however, they can make a tremendous difference in the first or second year of a new teacher. This study recommends that teacher-training programs discuss and analyze what kinds of opportunities they give their students to work with diverse populations. Management preparation strategies should also be more comprehensively taught.

This study can be used as a basis for creating programs that foster teacher support networks both in schools and across the district. For CPS human resource and new teacher program administrator, this project can help them evaluate the current induction program, Golden Teachers, and how they can make improvements to their mentoring program to make it more cost-efficient and effective. This study recommends that CPS provide new teacher social gatherings and workshops to promote these teacher support networks.

Limitations of the Study

While this study is useful as a basis for future research, it was limited by its survey response size, and time frame. The data was limited because while the survey was emailed to over 400 people, it received only nineteen respondents. CPS is a large district and it was difficult to give the survey out to its new teachers, thus the sample was limited to the researcher’s peer teachers and colleagues. The survey was also sent in mid May, near the end of the school year. The researcher speculates that many teachers may have
ending the year and looking forward to the summer break. Survey respondents’ attitudes towards teaching may have been different if the survey was sent in the fall.

The time frame also limited the number of interviews the researcher was able to conduct. By the time the project was approved, it was difficult to contact district administrators because of the summer vacation schedule.

**Lessons Learned**

Conducting a qualitative research study of this size and scope was difficult and challenging. I learned the methods and strategies utilized in qualitative studies, however if I could begin this project again, I would have narrowed the focus of this study to one aspect of new teacher support. The project was difficult to focus because there was so much literature and data on new teachers and new teacher programs.

This project was also a personal journey for me. I began this project because I felt that new teachers did not have a voice in CPS and I myself was not sure whether I could continue teaching for CPS. I learned that a large urban district like CPS has many difficulties coordinating new teacher support programs, especially since their different schools have their own ways of implementing them (or not implementing them). This investigation gave me a lot of insight into educational research and policy study. I really enjoyed the challenges and rewards of being a researcher and would like to continue to study educational policy through research.
New Questions/Next Steps

This investigation raised many new questions that for future research. Will the new teachers who checked unsure about staying in CPS continue to teach? What factors will affect this decision? I believe future retention rates at CPS can be predicted by the outcome of these new teachers. What effect does a principal have on new teacher support and retention? It would be interesting to learn about strategies and methods principals could use to support new teachers at the school administration level. If I were to conduct this study all over again, I think I’d like to focus on Chicago’s West and South Side schools, which have the most difficulty recruiting and retaining teachers. What strategies and methods do the West and South Side schools, Chicago’s most challenging schools, need to recruit and retain effective teachers? How do charter and smaller schools in Chicago compare with CPS in teacher support and retention? With so many charter schools opening in Chicago, it would be interesting to explore new teachers in charter schools and their support resources/programs. Do race and/or cultural background have an impact on teacher retention? There seems to be endless new questions that can be asked about new teacher support and retention. I believe the next step is to continue to ask questions and to continue to research the most effective methods of giving new teachers the support they need to become the effective teachers the nation needs.
References


Appendix
Survey

Instructions: The following survey is designed to provide important data concerning a) teacher retention in urban school districts, specifically Chicago Public Schools, b) new teachers and their struggles teaching in an urban school and c) strategies and methods that may support new teachers and increase teacher retention.

On average, this survey will take less than 20 minutes to complete. Please answer the questions as accurately as possible.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. Participation or withdrawal will not affect any rights to which you are entitled. Participation in this study is confidential and all information will be written in such a manner that you will not be identified. All research material will be kept under the control of the researcher. Information derived from this study will be used for research purposes within context of the researcher’s graduate research.

Any questions you may have about this study may be directed to Jennie Jiang, Northwestern University School of Education and Social Policy, at 773-344-0788. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects at Northwestern University at 312-5503-9338.

By completing and submitting the online survey, you consent to participate in the survey.

Part I: Teaching Experience. In this section, you will be asked to recall your experiences as a new teacher in Chicago Public Schools.

1. What year did you begin teaching at Chicago Public Schools?

2. Are you currently teaching at Chicago Public Schools?
   2a. What school do you teach at? Where is the school located?
   2b. What grade/subject do you currently teach?
   3c. What is the current size of the class you teach?

3. Did you feel prepared for your teaching responsibilities when you first became a teacher at Chicago Public Schools? Why or Why not?

4. Please describe your teacher training program (ie. Alternative certification, Bachelors in Education, Masters, in Education).
   4a. Where did you complete your teacher training?
   4b. Did you feel that your teacher training program adequately prepared you for your teaching responsibilities in an urban school setting? Why or why not?

Part II: New Teacher Support:
5. As a new teacher, did you participate in any of the following teaching preparation/orientation activities?

A. Individual mentoring by veteran teachers at your school  Yes  No
B. CPS’s Golden Teacher Program Orientation  Yes  No
C. Workshops or seminars provided by CPS on teaching  Yes  No
D. Peer teacher observation and feedback  Yes  No
E. Informal exchanges about teaching  Yes  No
D. Other preparation/orientation activities.  Please describe: __________________

6. If you answered yes to any of the above, what did you take away from the experience(s)?

7. If you answered yes to any of the above, which of these preparation activities, if any, were provided by your school? Please be specific in your response.

8. If you answered yes to any of the above, which of these preparation activities, if any, did you seek out on your own? Please be specific in your response.

9. If you answered yes to CPS’s Golden Teacher Program Orientation, did you feel that this program adequately orientated and supported you as a new teacher in CPS? Why or why not? Please be specific in your response.

10. If you answered yes to CPS’s Golden Teacher Program Orientation program, were you given a mentor teacher(s)? Yes  No
    10a. What kind of activities and/or support did your Golden Teacher mentor provide you with? (ie. Social activities, workshops, peer review and feedback, etc.)
    10b. Approximately how many hours a week did your Golden Teacher mentor provide you with support?

11. What other programs/support resources might you have found supportive for your role as a new teacher in CPS? Please be specific in your response.

Part III: Attitudes toward teaching in urban schools.
12. On a scale of 1-5 (1=very frustrating 5=very satisfactory), please rate your attitude toward the following aspects of teaching. Please circle the number that best reflects your opinion or n/a if you believe the selection is not applicable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>n/a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Student Behavior</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Creating and developing lesson plans</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Leading and teaching lessons</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Grading homework</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Interaction with co-workers/peer teachers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Interaction with students’ parents</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Administrative concerns and pressures</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Accountability and Testing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Large class sizes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12a. If you feel there are other aspects of teaching that are very satisfactory to you at your job, please describe them below.

12b. If you feel there are other aspects of teaching that are very frustrating to you at your job, please describe them below.

13. Within the next two years do you think you will continue to teach in CPS?
   Yes   No

14. Please rank on a scale of 1-5 (1=reasons to leave 5=reasons to stay), please rate the importance of the factors that affect your decision to leave CPS. Please circle the number that best reflects your opinion or n/a if you believe the selection is not applicable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>n/a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Student Behavior</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Retiring</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Salary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Benefits (ie. Retirement, healthcare, etc.)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Raising a family</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
15. Are there any other factors that affect your decision to continue to teach in CPS? Please explain.

16. If you answered No to question 13. What are your plans after you leave CPS?
   - Teach in another district (suburban or rural)
   - Teach in a private school
   - Leave the teaching field for a different career

17. What do you find to be the most difficult aspect of teaching when you first began teaching? Has this changed? If yes, how?

18. What have you found to be the most rewarding aspect of teaching?

**Part IV: Demographic Information.**
Interview Questions Guide

Part I: Administration Background

1. What is your job title?
   a) How many years have you been at this job?
   b) What experience do you have with urban education and teacher support?

Part II: New Teacher Support

2. What sort of programs/support resources does CPS have to help new teachers?
   a) Please describe these programs in detail.
   b) Do you feel these programs/support resources are adequately supporting new teachers?

3. Do you feel that teachers working in urban schools are getting enough support?
   a) What urban settings (New York, LA, Chicago, etc.) are doing a good job of supporting new teachers?

4. What programs of support for new teachers do you think CPS needs in addition to those they already have?
   a) Why do you think CPS is not using these programs?
   b) What programs have other cities/urban districts established that have positively affected teacher retention?

5. What programs have worked in past years to help support new teachers?

6. What do you think CPS is doing well to retain new teachers?

7. What do you think CPS is not doing so well to retain new teachers?

Part III: CPS Teaching Retention

8. In your experience as a principal/administrator, how many teachers have you seen leave CPS to teach in another district?
   a) What are the reasons they left?

9. In your experience as a principal/administrator, how many teachers have you seen leave CPS for different careers?
   a) What careers? Why?
10. Why do you think veteran teachers have chosen to stay in urban education?
   a) What sort of experiences will help teachers stay in urban education?
   b) What training programs may help better prepare teachers to stay in urban education?

11. In the past 5 years, have you seen any changes in the education system that may make teachers want to stay in urban education?
   a) In the past 5 years, have you seen any changes in the education system that may make teachers want to leave urban education either to another district (suburban, rural) or to a different career?

19. What is your gender? Male Female
20. What is your age?
21. What is your race?
Northwestern University  
School of Education and Social Policy

Interview Group Consent Form

Project Title: The Five Year Mark: Teacher Retention in Chicago Public Schools

Faculty Advisor: Lois Trautvetter

Student Investigator: Jennie Y. Jiang

Introduction:
You are being asked to participate in a study the researcher is completing for a graduate class at Northwestern University. The researcher’s instructor is Lois Trautvetter, who may be contacted by phone at (847) 491-3901. The researcher is conducting this study because the researcher wants to understand more about why teachers leave or stay in urban school districts, specifically Chicago Public Schools. You are being asked to participate because your experience with urban schools and teacher retention may provide information for the study. The purpose of this study is to determine what factors may improve teacher retention in urban school districts.

Procedures:
In this interview, you will be asked questions related to your experience with teacher retention and the programs that may support new teachers and prevent them from leaving urban schools or the field. This interview should take 30-45 minutes.

Risks:
You are unlikely to experience any physical, psychological, or social risks. If you feel, however, that you become uncomfortable or experience any problems due to participation in this project, you may withdraw at any time.

Benefits:
There may be no direct benefit to you by your participation in this project, however both future teachers and students in urban schools might benefit from the insights gained from your participation.

Alternatives:
You have the alternative to choose not to participate in this research study. You are free to withdraw your participation at any time.

Confidentiality:
Participation in this study is confidential and all information will be written in such a manner that you will not be identified. Both your first and last name will be replaced by a pseudonym in the transcription, all notes and the final report. All research material will be kept under the control of the researcher. Procedures to protect your identity will be followed in transcription and in all reports associated with this project. Information
derived from this study will be used for research purposes within context of my graduate research courses. Your identity will be kept confidential and any audiotapes will be destroyed once the transcription is complete. Although the researcher does not expect this to come up, the researcher needs to make you aware that the only exception to this promise of confidentiality is that the researcher is legally obligated to report any evidence of illegal activities, abuse, or neglect.

Financial Information:
You will not incur any costs, nor will you receive any reimbursements for your participation in this study.

Subject’s Rights:
Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. Participation or withdrawal will not affect any rights to which you are entitled.

Contact Persons:
If you have any questions about the research study you may reach the researcher Jennie Jiang at 773-344-0788 at any time. You may also call the Director of Master of Science Programs, Dr. Sophie Haroutunian-Gordon at: 847-467-1999, if you have any additional questions.
If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject you may call the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects of Northwestern University at telephone number (312) 503-9338.

Consent:
I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have been answered to my satisfaction. If I have additional questions, I have been told who to contact. I agree to participate in the research study described above and will receive a copy of this consent form after I sign it.

_________________________________________  ________________________
Participant                                      Date

_________________________________________  ________________________
Researcher                                      Date