



Developing relationships with new teachers

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Background Leading to My Inquiry (Slide 2)

Having positive relationships with teachers is a key facet to creating a successful and positive learning environment. As a second-year principal, I have learned that an area in which I needed personal growth was increasing communication, especially in the area of school procedures, with teachers who are new to our school.

In my first fifteen years at Southwestern High School, our staff was relatively stable and we experienced very little teacher turnover. However, in the past three or four years, our school, like many others, has witnessed a marked increase in teacher turnover. This turnover has exposed the lack of a new teacher induction program within our school and has led to several new teachers feeling isolated and frustrated in regard to a lack of communication of our school's basic procedures. In years past, experienced teachers would simply take the new teacher in their department "under their wings" and walk them through our school's procedures. However, it has become evident that our school needs a new and formalized new teacher induction program in order to increase communication, welcome new staff members, and aid in smoother continuity at our school.

The Purpose of My Inquiry (Slide 3)

Therefore, the purpose of my action inquiry was to seek how to improve my interpersonal and management skills by creating an environment in which all employees will work together to welcome new teachers and help them feel like they belong as equal contributing members to our learning community.

My Wondering (Slide 4)

With this purpose, we wondered how can we help new teachers in our school feel like equal and positively contributing members of our learning community? This wondering led to additional questions that fit naturally into this action research project such as: How do we better develop relationships between new and existing teachers? What leadership opportunities can be offered to new teachers? How do we monitor the progress of new teachers and continue the positive relationships that we are building?

My Actions (Slide 5)

To gain insight into my wonderings I began to compile information about how new

teachers felt about the level of communication in our school and what could be done to improve relationships by improving our lines of communication. This information was gathered by meeting with new teachers (first or second year) in a group setting and having open discussions about communication and how to better inform and include new teachers.

Additionally, a staff survey was conducted of our entire high school staff about our induction and communication processes for new teachers. This gave experienced teachers a chance to share their experiences and views.

Finally, I conducted interviews with our superintendent and assistant superintendent to gain insight into their thoughts and views on how to improve communication with our new teachers.

Once I had compiled information about school communication and how a formalized new teacher induction program may improve its effectiveness I analyzed the data for new discoveries.

Data Collection (Slide 6)

Data collection began in December 2020 and continued through March 2021. I gathered both qualitative and quantitative data to analyze for my action research project. The qualitative data was gathered through interviews with the five teachers in their first or second year at our school, as well as our corporation superintendent and assistant superintendent.

The quantitative data was gathered from a five-question survey sent to all high school teachers. All twenty-six of our full-time high school teachers responded to the survey.

My Data (Slides 7-12)

The qualitative data shows the common threads that occurred in discussions with teachers and administrators. In discussions with teachers the most common thread was the need for a new teacher handbook or orientation program. New teachers discussed the need for a reference to answer questions, show the chain of command, provide directions for technology use. Common discussion threads from corporation administrators were the need for a mentor program in our corporation, the need to use technology and face-to-face interactions to better disseminate information to teachers, and a willingness to assist in improving communication across the school corporation

The qualitative data shows the responses by high school teachers to a five-question survey about new teacher communication and induction. 58% of our teachers feel that our school performs average in helping new teachers feel like contributing members of our school. In

regard to our current process of inducting new teachers to our corporation's policies and procedures, 46.2% of teachers believe we perform at an average level while 46.2% believe we perform below average. 89% of our teachers believe our school would benefit from the creation of a formal new teacher induction program. 96% of teachers would be willing to serve as a mentor teacher. 81% of teachers would be willing to assist in the development of a new teacher induction program.

My Discoveries (Slide 13)

Learning Statement One: There is a need for a new and formal teacher induction program for our school.

Learning Statement Two: There is overwhelming support from teachers and corporation-level administrators to assist in the development of a new teacher induction program for our school

There is a need for a new and formal teacher induction program for our school. Each of the five first or second year teachers in our building and 88% of our staff believe that our school would benefit from the creation of a new and formal induction program.

There is overwhelming support from teachers and corporation-level administrators to assist in the development of a new teacher induction program for our school. 96% of our school's teachers indicated they would serve as a mentor teacher and 81% of teachers indicated they would assist in the development of a new teacher induction program. Both corporation-level administrators see the need for a new teacher induction program and stated they would be willing to assist in creating and administering such a program.

Where I Am Heading Next (Slide 14)

During this process I have learned that the teachers of our school are willing to cooperate with one another and participate in making our school better. Every teacher in our building participated in the survey and each teacher indicated they would be willing to help either as a mentor teacher or in the development of a new teacher induction program.

Changes I will make will be to work with the middle school principal with whom I share a building and several teachers and see if he would like to assist in creating a new teacher induction program. The goal would be to begin work on this project in the spring and summer of 2021. I believe that increasing communication with teachers new to our building by clearly explaining our policies and procedures would create a more positive and professional learning and working environment.

Bibliography (Slide 15)

N/A

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Background Leading to My Inquiry

- Having positive relationships with teachers is key to creating a successful and positive learning environment.
- As a second-year principal, I have learned that an area in which I needed personal growth was increasing communication, especially in the area of school procedures, with teachers who are new to our school.
- During my first 15 years at our school there was little teacher turnover. This resulted in few new teacher hires and an erosion of a new teacher induction program
- By the time I became principal, new teachers received no formal training on school policies/procedures. This resulted in new teachers feeling frustrated and left out.

The Purpose of My Inquiry

- To improve my interpersonal and management skills by creating an environment in which all employees work together to welcome new teachers and help them feel like they belong as equal contributing members of our learning community.

My Wondering

- How can we help new teachers feel like equal and positively contributing members of our learning community?
- Will a new teacher induction program help bridge this gap and increase positive communication in our school?

My Actions

- Met with teachers in their first and second year at our school in a group setting.
 - Had an open discussion about orientation and communication and how to better inform and include new teachers
- Conducted a staff-wide survey on new teacher induction and communication.
- Conducted interviews with the superintendent and assistant superintendent to gain corporation-level insight on how to improve communication with teachers who are new to our school.

Data Collection

- Data was collected between December 2020, and March 2021.
- Qualitative data was collected through the interviews with new teachers and corporation-level administrators
 - Our school shares a building and several teachers with the middle school. Only high school teachers were interviewed for this project
- Quantitative data was collected through the staff-wide survey
 - All twenty-six full-time high school teachers in our building responded to the survey.

My Data (Qualitative)

- Discussion with new teachers:
 - Most common thread: There is a need for a new teacher handbook/orientation program
 - There is a present need for a reference to answer basic questions about school policies and procedures
- Corporation-Level Interviews:
 - There is a need for a teacher mentor program
 - We can utilize technology and face-to-face interactions to increase communication and information
 - There is support from corporation-level administrators to help in increasing communication and new teacher induction

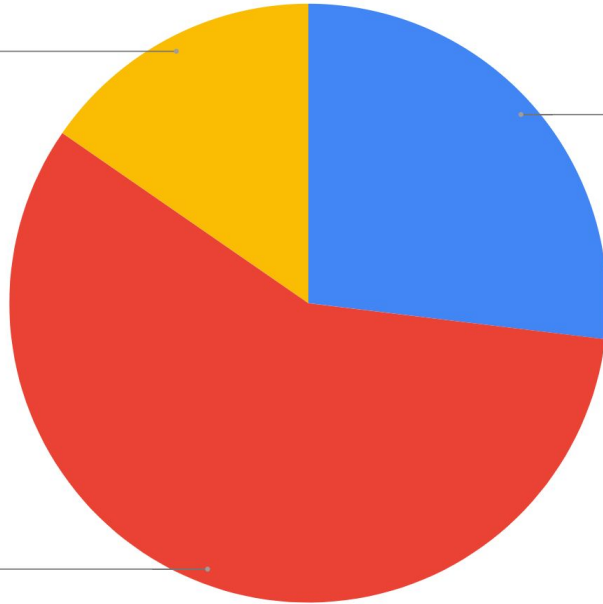
My Data (Quantitative): Staff Survey

Rate how you think our school performs in helping new teachers feel like contributing members of our school.

Above average
15.4%

Below average
26.9%

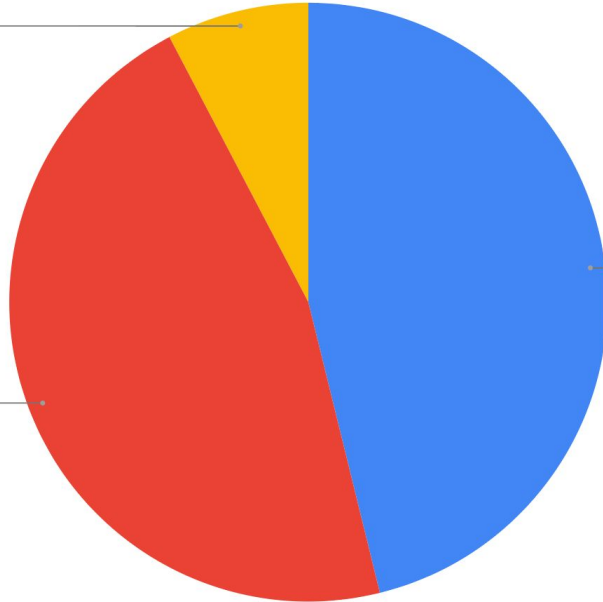
Average
57.7%



My Data (Quantitative): Staff Survey

Rate our school's current process of inducting new teachers to the policies and procedures of our school corporation?

Above average
7.7%

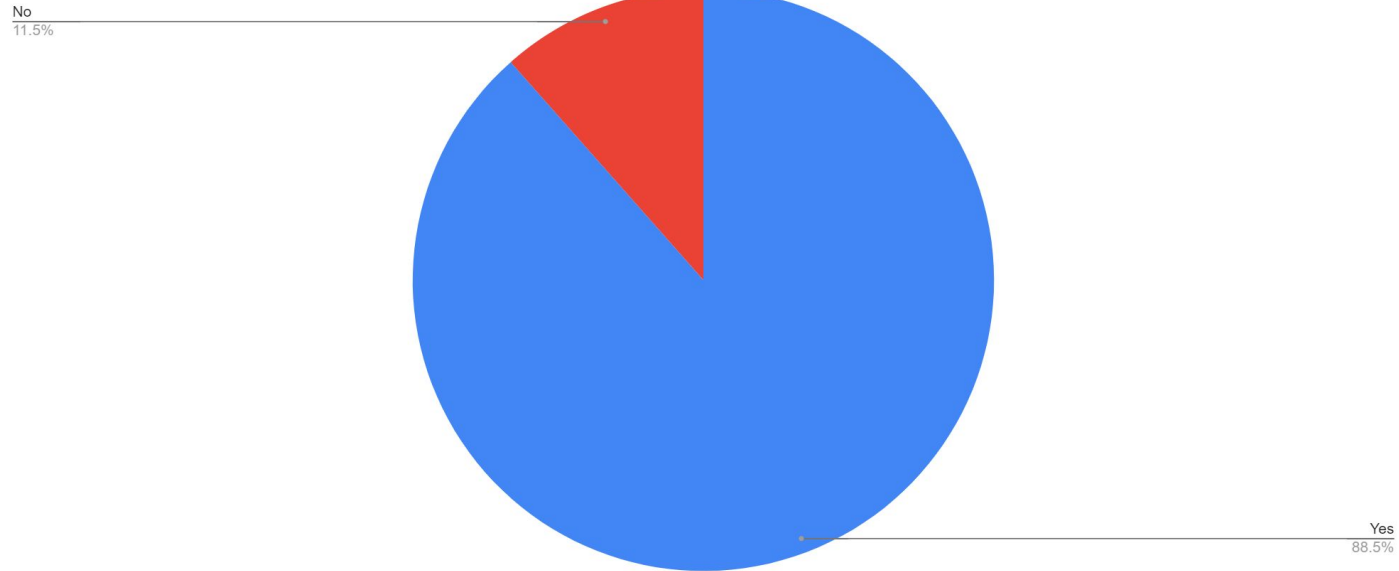


Average
46.2%

Below average
46.2%

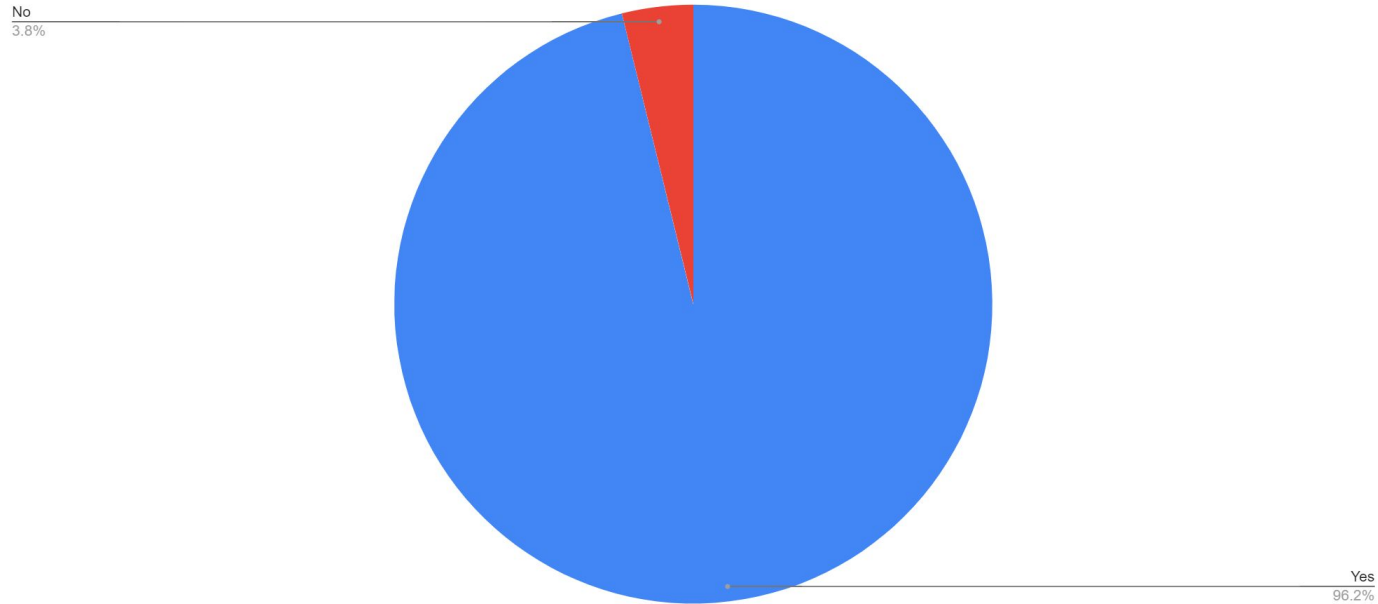
My Data (Quantitative): Staff Survey

Would our school benefit from the creation of a new formal teacher induction program for educators who are new to our building?



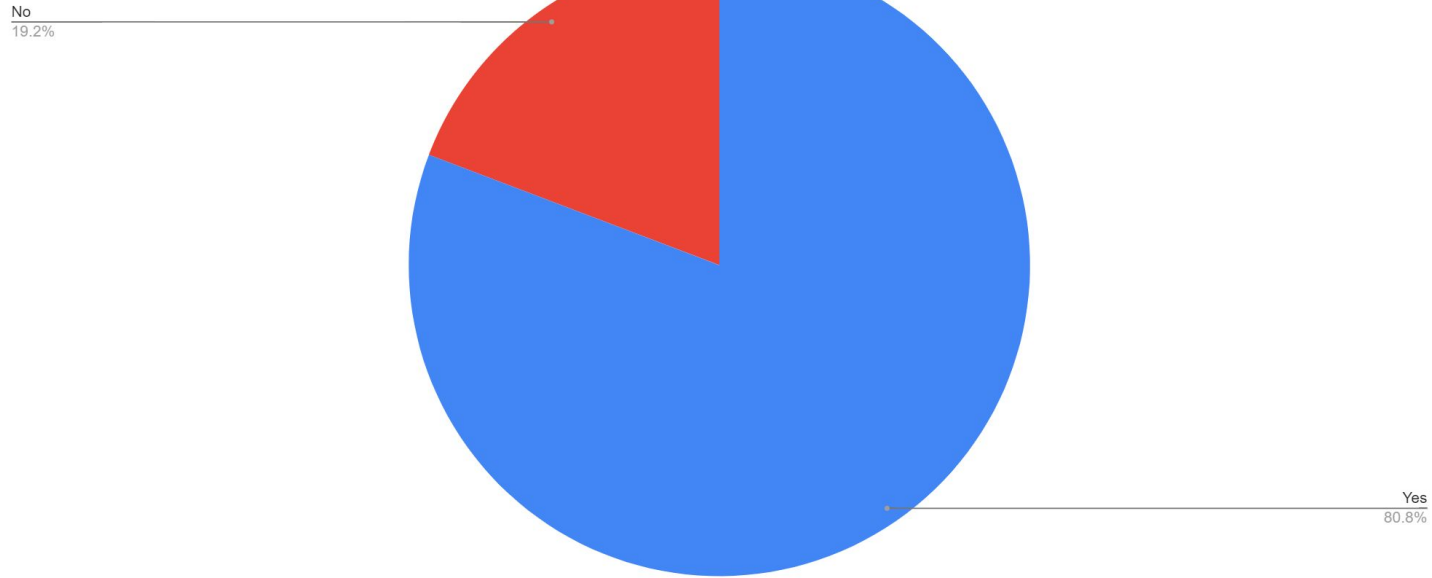
My Data (Quantitative): Staff Survey

Would you be willing to serve as a mentor teacher to a teacher who is new to the profession?



My Data (Quantitative): Staff Survey

Would you be willing to participate in helping to create a new teacher induction program at Southwestern?



My Discoveries

- Learning Statement One: There is a need for a new and formal teacher induction program at our school.
 - Each of the five new teachers at our school and 88% of our staff as a whole believe that our school would benefit from the creation of a new teacher induction program.
- Learning Statement Two: There is overwhelming support from teachers and corporation-level administrators to assist in the development of a new teacher induction program.
 - 96% of teachers indicated that they would serve as a mentor teacher
 - 81% of teachers indicated that they would assist in the development of a new teacher induction program
 - Both corporation-level administrators see the need for a new teacher induction program and both indicated they would assist in creating and administering the program.

Where I am Heading Next

- Discuss this project with the middle school principal and see if they would like to take part in developing a new teacher induction program.
- May-June 2021: Develop an outline of a new teacher induction program
- July 2021: Implement the beta version of the new induction program with newly hired teachers

Bibliography

- N/A