

The Role of the School Administrator in Teacher Induction and Mentoring Programs

Panel and Research Presentation

1. What experiences have you had in a school administrator's role that are related to the induction and mentoring of early career teachers?

Leadership is key:

“nothing uglier than a man hitting his stride...”

- I gave first year teachers 'the speech' – “i hired you, you must be great, see you in June, come see me if you need anything”.
- I did not have a clearly set of defined expectations and no pedagogical plan or process focussed on staff development.

“scared money doesn't win”

- I believed I didnt have anything to learn from this new 'new teacher induction program'.
- After experiencing training and started to gain expertise I realized how little I was doing to improve instruction as a whole in our school.
- Early career teachers were on their own and I realized that I didn't support them while still expecting them to flourish.
- We began to develop the expertise while beginning to garner buy-in with the staff – our focus was support and we embraced our work with.

“origin or pawn”

- We decided we wanted to support our staff and we believed the Induction programming would give us the tools to support and retain the right teachers for our school.
- We decided to commit to our staff (and, by doing so, to our students)

“the death of inevitability”

- The first years don't have to be an impossible experience.
- The induction program gave us a common language which led to a common vision of support for all teachers

“fully completely”

- Induction became the lens through which we would see our primary role as administrators. It led to developing: induction PD days for staff, induction days for students and parents, clear expectations for all aspects of school life and the supports that must be in place to promote growth and health.
- We began to focus our adult behaviours and knowing the impact of all our pedagogical plans and pedagogical practices.
- We developed a culture of self-propelling self-reflection and self-improvement...and it began with our induction programming.

2. Based on your experiences, what supports are needed for a successful school administrator's involvement in teacher induction and mentoring processes?

Leadership is key:

- **Centralize quality assurance:** ensure Induction Programming is well designed high quality product. Quality assurance must be centralized. Ensure integrity of programming. Standardize the process.
- **Ensure buy-in from principals.** Challenge and support principal's learning needs.
- Clearly define what an **outstanding mentor/coach is, what are the expectations, and potential opportunities.** Professional development and training for everyone involved – make sure the principals and mentors/coaches know what they are doing.
- Ensure the pedagogical plans and **processes are clearly communicated** to the school community.
- **Spend** money and **commit** to long term sustainable programming.
- **Decentralize pedagogical adaptability:** have extra patience with mentors/coaches/mentees/fellows. Provide new teachers with school guidebooks and a pre-school year preparation plan. Listen to teachers and adapt programming.
- **Respect a teacher's time and workload.** Processes must have as little negative impact as possible on classroom.
- **Consider school climate** and **organizational health** as potential impact on teacher efficacy.
- Perfect world scenario: Invite principal's in Induction programs into the university setting. Consideration given to effectively involve union support.
- Give back to the process: principals also must be heard and also enabled (feel valued) to add to the process allowing for mutual growth. Induction programs could benefit from the **collective wisdom of the system...**
- **Foster organizational growth mindsets:**
 - Only two types of employees in a school – teachers and those who support them.
 - Only two types of employees in a school board/district – principals and those who support them.