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ABSTRACT

This book surveys the Career in Teaching (CIT) initiative launched in Rochester, New York, looking at its impact on the district since 1987. CIT incorporates support for new teachers, provides opportunities for highly accomplished teachers to share their skills, and offers peer review and assistance to teachers experiencing problems in their practice. CIT has a collaborative structure, with roles for teaching peers, parents, and administrators. Teachers are the most actively involved in monitoring their professional peers and are the backbone of CIT. A vital element of CIT are the mentors who help guide and encourage new teachers, when attrition is usually the highest. CIT designates four stages in a teacher's career (intern, resident teacher, professional teacher, and lead teacher), providing programmatic supports and professional opportunities at each level. This monograph describes: the beginning teacher mentor/intern program; the professional support program for experienced teachers; the alternative evaluation program for teachers whose practice is not in question; governance of the CIT; Rochester's efforts to involve parents in evaluating teacher performance; and program effects. Five appendixes include an Intern Needs Assessment, Intern Status Report, Intern Mid-year Unsatisfactory Report, Status Report on Mentor, and Parent Survey. (Contains 20 references.) (SM)

DEVELOPING CAREERS, BUILDING A PROFESSION:

The Rochester Career in Teaching Plan

JULIA KOPPICH, CARLA ASHER, AND CHARLES KERCHNER

WITH A FOREWORD BY LINDA DARLING-HAMMOND

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Foreword

When policymakers across the country talk about improving the teaching profession, the discussion often turns to higher pay, better benefits, or more rigorous entry standards. While these are important factors, they are only part of what is needed to make teaching a more attractive, long-term career. In this informative report, the authors survey a ground-breaking program implemented in the city of Rochester, New York, a program crafted by teachers and administrators working hand-in-hand, that created a career pathway for teachers founded on knowledge and accomplishment. This far-sighted initiative, the Career in Teaching (CIT) program, incorporates support for new teachers, provides opportunities for highly accomplished teachers to share their skills, and offers peer review and assistance to teachers experiencing problems in their practice.

From the start, one of the remarkable features of Rochester's CIT program has been its collaborative structure, with roles for teaching peers, parents, and administrators to provide input into the review process. It is the teachers, however, who are most actively involved in monitoring their professional peers and are the backbone of the CIT program. This innovative structure was developed and established with the strong support of the city's teacher union, whose members have long understood that issues of professional support, effective teaching, and student outcomes do not exist in isolation from one another.

A vital element of Rochester's CIT program is the mentors who help guide and encourage new teachers during their beginning years, when attrition is usually highest. Due to the critical nature of this position, mentors are carefully selected, and must first earn lead teacher status in the district. Lead teachers must have at least seven years of successful classroom teaching experience, a proven ability to work successfully with students with the greatest needs, and an ability to work cooperatively and effectively with other professional staff members. Primarily through mentoring and the peer review process, Rochester's CIT program has improved beginning teacher retention dramatically: in 1998, 95% of those who entered teaching in Rochester ten years earlier and who received mentoring were still teaching there. The

district's demonstrated commitment to providing professional support for teachers, by allowing for the time and money to make it happen, has been essential to the program's successes.

Rochester, once a prosperous home to corporate giants, currently mirrors many other post-industrial cities in the U.S., finding itself with strained budgets and an increasing percentage of low-wealth and ethnically diverse students, while at the same time competing against better-paying suburbs for qualified teachers. As the authors note, an induction and peer support program cannot, by itself, overcome many of the realities at work in the district. To make itself more attractive to prospective teachers, the district has recently put additional incentives in place, including higher salaries and paying for new teachers to obtain Master's degrees (a requirement for permanent certification in New York).

Across the nation, districts find they are in need of teachers because many experienced, competent staff members move on to other districts, or leave the profession entirely. Too often, they leave because of feelings that they have very little voice in their workplace, and not enough support within the school, or among their professional peers. This valuable study offers a concise account of what one urban district did to manage a persistent problem that looms large in districts great and small, inner-city or rural. By offering teachers guidance, assistance, and recognition at successive stages of their careers, the CIT program established by Rochester offers a model of how viable professional career ladders are created, supported, and sustained.

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1

Introduction

Teaching has long been described as an unstaged career (Lortie, 1975). A teacher's job is likely to be much the same on the first day of her first year as it is on the last day of her twentieth year. But in Rochester, New York, a school district of about 38,000 students and 3,500 teachers, things are different. The Rochester school district and the Rochester Teachers Association (RTA), have created a four-step career path for teachers that includes mentoring for new teachers; peer assistance and review of new and veteran teachers; and leadership roles for highly qualified, experienced teachers.

At a time when districts all over the country are seeking ways to support and retain beginning teachers; provide professional development to more experienced teachers; use the expertise of their most accomplished teachers; and establish effective processes to deal with the problem of teachers whose performance is not up to standard, Rochester's Career in Teaching Plan provides a model.

The Rochester Career in Teaching Plan (or CIT Program) designates four stages in a teacher's career: **intern, resident teacher, professional teacher**, and **lead teacher**. Rochester gives these four roles real substance by providing programmatic supports and professional opportunities at each level.

An **intern** is a teacher who is new to the Rochester district and who may or may not have previous teaching experience. Some new hires

with experience elsewhere may skip the intern stage. The stage generally lasts for a year, during which time interns receive intensive mentoring. A teacher may be required to spend a second year as an intern if she is not deemed ready to become a resident teacher.

A **resident** is a teacher who has completed the intern stage, but who does not yet have tenure. A teacher may remain at the resident level for up to four years if he continues to meet professional standards. Teachers are expected to acquire tenure and a master's degree during residency. Residents may participate in the professional support program, a voluntary peer assistance program for teachers who request help to improve their teaching.

A **professional teacher** has tenure and permanent New York State certification. A teacher may choose to remain at this level for the duration of her career. Professional teachers also have the opportunity to participate in professional support and can elect to participate in the Performance Appraisal Review for Teachers (PART), an alternative to traditional evaluation of tenured teachers. If they are experiencing severe professional problems, they may also be recommended for the intervention program, which makes mentors available to assist them in their classrooms.

Lead teacher status is designed, according to the contract between the district and the union, to "provide opportunities to highly qualified teachers for professional advancement, growth, and leadership while remaining in the teaching profession." Lead teachers are selected through a competitive process and receive additional pay for taking on mentoring assignments or other additional responsibilities. Teachers selected as lead teachers have the opportunity to serve as mentors for interns, or as mentors for experienced teachers through the professional support and intervention programs.

The contract between the district and the RTA also provides that teachers who complete the certification process of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) will be reimbursed by the district for the costs of certification application fees, and that successful completion of NBPTS certification requirements will be considered as a special qualification for lead teacher eligibility.

As part of the Career in Teaching Plan, Rochester has developed a set of professional expectations for its teachers that echo those of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. These expectations (see below) guide the assessment of all district teachers, from interns on up. When the professional practice of Rochester teachers is evaluated, they are judged either to "meet professional expectations" or fail to meet them.

Professional Expectations for Teachers

Pedagogy: Teachers are committed to their students and provide for effective, worthwhile, student-centered learning.

Content: Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to develop content-related skills, knowledge, understanding, and attitudes in students.

Human Development/Social Context: Teaching reflects deep understanding of human development - the range of social, cultural, emotional, and cognitive dimensions which affect students and schools.

Management: Teachers construct and manage a safe, responsive learning environment.

Professional Development: Teachers think systematically about their practice and are members of learning communities.

School Quality: Teachers have a professional, collegial responsibility to contribute to the improvement of school quality and to student learning.

Home Involvement: Teachers reach beyond the school to make connections with students' homes and families in order to provide a school experience that addresses the needs and interests of each child.

Community Relationships: Teachers support the education of their students by establishing appropriate community relationships.

Responsibility to the Profession: Teachers contribute to promoting and enhancing the profession.

3

District Context

In 1999-2000, Rochester enrolled 38,261 students in grades kindergarten through 12, making it the third-largest school district in the state, after New York City and Buffalo. Enrollment is increasing steadily, by a total of more than 3,000 students since 1994-1995. Sixty percent of the district's student body is African American, 20% is white, and 18% Hispanic. The remaining 2% is composed of students of Asian, Pacific Islander, and Native American descent. As of the Fall of 1997, 89.2% of Rochester's students were entitled to a free or reduced-price lunch (New York State Department of Education, 1999). In comparison, only one of the six community school districts in New York City's borough of the Bronx had a higher rate of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch.

In 1998-99, the district employed 2,932 teachers, about 79% of them white, and about 350 administrators.

History of the Career in Teaching Plan

The Rochester Career in Teaching Plan is part of a movement that began in the 1980s, when more collaborative union-management relations came to the fore and teachers' unions began actively to seek an expanded role for themselves in ensuring and monitoring the quality of the teaching force. By 1991, union leadership was "employing an expanded public vocabulary-professionalism, accountability, productivity, outcomes, achievement, results-to describe the purpose of their organization and the work of their members. Union leadership [was] asking, and attempting to answer, questions such as, 'What is good teaching?,' 'What does accountability mean in education?,' and 'How do we measure educational productivity?'" (Koppich, 1991)

In a number of school districts across the country, this new union orientation led to the establishment of peer assistance and review programs, most of which became part of collective bargaining agreements. Such programs sought to recognize a legitimate role for teachers in establishing and/or enforcing standards in their own profession. Programs established in Toledo, Cincinnati, and Cleveland, Ohio; in Minneapolis, Minnesota; in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and in Rochester, share certain characteristics. They all:

- Provide assistance and/or review to new teachers and/or to tenured teachers who were not performing at acceptable levels;
- Establish a process for identifying and training qualified teachers to provide peer assistance and/or review;
- Dedicate resources to implementing the program;
- Provide the union with at least an equal voice in the policies, practices, and decisions involved in the implementation and evaluation of the program; and
- Establish safeguards to due process, should dismissal or other disciplinary action be necessary. (American Federation of Teachers, 1998)

Rochester's Career in Teaching Plan began in 1987, with a ground-breaking teachers' contract that attracted national media attention. The contract raised experienced teachers' salaries by 40% over a three-year period and beginning teachers' salaries by 52% over the same period. Rochester's teachers would be the highest-paid city teachers in the country. Although it was the teacher salaries in the contract that the news articles focused on, the contract's other provisions were perhaps more revolutionary. The contract, which sought to restructure the career of teachers in Rochester and to give them a prominent role in monitoring their profession, was the result of a meeting of minds between the then superintendent, Peter McWalters, and the union president, Adam Urbanski.

The 1987 contract created the peer review program and gave accomplished teachers - called "lead teachers" - a significant role in evaluating new teachers and teachers whose performance was in serious question. This contract provision was not without controversy. Indeed, the Association of Supervisors and Administrators of Rochester filed suit in state court to undo this aspect of the contract, claiming that mentor teachers were performing supervisory and administrative tasks that had always been, and should remain, the province of administrators. The court ruled against the administrators saying that the program did not have a "harmful" effect on administrators. (Rodman, 1987)

In 2001, 13 years and three school superintendents later (but with the same union president), the Career in Teaching Plan, included in every teachers' contract since 1987, has grown enormously.

This monograph describes the program as it currently exists in the Rochester public schools.

Chapter 2 describes the mentor/intern program for teachers who are new to the district.

Chapter 3 describes the professional support program for experienced teachers who seek extra guidance and support, and the intervention program for tenured teachers whose professional practice is in serious jeopardy.

Chapter 4 describes the alternative evaluation, or PART, program for teachers whose practice is not in question.

Chapter 5 describes the governance of the Career in Teaching Plan.

Chapter 6 describes Rochester's efforts to involve parents in evaluating teacher performance.

Chapter 7 provides an analysis of the program's effects.

We have not attempted here to evaluate Rochester's Career in Teaching Plan, rather to describe and analyze the program in order to give a clear picture of what it means to have a career in teaching in Rochester.

2

The Mentor/Intern Program

Ask almost any experienced teacher about her first year of teaching, and you are likely to hear about a year of great stress, turmoil, and doubts about the decision to become a teacher. The costs of this stress go beyond the teacher and her first class of students. Nationally, 19% of teachers leave the profession after the first year, and several studies estimate that 30% leave within five years (Henke, Chen, and Geis, 2000; Grissmer and Kirby, 1987; Haggstrom, Darling-Hammond, and Grissmer, 1987; and Murnane, Singer, Willet, Kemple, and Olsen, 1991).

Rochester's mentor/intern program attempts to change this situation. Its goals, according to the *1999-2000 Handbook for Interns*, are to:

- inspire individual and professional excellence;
- induct newly hired teachers into the district, the profession, and the community;
- communicate to interns the district's mission and values;
- assist interns in developing and refining their pedagogical skills and in handling their other responsibilities;
- help interns to develop the skills necessary to work effectively in an urban environment; and
- encourage interns to develop collegial relationships (Rochester City School District, 1999).

Unstated in the handbook, but embedded in the program, are two other important goals: to retain interns who promise to become

competent teachers, and to counsel out those who are unsuited to the profession. The overarching goal of the mentor/intern program is improving the quality of instruction. New teachers are provided with a year of supported induction. At the end of that year, mentors evaluate their interns' professional practice and play a key role in determining whether they become second-year teachers.

How does it all work? Perhaps the best way to understand the program is to look at how two mentors spend their days. Susan Salzman, a high school English teacher, is what Rochester calls a "traditional" mentor; she teaches three courses rather than the normal five and mentors four first-year teachers, two at her own school and two at two other schools. Donna Proietti, a kindergarten teacher, is a "school-based" mentor. Her two interns are at her own school and she has a full teaching load.

A Day in the Lives of Two Mentors

It's 8:30 on a Tuesday morning in late September and the 29 students in Susan Salzman's tenth-grade English class at Rochester's School of the Arts, known in the district as SOTA, take their seats around five tables. Salzman arrived at school at 7 a.m. to prepare for the day. The class will soon be starting a unit on short stories from different countries. Today, in preparation, they'll be doing some research on those countries. Salzman gives each table a packet of information on a country and a set of directions. The students' task is to prepare an oral report to the class on the country that has been assigned to their group. Students divide up the task and begin taking notes on various aspects of their country. Salzman circulates among the tables, answering questions, observing, pointing students in the right direction. At about 9:50 she reminds the groups to collect their materials and put them back in their folders. Class is nearly over. They will continue the next time the class meets, in two days. Classes at SOTA are block scheduled, lasting an hour and twenty minutes and meeting on alternate days.

A few minutes later, at 10 a.m., Salzman's senior advanced placement English class arrives. They begin with a review of literary terms they've been learning. Salzman reads five definitions aloud, pausing to allow students time to write down the term that goes with each definition. They go over the correct answers: caesura, onomatopoeia, denotation, blank verse, and hubris.

The class has just finished its study of Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis*. Today they'll begin *Beowulf*. Salzman gives them some background on medieval life, painting a picture of people gathered in a castle in the evening to listen to an itinerant storyteller. She tells the students that people then liked some of the same kind of stories that people like now - action adventures with superheroes.

She gives out copies of the first page of *Beowulf* in the original Old English and plays a recording of it. The students listen to the tape twice and Salzman asks them to talk with the other students at their table about what they heard, to see if they can draw any conclusions about the poem. Students talk about the meter, they notice some alliteration, some caesuras–breaks in the middle of the line. Salzman asks them if any of the words made sense. They make some guesses about words that are close to modern English.

Then Salzman gives out a page with the first 11 lines of the poem in the original, along with two different modern translations of these lines. She asks the students what they think about the translations. Students notice that the first is more faithful to the poetic elements of the original, but not very good at conveying the meaning in a way they can understand. The second is much clearer meaning-wise, but has lost some of the poetry. "What do you think about these modifications?" Salzman asks the class. After a brief discussion, they go on to read and discuss the first section of the poem in a third translation, the one they'll be using to read the poem.

Class ends at about 11:20 and Salzman takes a few minutes to straighten her room and put books away. She has no more classes to teach today, but it's far from the end of her day.

Salzman has been teaching in the Rochester school district for nearly thirty years. In 1999 she became a National Board Certified Teacher, certified in Adolescent and Young Adult English Language Arts. Her framed certificate hangs on her classroom wall, next to her diplomas, a B.A. from the State University of New York (SUNY) Buffalo, and a Master of Library Science from SUNY Geneseo. This is her first year as a mentor and she loves it. "I love sharing knowledge," she explains. "I like the collegiality. This is allowing me to work with others."

She rushes off to the English Department to meet Hanna Trooboff, one of her SOTA interns, for lunch. They take out their sandwiches and plunge right into their discussion. Salzman asks, "What happened with the eighth grade? You planned out the different segments; did that go well?"

"We read aloud; I thought it went well. And my seventh graders were good. Did you notice the new room arrangement?" Trooboff has rearranged the tables and chairs in her room after a suggestion by Salzman that a different arrangement might strengthen her classroom management.

"Is it better?" Salzman asks.

"I don't know," Trooboff tells her. "Their book bags end up in the aisles."

"Give this way another week," Salzman advises. "You can always change it."

They switch gears to discuss a new unit that Trooboff is planning on gods and titans. She shows Salzman a sheet of questions that she has prepared on the reading.

"I don't know if I should do it as a group," Trooboff says.

"Why not have them work in pairs?" Salzman suggests.

"Should I give them each a copy of the questions?"

"It depends," Salzman tells her. "Make one for each student and tell them they can work with a partner. That way they won't have to copy the questions."

"Is it a reasonable goal to finish the story by the end of the week?" Trooboff asks.

"Get through as much as you can today," Salzman tells her.

Salzman asks, "What happened with the sub plans?" Trooboff takes out three emergency lessons the school requires that she prepare in case she's absent.

"Do you think I need another copy of the story to include?"

"It's lovely the way it is. Just turn it in," Salzman tells her.

"I thought it was a big deal," Trooboff says.

"No," says Salzman.

The lunch period is nearly over and Trooboff goes off to prepare for her next class. Salzman takes a few minutes to go and see the tenth-grade guidance counselor about a schedule problem that's affecting some tenth-graders.

Then it's time for Salzman to leave SOTA to go to SHAPE (Senior H.S. Alternative Program of Education), to see Ira Kessel, her intern there. Although Kessel is new to Rochester, he's not a new teacher. He taught for five years in California.

SHAPE is a program for students who have gotten into serious trouble at their home school. They go to SHAPE for ten weeks for behavior modification and then return to their regular high school. In these first few weeks of the school year, the student load is light. The next ten-week session is expected to bring many more students.

Salzman has arrived at SHAPE in time to talk with Kessel before his next class, which she'll observe. They discuss his classes, what he's planning to teach in the coming weeks, and his adjustment to Rochester. Salzman gives Kessel a needs assessment form that the program has developed to fill out. Kessel explains that he'll be doing a poetry lesson with the class that starts in a few minutes. He gives Salzman the lesson plan he has prepared.

Four students, three boys and a girl, come in the room, none with a notebook or a book. There are many more desks than students, and they take seats far from each other. On the blackboard there's a "warm-up" for the students to do. They are to write two metaphors and two similes. One student doesn't have a pencil. Kessel switches tactics. "We'll do it orally," he tells the group. "What's a metaphor?" he asks.

Two students say they don't know, but one finally responds. "Dreams are a river with many streams," he says.

"Very good," Kessel tells him.

Kessel gives the students copies of a poem by Sandra Cisneros, "Four Skinny Trees." One student reads the poem aloud and then Kessel begins asking them questions about it. It's hard to get a response. The students seem depressed, unengaged. Kessel, trying hard to coax answers from the students, ends up doing most of the talking.

When the class is over, Kessel comes over to where Salzman is sitting and takes a seat. "How do you feel with a class like this?" she asks him.

"A little annoyed," Kessel tells her.

Salzman asks him if the school's director has mandated that lessons be structured in a certain way. Kessel says that she hasn't.

"I'm just wondering," Salzman says, "since you're in a nontraditional class in a nontraditional school, do you want to experiment with teaching in a nontraditional way? You've only got four kids, what else could you do?"

"I'm still feeling my way," Kessel answers. "I prefer the Socratic method, but with these kids, it's like pulling teeth."

Salzman asks whether anyone in the school is addressing the students' organizational skills. "They're coming without paper, without books," she observes. "You might check to see if the other teachers are using any kind of a system about notebooks and supplies that could go across teachers. Someone should be addressing the basic organizational skills. Having a notebook, writing down assignments."

"Why are the students so reluctant?" Salzman probes. "They're not unintelligent. Why don't they want to work with you?"

Kessel tells her that the students don't want to show they have brains.

"One thing you can do," Salzman suggests, "is talk a little slower."

Kessel tells her that he's ordered some novels for the class, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X, The Count of Monte Cristo*, and *Invisible Man*. Salzman suggests adding *The Contender* by Robert Lipsyte, for those who need an easier book. "You may have more success with young adult fiction," she advises. "I'll put together a bibliography for you."

Salzman tells him that she's reluctant to make many suggestions at this stage; she needs to understand the program better. They agree that next week, when Salzman comes again, they'll go over the needs assessment.

It's nearly 2:30 p.m. and Salzman gets back in her car to return to SOTA. She needs to check her mailbox and messages, prepare for her class the next day, catch up on her mentor paperwork, and check in with Trooboff and her other SOTA intern to see how their day went. She'll head home around 4 p.m.

A few blocks away from SOTA, at School #58, Donna Proietti's day begins at 8 a.m. Proietti teaches kindergarten and her first hour is spent setting up for the day and conferring with her student teacher. By 9 a.m., there are 20 very lively five-year-olds in her classroom.

Proietti has a full day ahead of her. In addition to teaching her own class, she will observe lessons taught by her two interns and then meet with each of them to discuss the observations. She is expecting a substitute teacher to show up soon, which will allow her to leave for brief periods. Proietti is pleased that the CIT program now has its own pool of substitute teachers - a great improvement, she feels, over the past, when she rarely knew who would be teaching her students when she wasn't there, or even whether she could get a substitute when she needed one. CIT has three substitute elementary teachers; Proietti can call and schedule in advance, even for part of a day. This arrangement allows her to visit each of her interns a couple of times a week, to observe different lessons and get a fuller picture of their teaching.

First, though, she needs to get her own class under way. The children gather on a rug at the front of the room. Proietti and her student teacher lead the children in a song about dates and days of the week, followed by a discussion about the day's weather. Then there is a lesson on numbers, using straws to show the number of days school has been in session, to teach the children about 10s and 1s.

In her teaching, Proietti tries to connect the curriculum to her students' lives, using a weekly theme. This week's theme is "colors and shapes in our world." After she reads a book called *Round Is a Pancake* to the class, Proietti asks the children to think of things that are round. The children illustrate their own booklets about things that are round, which they'll read with a family member for homework. Outreach to families is an important part of Proietti's teaching. She sends the "Kindergarten News" home with the

children each week. The newsletter reviews the lessons of the previous week; outlines the theme, lessons, and homework (much of which calls for family involvement) for the current week; gives a preview of the next week's theme; and includes reminders about events like open house.

The substitute teacher arrives at 9:30. Proietti introduces her to the children, who are meeting her for the first time. They've made buttons with their names on them so that she will know their names. She and Proietti confer while Proietti's student teacher continues with the lesson.

At 10:00, Proietti goes to observe Alyson Blowers, a first-grade intern teacher. Blowers did her student teaching at School 58; after she graduated last year, she was a long-term substitute teacher there. Her classroom, while smaller than Proietti's, has a similar atmosphere, with discrete spaces for different activities. She has a rug at the front of the room just like the one in Proietti's classroom, where her 20 students are now sitting.

Blowers has hit on the idea of having the children take turns pretending to be the day's weather reporter, using an imaginary microphone, which gives them opportunities to practice public speaking and lead class discussion about the weather. She did it herself once in jest, and her students liked it and asked to do it themselves. Perhaps because she has more experience than many new teachers, Blowers seems confident and relaxed.

Blowers begins a lesson on the five senses. First the students sing a song about the senses that they've made up, sung to the tune of B-I-N-G-O. Then they read a book about the five senses. Next, Blowers has them sit in a circle. She brings out several paper bags that hold things like paper clips and uncooked rice. She passes these around and asks the children to reach into them without looking and guess the contents, using their sense of touch.

It's 10:45 and time for Proietti to leave Blowers' classroom to go to intern Stacey Galvano's second-grade class. Galvano's students are sitting in rows at their desks; she stands at the front of the class finishing up a review of consonant clusters and blends. Then she gives out paper and begins a writing lesson. Galvano is teaching the children to use webs -diagrams for organizing their thoughts-and asks them to develop rough drafts putting those thoughts together. It's a challenging lesson, and some of the children seem to have difficulty with it. Galvano goes from child to child, and Proietti gets up to help. When the children all seem to be able to work independently, Galvano and Proietti talk quietly about the lesson as the children write.

At 11:30, Proietti leaves Galvano's classroom to go back to her own class. Soon it's lunchtime. The teachers at School 58 decided this year to take on lunchroom duty themselves, because there had been a lot of difficulty getting good lunchroom aides and lunchtime had become chaotic. Proietti and her student teacher spend the entire half hour opening food containers and cleaning up spills. They're barely able to eat their own lunch. In the middle of cleaning up something sticky, Proietti half-jokingly says, "I think I'm going to rethink this next year."

Back in Proietti's classroom, it's choice time. The children make bee-lines to different sections of the room. Some go straight to the bookshelves and start reading. Others sit at tables, drawing or playing with toys or manipulatives. One boy quietly arranges and rearranges colored tiles. Proietti comes over to compliment the way he is making patterns, just like they talked about in class. Several children organize a game that involves cooking plastic breakfast on a toy stove and serving each other.

At 1:00, Proietti meets with Blowers. It's Blowers' break time. Proietti asks questions about the lesson she observed and the students, compliments Blowers on the way she

engaged the children's interest and her clarity about expectations, and offers advice on organizing the straws Blowers uses to teach counting and on storing snacks to keep them from attracting insects. They discuss alternative strategies and ways to build on the lessons Proietti observed. Blowers tells Proietti that the paper bags sparked experimentation on the part of the children; someone came up with the idea of weighing the bags and they discovered that the rice was heavier. She plans to encourage the children's curiosity and talk with them about using weight and feel as just two of the clues they can use to figure out what is in the bags.

Proietti compliments her on her voice inflection in class and the fact that students respect her because she doesn't talk down to them. Blowers responds, "Well, they're little people." Proietti asks Blowers to let her know when she plans to teach a phonics lesson so that she can schedule the substitute teacher and do an observation.

From 1:30 to 2:00, Proietti meets with Galvano during her break time. Proietti has some suggestions about classroom management and cooperative grouping to get students to help each other. Galvano also has a lot of questions and issues she wants to get Proietti's advice on. "I'm a sponge," she tells Proietti. Galvano finds the end of the day a challenge because the children have PE then, making it difficult to assign homework and wrap up on time. Proietti suggests changing the time of day of some housekeeping tasks, and promises to think of some other strategies.

Galvano hasn't been given any social studies or science curriculum or materials. Proietti says she'll give her a science curriculum and that she'll check on social studies materials. She urges Galvano to supplement the science textbook. She tells Galvano that as a new teacher, she can bring new ideas to the school. "Books are fine," she tells her, "but you should supplement them with hands-on activities to make it more meaningful for the children."

Proietti makes suggestions related to part of Galvano's language arts lesson, about consonant clusters and blends; she suggests integrating consonant clusters with fire safety (it's fire safety month). She compliments Galvano on the writing workshop and her use of webs. She suggests ways that Galvano might build on the webs, getting the children to craft sentences that add information about when, why, how, and where, until they've built paragraphs.

Proietti returns to her own classroom at 2:00 and teaches a social studies lesson on getting along with others. She uses the felt board to illustrate a story called "Shapetown." In the story, each group of shapes thinks they're better than the other shapes. They tease and fight among themselves until they realize that it's okay to be different. Eventually, they learn to get along with shapes that are different from themselves. Toward the end of the afternoon, the class goes outside for recess, during which Proietti and her student teacher tie a lot of shoes and dry a few tears.

Proietti is very pleased to be a school-based mentor this year; in the previous three years she mentored teachers at other schools. "I enjoy having interns in my own school," she says, "because we're able to connect on a daily basis." And because she teaches such young children, it's very important to her to be in the classroom full time. School-based mentoring allows her to spend the majority of her time with her kindergarten class.

"Mentoring keeps my own teaching constantly revitalized," Proietti says. "I get lots of ideas from my interns." An added benefit of being a school-based mentor is that she also gets to see many of her former students in interns' classes. "I get to see the progress they've made," she explains.

Becoming a Mentor

In order to mentor an intern teacher, a teacher must have achieved lead teacher status. Lead teachers are chosen through a competitive application and interview process. According to the contract, lead teachers must meet the following criteria:

- at least seven years of successful classroom teaching experience and/or direct student contact;
- proven ability to work successfully with students who have the greatest needs;
- demonstrated outstanding classroom teaching ability (or direct student contact);
- demonstrated effective written and oral communication skills;
- demonstrated ability to work cooperatively and effectively with other professional staff members; and
- evidence of professional growth.

In addition, candidates for lead teacher status must demonstrate commitment to improving student outcomes, knowledge and use of community support systems, involvement in professional activities, demonstrated parent communication skills, and evidence of leadership skills.

The first step in becoming a lead teacher is the submission of a written application to the CIT Panel, the program's governing body (see Chapter 5). Applicants must include a résumé documenting their teaching experience, and a statement of intent describing reasons for applying for lead teacher status, experience and training that qualify the applicant for the position, and the nature of professional growth opportunities in which the teacher has participated. In addition, applicants must submit five confidential letters of reference: one from their principal, one from the Rochester Teachers Association (RTA) representative at their school, two from teachers in the district, and one from some other person - a parent, student, or colleague - knowledgeable about the applicant's professional practice. The recommendation letters must include information about the applicant's success in classroom instruction and ability to engage students of different backgrounds; ongoing professional development and evidence of professional growth; interpersonal skills, including interaction with parents and other adults; leadership qualities; and ability to communicate orally and in writing.

The CIT Panel reviews the applications and interviews all the applicants who meet the minimum requirements. These applicants are then interviewed by a pair of CIT Panel members–one a teacher, the other an administrator. Often,

the interview team also includes a teacher or supervisor who is knowledgeable about the discipline. In 1999-2000, most Panel members were involved in 16 to 18 interviews.

The Panel's interview protocol includes the following questions:

- Please provide us with specific examples of your success in working with students from different backgrounds and with differing abilities.
- How would you define your teaching success in terms of the professional expectations?
- What is your philosophy of teaching? How would you advise an intern whose philosophy was different from yours?
- On what basis would you recommend a decision for continuation or termination of an intern?

The interview generally also includes a question that is specific to the certification area of the applicant.

The CIT Panel as a whole makes the final decision about lead teacher status, based on the written materials and the interviewers' assessments. In 1999-2000, 92 teachers applied to become lead teachers in Fall 2000; about 75 will be selected.

Becoming a lead teacher does not guarantee a mentoring assignment. That is, not all lead teachers are "activated." Whether or not a lead teacher is activated as a mentor depends in great part on matching mentors to interns. Because the program is committed to providing interns with mentors in their areas of certification and, in the case of elementary school teachers, at their grade level if possible, whether a lead teacher is needed depends on who is hired.

Mentors have case loads ranging from one to four interns (and now in a few cases, as many as five), and it is the job of Carl O'Connell, the program's coordinator, to match each intern to a mentor. O'Connell works from hiring sheets provided by the Human Resources office. He also phones principals with vacancies to get an even earlier alert about whether a position has been filled. Since hiring goes on throughout the summer and even into the Fall months, assigning interns to mentors is not a simple job. Some mentors will be activated in June and others may wait until September for an assignment, while still others may not be activated at all.

Mentors serve a term of two years and may reapply, so O'Connell's pool of mentors includes both experienced and newly designated lead teachers. About half of all mentors' terms expire each year. In 2000, of the 82 mentors whose terms were up, 51 (62%) reapplied. Some who did not reapply retired from

teaching, six were advised by O'Connell not to reapply because of problems in their performance, and others simply decided to take a break from mentoring. O'Connell and Panel co-chair Tom Gillett handle the reapplication process.

Peer review programs operate on the principle that teachers ought to have opportunities to assume leadership roles without leaving teaching for administration. In most districts with such programs, teachers serve for a period of time (generally three years) as full-time mentors and then return to their classrooms. Rochester's program operates differently. Mentors remain full- or part-time in their classrooms while they serve as mentors. This arrangement ensures that mentors do not lose touch with the day-to-day realities of the classroom. It does, however, make the logistics of matching mentors and interns more challenging.

About 60% of Rochester's mentors are school-based. They receive a 5% supplement to their base pay as a teacher if they mentor one teacher in their school; 10% if they mentor two.

The remaining 40% of Rochester's mentors are "traditional" in Rochester's nomenclature, and receive a 10% supplement to their base pay if they have a full case load of four interns. Release time for traditional mentors at the secondary level is generally 40% of their teaching load, but may be less if a mentor is assigned fewer than four interns. The CIT plan pays for this release time by giving the school comparable funds to replace the teacher. It is part of O'Connell's matching process to call principals and negotiate the partial release of teachers. Generally, principals are cooperative, according to O'Connell, because the program is part of the contract and because they know that interns in their own schools will also receive mentoring.

At the elementary school level, the release time works differently. It is not usually possible to give an elementary teacher 20% or 40% release time. So instead, two lead teachers who are both mentors may share a class, with one of them teaching in the morning and the other in the afternoon, or with one teacher in the classroom the first half of the week and the other the second half. Thus, each is released half of the time. This works neatly if there are two mentors in the same elementary school who can be teamed in this way. If there are not, O'Connell arranges a transfer so that one mentor is transferred to the school of the other and the first school fills its vacant position with another teacher.

To effect this sort of transfer, the principals of both schools must agree, and a letter is sent to the parents of students in the shared class informing them of the arrangement. Although the arrangement is unusual, it does mean that the students in the class receive instruction from two highly qualified teachers. It

isn't always easy to share a class. O'Connell calls it a "yearlong marriage," but most of these marriages do survive.

Almost all of O'Connell's intern-mentor matches also work out. In 1999-2000, only eight out of 489 matches needed to be changed because of requests from both the mentor and the intern.

Experienced teachers apply to become lead teachers for a number of reasons. Certainly, the money is an inducement, ranging from about $3,000 a year for mentoring two interns to $6,000 a year for a full case load of four interns, depending on the mentor's base salary. But considering the many out-of-school hours most mentors spend on their assignments, it is not princely.

Now that the program has been in existence for 13 years, many lead teacher applicants have themselves been interns in the district and received mentoring. Of this year's crop of 92 lead teacher applicants, half participated in the program as interns. According to Panel members, many applicants talked in their interviews about the experience of being mentored. In becoming mentors, they want to provide the same kind of positive experience that they had to people joining the profession now.

For others, mentoring is a way to extend their influence. Marlene Blocker, a third-grade teacher who has been a mentor for four years, felt that she could "reach more kids by mentoring." Joanne Niemi, a middle school science teacher, was motivated by her work with student teachers to become a mentor. "I knew I liked helping new teachers," she says. In her first year as a mentor, one of her interns was a former student teacher of hers. Conversely, some want to mentor because they didn't receive mentoring and remember how hard their first year of teaching was. Tove Dettori, a middle school reading teacher who has been a mentor for two years and has reapplied for another term, remembers, "There was no help in the 1960s when I started. I was really isolated." Now, in her thirty-second year in the district, she says, "It's important to give something back to the district, to help new teachers." Jennifer Tomm DiPasquale, once an intern and now a Panel member, puts it another way: "This is my profession. I want to make sure [the new teachers] are ready."

Learning How to Mentor

New mentors attend a three-day training workshop that the program holds each August. The orientation, which is conducted by Carl O'Connell and several experienced mentors, provides mentors with an overview of their roles and responsibilities. It explains the records that they are required to keep and what to look for in an observation. New mentors learn about the research on

coaching and questioning techniques–how and when to offer praise and encouragement, and how to pose the hard questions designed to help interns think critically about their own practice. And they learn the fine points of formative and summative evaluation. The workshop also provides training in confidentiality and in relationships with administrators and colleagues.

Mentors, both new and experienced, are also assigned to a Panel member who monitors their work. Each Panel member has a caseload of between 12 and 15 mentors whom they observe at work at least once a year, and to whom they are available for advice.

Another support for mentors is Carl O'Connell, who is available to mentors by phone from morning until night and who makes many observations of mentors and interns. He helps mentors deal with situations ranging from finding a way to tell a new teacher that her clothing is inappropriate in the classroom to figuring out what to do about an intern with a drug problem. O'Connell also holds monthly meetings of all the mentors. At these meetings, there may be discussion of an upcoming report that is due, such as the first status report; O'Connell may present a report on the state of the program and its budget; or mentors may break into grade level and subject groups for discussions of problems and issues.

The Mentoring Relationship

Mentors and interns say that the relationship of intern and mentor is not one of student and teacher. "We're peers," says mentor John Camelio. "We provide support and development; we're not teaching a set of established skills."

The mentoring relationship begins for most interns at the very beginning of the school year. Reginald Simmons, a new middle school English and social studies teacher, got a note from his mentor in his mailbox on the opening day of school. Soon after, the mentor phoned. Cynthia Kerber, a new sixth grade teacher, remembers her first, brief phone conversation with her mentor before the beginning of the school year. The mentor asked her if she had any questions about her new teaching job and Kerber said no. "About an hour later," she recalls, "I called her back. 'I have a list now,' I said." It was a long conversation.

To determine how to focus their time together, the mentor and the intern assess the intern's strengths and weaknesses on such dimensions of the district's professional expectations as effectiveness in instructional planning, classroom management, presentation of subject matter, and comfort level in communicating with parents. They use a needs assessment form that the program has developed to do this. (See Appendix A for a copy of the form.)

Mentors observe each of their interns at least weekly and then talk with them about what they noticed. Tove Dettori, a traditional mentor who worked with four interns in 1999-2000, spent an afternoon a week with each. She observed the intern teaching and stayed until the end of the school day so that they could talk after school. Marlene Blocker followed a similar schedule, spending a morning with each of her interns. She used the fifth morning to work with anyone who needed more help. Mentor Joanne Niemi sees herself as a coach. "If there are things to correct, we correct them. If there are things to praise, we praise them." Marlene Blocker puts it similarly: "The mentor's job is to find the things that are going well and provide assistance with the things that need tuning." Interns also know that at the end of the year, mentors will prepare first-year evaluations of them.

Predictably, many new teachers struggle with classroom management. But mentoring in Rochester focuses on a mix of pedagogy and subject area content. It is for this reason that mentors and interns are matched by certification. "A good lesson can solve some of your management problems," Carl O'Connell observes. Rochester Teachers Association President Adam Urbanski describes the mentor's roles as "deliver[ing] professional development in the classroom...."

The weekly observation and follow-up discussion are at the heart of the program, but there is much more. Mentors help interns negotiate the system, from learning how to set up a grade book, to how to get materials, to knowing that "it's important to be friendly and kind to the secretary and custodian," as one mentor says. Tove Dettori helps the intern "to create a network of support in the building, to build alliances with peers."

CIT Panel member and former intern Jennifer Tomm DiPasquale relates her own first-year story:

> For my first [year], I was assigned to a portable [classroom]. When I got there, all I had were tables and chairs-no equipment, no supplies. My mentor came in with a bag of chalk, erasers, and pencils. This was survival. She got me through.

Bridgitte White, a first-year fourth-grade teacher, says that her mentor reminded her of meetings, advised her on how to divide her students into small groups, and assisted her with paperwork. "She helped me continue to be organized," White explained.

Interns and mentors describe extensive evening and weekend telephone contact and informal meetings. Sharon Delly, a school-based elementary school mentor, was assigned two interns in her building this year. "I saw my interns every day," she says, "sometimes three or four times a day." One of Delly's

students saw her with one of her interns and asked, "Is she your best friend?" "She's *one* of my best friends," Delly told her. "I knew it," the child responded, "because she's in our room every day."

"Being a mentor," says one former mentor, "isn't about filling out those forms that have to be turned in to the Panel."

> That's just the formality. It's about trying to figure out a teacher's whole job. You go into a classroom and look around, and you [make] some notes. But then you go away and try to figure out what's missing in this puzzle. A teacher might have all the parts. She might know the book and some technique she has learned, but it just doesn't flow. Teaching's like a dance. There's a rhythm to it. Sometimes it's not working. The rhythm's not there.

Mentors stress the importance of building a bond with their interns. "They have to learn to trust me," says mentor Edie Silver. "[I] need trust and understanding [so I can be] very direct about their teaching."

"My first task," says Silver, "is to make [the interns] feel comfortable, to help the find a system, a way of doing things, and a space." "Space" here is used both literally and figuratively. Mentors recognize that interns need physical space–a place to work in often overcrowded school buildings where first-year teachers are at the bottom of the pecking order and last in line for work room. New teachers also need mental space–permission to be reflective about their practice, and breathing room away from the press of every day activities.

Time for Mentoring

As mentioned earlier, some mentors are assigned exclusively to interns in their own building and have no release time; others have release time to mentor interns in several different schools. Some mentors find one system more congenial than the other. Marlene Blocker, who has done both, prefers the traditional model, which provides release time. Blocker feels that this system gives her much more time with her interns. As a school-based mentor, she had to give up her lunch or planning period to meet with her intern. Now, with release time, she says, "I can focus more on my own classroom."

School-based mentor Sharon Delly likes the school-based system for the freedom it gives her to see her interns daily. For Joanne Niemi, the school-based system has both strengths and weaknesses. For example, this year her schedule did not mesh with her intern's. They weren't free at the same time, so they had to use substitute days (discussed below) to meet. On the other hand, Niemi could meet regularly with the principal and the administrator of the "house" her intern was teaching in, because they were all working in the same building.

For intern Cynthia Kerber, her school-based mentor's accessibility was a definite plus. "I spent at least five hours a week asking her questions," she reports. "Things you don't want to ask an administrator."

In addition to the time they spend together during a regular school week, mentors and interns can draw on a pool of substitute days, known as CIT days, to hire substitutes for either or both of them. Officially, each pair has eight to ten days, but Carl O'Connell rarely turns down a request for additional days. Some mentor-intern pairs draw on these days very little or not at all.

The days can be used in a variety of ways. Sometimes they are used for a mentor and an intern to spend some extended time together free of classroom responsibilities. A school-based mentor whose schedule limits the time she can visit her intern's class may use a CIT day to spend some extra time observing her intern. Or a mentor may arrange for an intern to spend a day visiting a teacher at another school whose practice he thinks will be useful for his intern to see. The mentor and intern may even make such a visit together. CIT days are also used by interns for organized trips to learn about community resources, such as museums.

The Gatekeeper Role

Mentors in Rochester are coaches, offering support and advice to interns. They are also evaluators, whose assessments weigh heavily in the decision about whether an intern should continue to work in Rochester. Mentors submit their assessments of interns to the CIT Panel. Principals' evaluations of interns are submitted to the district human resources office. The CIT Panel recommends to the school board whether an intern should be promoted to resident teacher based on both evaluations.

What if there is a dispute between the mentor's recommendation and the principal's? This situation is rare, but it does happen. (In 1999-2000, only ten such cases came before the Panel.) "We take these up on a case-by-case basis," says Panel co-chair Tom Gillett. But if there is a disagreement, the mentor's view often prevails. "The principal has observed the intern about three times," says Gillett. "The mentor has been in that classroom dozens of times." Adds Panel member Jennifer DiPasquale, "If teachers don't want a teacher, why would an administrator?"

Because both mentor and principal are evaluating interns, establishing a professional relationship with each intern's supervisor is an important part of the mentor's role. Early in September, Joanne Niemi went to each of her interns' schools with a letter introducing herself to the principal. Tove Dettori also introduces herself to the principals at the beginning of the school year and

meets with them every couple of weeks. Once the principal has done a formal evaluation of the intern, Dettori asks "if there are any areas the principal feels the teacher needs to work on." On subsequent visits, she asks whether the principal has seen any improvement.

From the principal's side of the relationship, Michelle Hancock, Principal of School #5 and a former lead teacher, feels that communication with mentors is the key to making the program work. "I want to make sure that I meet every mentor," she says, "and outline my instructional game plan. I give them my checklists [for classroom practice] so they know what my expectations of teachers are." She gives each mentor her home phone number. "If you don't spend time with a mentor, some will give you a glowing report on a teacher you have concerns about."

There is a good deal of paperwork involved in the mentoring and evaluation process. Mentors keep extensive logs on their work with interns. They also submit formal intern status reports twice a year, in November and February, rating their interns in seven areas (see Appendix B for a copy of this form). Mentors may also submit an early warning report on an intern who they feel is having serious difficulties. This report may be completed at any time after the first status report. The early warning report asks for a description of the areas of difficulty, a summary of actions taken, and future outlook and additional support suggested.

The program has also developed a mid-year unsatisfactory report that is submitted by mid-January for interns who, in the opinion of the mentor, are failing to meet professional expectations in one or more areas. The form includes a place for the mentor to describe the perspective of the intern's immediate supervisor as well. Interns sign and write comments on this form. (See Appendix C for a copy of this form.)

The purpose of this form is three-fold. It formally alerts an intern that there is a problem, so that he is not taken unaware by an end-of-year unsatisfactory rating. It brings to the surface differences in the perspectives of the mentor and the supervisor that may need to be resolved. And it alerts the program that an intern (and his mentor) may need some extra support.

Support comes in a number of forms. Carl O'Connell, himself a former mentor, does about 200 intern observations a year and often observes interns at the request of their mentors. O'Connell also arranges for "spot checks"–intern observations by another mentor–when a mentor wants the advice and perspective of someone else. The mentor who does the spot check writes a report of the observation. Sometimes, with the cooperation of the union and the district's Human Resources office, O'Connell arranges for an intern to be

transferred to another school, if a transfer seems likely to help the situation. In 1999-2000, he arranged four such transfers. Sometimes, the program refers an intern to the Employee Assistance Program for problems such as drug or alcohol abuse.

When the performance of an intern seems unlikely to improve, the mentor and O'Connell will often try to counsel the intern out of teaching - in effect, to convince the intern to resign. In 1999-2000, 36 interns resigned during the year. Of these, 34 were counseled out by O'Connell. O'Connell sees the counseling out of interns as "the program at its best." He feels that it is better to counsel out an intern "if it's going nowhere" than to use a formal termination procedure that would take longer. With the cooperation of Human Resources, O'Connell is often able to offer an intern a month's pay if the intern signs a letter of immediate resignation.

What about the fact that mentors are union members and are sometimes recommending that other union members lose their jobs? Not a problem, say the mentors. A former mentor: "This person [the intern] is being called a teacher and is representing the union." Mentors are firm in their belief that teaching quality is the priority; job protection at all costs is not.

O'Connell provides the following advice to mentors who are faced with the responsibility of recommending or not recommending an intern for continued employment. "I ask them, would you want to teach next to that person for the rest of your career? Would you want your child to be in that class? If your answer to either question is no, don't recommend them."

At the end of the school year, mentors submit a final report on each of their interns. The form asks the mentor to describe the progress the intern made during the school year and, drawing on the mentor's logs and other records, the procedures the mentor employed to assist the intern. The report is signed by both the mentor and the intern.

How do administrators feel about sharing the evaluative function with lead teachers? Most principals are enthusiastic. One remembered the years before the program, when she was responsible for evaluating more than ten staff members each year. "You could not spend the quality time with interns that mentors spend with them," she says. For this principal, "the program represents the finest teachers being available to new teachers. Given the multiple responsibilities an administrator has, [intensive mentoring of new teachers] is an impossibility. I don't have the time."

Marie Cianca, a principal who has been on the CIT Panel, is also very positive about the program. "With all the responsibilities you have as a principal," she says, "it's nice to know that new teachers are getting the help they need."

Robert Pedzich, principal of Franklin School, agrees. "Mentors will spend an incredible amount of time with a new teacher," he says. "Mentors, because they're in a classroom, have a certain credibility with colleagues. When both sides, administrator and mentor, agree that there's a problem, it's something the intern has to look at more closely." Pedzich finds that some mentors are harder on interns than an administrator would be.

Mentors are not permitted to talk to principals about what they see in interns' classrooms. One principal feels that this commitment to confidentiality creates a barrier to communication. "I show the mentors my observation reports, but I never see theirs," she says. From the point of view of the program coordinator, however, confidentiality is essential. It enables the mentors to establish a relationship of trust with their interns, where the intern feels free to discuss problems and concerns. It also ensures that the mentors are able to develop independent assessments of the interns for whom they are responsible.

According to Carl O'Connell, a few administrators in the district still don't like the fact that mentors evaluate interns. These administrators may be supportive of the mentoring that the program provides, but not the evaluation role played by the mentors. But O'Connell believes that assessment is a critical part of the mentor's role. "It gives the mentors status, influence, and a reason to take on the role," he explains.

Evaluation of Mentors

Just as interns' work is carefully monitored and evaluated by the program, so is that of the mentors. Mentors annually complete written self-evaluations. They assess what they have done in their mentor role, ways in which their efforts have helped their interns reach professional expectations, their own strengths and weaknesses as mentors, and changes that might be made in the program to make the mentor role more effective.

In addition, twice during the year, interns complete status reports on their mentors (see Appendix D for a copy of this form) that assess and describe their mentors' work with them. Administrators in the schools where mentors are assigned also complete a report in which they appraise each mentor's activities in their building, and provide their perception of the mentor's relationship with the interns, administrators, other teachers, and support staff in the school.

Finally, as mentioned earlier, mentors are observed annually by a Panel member, usually as they hold a post-observation discussion with an intern; the Panel member then submits a written report of the observation to the Panel.

Only rarely are there serious problems with a mentor's performance. Two years ago, Carl O'Connell had to remove a mentor from his position. "The mentor," says O'Connell, "was not honest or professional with his intern. And he was gone."

Coordinating the Program

Carl O'Connell, the program's coordinator, has overall responsibility for the day-to-day running of the program. He is assisted by a full-time secretary. Until 1999-2000, O'Connell taught ninth-grade history in the morning and coordinated the program in the afternoon. However, when by the end of September the number of interns had reached 350, it was apparent that the program needed a full-time coordinator, and O'Connell was released entirely from his teaching duties.

His responsibilities include:

- organizing materials for the CIT Panel, such as new mentor applications and cases of discrepancies between mentor and administrator recommendations of interns;
- observing interns;
- taking phone calls from mentors, interns, and administrators;
- matching mentors to interns;
- preparing mentor and intern handbooks;
- negotiating with principals for release time and transfers of mentors;
- attending meetings of the CIT Panel;
- preparing reports on the program for the union president and the superintendent; and
- maintaining program records, including a database.

Program Outcomes

One way to measure the success of the mentor/intern program is to look at teacher retention rates. The district estimates that before the mentor/intern program began, the retention rate of new teachers three to five years after their initial hire was 65%. Much higher percentages of teachers have been retained since the program began (see Table 1).

TABLE 1
RETENTION RATES FOR MENTORED TEACHERS IN THE ROCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT AS OF JUNE 1998

Entry Year	Number of Years of Teaching as of June 1998	Percentage Remaining in Teaching in June 1998
1986	12	91%
1987	11	88%
1988	10	95%
1989	9	95%
1990	8	89%
1991	7	83%
1992	6	81%
1993	5	86%
1994	4	88%
1995	3	83%
1996	2	76%
1997	1	83%

Rochester's five-year retention rate of 86% in 1998 is considerably higher than the 70% that researchers estimate as a national average. And the retention rates for teachers who entered teaching in Rochester in the first five years of the CIT Plan (those who had been teaching between eight and 12 years in 1998) are truly spectacular. For example, in 1998, 95% of those who had entered teaching in Rochester ten years earlier who had participated in the mentoring program were still teaching there.

In June 2000, of the 489 interns who began teaching in Rochester the previous Fall, 91% remained at the end of the school year. Two percent were not recommended for rehire and seven percent resigned (most of these were counseled out.)

Value of the Program

Overall, for interns, the value of the program goes beyond the concrete and easily definable. For Bridgitte White, mentoring helped her to set high expectations. "If you don't have someone to lift you up," she explains, "you might settle for less or give up. I knew that someone would be there to support me. I don't have the experience to be the teacher I want to be. I've got thirty kids who need me. I need my mentor."

Mentors find that the program affects their own teaching as well. Joanne Niemi feels that being a mentor "makes me constantly reevaluate and reassess what I do." For Tove Dettori, "Mentoring is a two-way street," since interns share ideas and information from their teacher education programs that give Dettori new ideas for her own classroom. Marlene Blocker also feels that working with interns is revitalizing to her own practice. "It's almost like going to college again each year," she says, "because they always have new ideas."

Mentors also value their connection to other mentors. "When I go to mentor meetings," Joanne Niemi says, "and look around at other mentors, the commonality is a passion for children and for teaching children. You look around the room and you don't see any slouches."

Bridgitte White summed up the benefits of the mentoring program in Rochester in June of her first year of teaching. "Coming into teaching," she said, "you don't know what to expect. I'm leaving [for the summer] on such a good note. I've had such a good experience with this program that I'm leaving rewarded that I've accomplished so much. I thought I'd be burnt out, but I'm not. I'm ready to begin again."

Newly employed teachers shall be considered Intern Teachers. Every effort shall be made to assign Intern Teachers a CIT mentor for their first year with the District. Newly employed teachers who have had previous teaching experience may be excluded from Internship and assigned Resident status by the decision of the Joint Governing Panel.

Intern Teachers shall by evaluated by their supervisors using the existing teacher evaluation forms and procedures. Intern Teachers will also be monitored and evaluated by their CIT Lead Teacher/Mentors.

At the end of the internship period, the CIT Joint Governing Panel is responsible for making recommendations as to the continued employment and advancement to Resident level of each intern to the Superintendent and the RTA President.

Excerpts from Section 52 of the Contractual Agreement Between the City School District of Rochester, New York and the Rochester Teachers Association, July 1, 2000 - June 30, 2002.

3

Professional Support and Intervention

The Rochester Career in Teaching Plan also provides for teachers to receive support and assistance from colleagues on a voluntary basis when they encounter a challenge in their teaching that they cannot meet alone. Known as Professional Support, this component of the program opens the door to professional consultation by lead teachers for resident and professional teachers.

The Plan also provides a way for professional teachers who have been identified as having serious performance problems to receive peer assistance and review by lead teachers. This component of the CIT program is known as Intervention.

Professional Support

An elementary school teacher is assigned to a grade she has never taught before. A history teacher changes schools and finds that lessons that worked with the students at his old school fall flat at the new one. A math teacher is scheduled to teach geometry for the first time and feels unprepared. In many schools and districts, teachers in these sorts of situations struggle in isolation. They tend not to talk about problems in their classrooms or ask for help from colleagues. But there are times in nearly every teacher's career when he or she could use assistance. Whether the challenge is a new grade or subject assignment, a particularly difficult class, or an emerging but not

quite developed notion about new instructional strategies, consulting with colleagues can often make a seemingly intractable problem manageable.

CIT makes it not just acceptable, but expected, for teachers to seek out assistance from colleagues. Sometimes this assistance takes the form of informal consultation. Other times, a more structured approach is warranted.

The 1996 contract between the district and the union established a professional support program that provides short-term, voluntary support to teachers. Although a union representative or administrator may suggest that a teacher seek professional support, participation, which is limited to two semesters, is by self-referral only. Teachers who are accepted into the program are assigned a mentor. There is no paperwork or record keeping involved and the teacher is not obligated to inform his administrator that he is receiving professional support.

The professional support program does not have its own budget. Carl O'Connell "piggybacks" professional support onto the program for interns by asking some mentors to take on a professional support case or two in addition to the regular load. "I've never been turned down," he says. In 1999-2000, about 125 teachers received professional support.

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Mentors in the professional support program counsel, observe classroom lessons, and provide professional development as needed, although generally in a less-intensive way than they would with an intern.

What kinds of situations have caused teachers to seek professional support? Here are a few examples.

Gloria Nolan[1]

Gloria Nolan is an elementary teacher with three years' teaching experience. A first-grade teacher, Nolan was assigned in 1997-98 to teach fifth grade. Once the school year began, she realized she needed help. Fifth grade was definitely different from first. Nolan requested professional support.

Linda Mayerson, the teacher who had mentored Nolan when Nolan was an intern, was still an active mentor and was asked by the CIT Panel to assist her. Mayerson and Nolan met and together developed a "needs list" that identified the areas in which Nolan most required assistance - classroom management, planning age-appropriate activities, and securing instructional materials and other resources. Mayerson visited Nolan's classroom several times to observe lessons, offer feedback, and deliver materials. The two teachers continued to meet every other week during the next school year to discuss progress and problems.

Nolan says that the knowledge that she "had someone to go to" gave her the confidence to be successful in her new teaching assignment. "Linda made me aware of the

[1]Names of teachers and mentors have been changed to protect their privacy.

resources [I needed] and helped me tap into them. Because this was my tenure year, I don't think I would have been able to acknowledge what I needed if it hadn't been for professional support. It was a kind of safety net for me."

William Harris

William Harris had taught high school social studies for 14 years. He requested professional support when he transferred to a new high school and found himself teaching a new schedule of classes. Harris discovered that the change from juniors and seniors to a schedule of mostly ninth graders was "like teaching an entirely different subject, one I had never even heard of." His situation was exacerbated by the fact that, at his new school, Harris did not have a cadre of colleagues with whom he had worked and on whom he could rely for assistance. As a new staff member, Harris was reluctant to seek help from other teachers or the administrators. He turned to professional support.

The CIT Panel asked a mentor to work with Harris. The mentor quickly understood Harris's difficulties. Ninth graders often require more structured teaching and more active learning than do high school juniors and seniors. Harris's mentor, who had taught ninth grade for several years, was able to help Harris develop group activities that shifted instruction from being heavily teacher-directed to more cooperative and student-centered. The mentor also arranged for Harris to visit other ninth-grade classrooms both in his own school and in other schools in the district. Professional support lasted for a year and Harris was able to make a successful transition to his new teaching responsibilities.

Dennis Coulter

In most cases, professional support provides teachers with just the kind of assistance they need to succeed in a new assignment. Sometimes, however, a teacher's problems are more than professional support can remedy. This was the case with Dennis Coulter.

Coulter was a middle school math teacher with 30 years experience. After receiving numerous complaints from parents, students, and other teachers, Coulter's principal urged him to seek professional support. Coulter had no attendance record, no plan book, and no grade book. Parents' calls went unreturned. Instruction was inconsistent and disorganized.

While Coulter seemed to welcome the help of his CIT Panel-assigned mentor, few of the mentor's suggestions were implemented. A pattern soon emerged. The mentor would schedule a meeting with Coulter but at the last minute, Coulter would be unavailable. He also failed to appear at observations that had been arranged. After more than a semester of little or no progress, Coulter's mentor suggested that the teacher needed more than professional support could offer. Intervention (see below) was warranted.

Professional support is meant to be nonthreatening and nonpunitive. The program is designed to be what its name implies–support. Thus, participation in professional support is not part of a teacher's personnel file unless the teacher chooses to include it.

What professional support does is give teachers–some with a great deal of experience, some still near-novices–the confidence and skills to face new teaching challenges. Rather than adopting the "sink or swim" philosophy that

characterizes so many districts, Rochester provides an avenue for teachers to seek and receive the kind of professional boost from a colleague that enables them to continue to be successful in their classrooms.

The District and the Association recognize the need for more accessible and more immediate peer assistance and support. To that end, the parties agree to establish a formal Professional Support program with the following features:

Professional support may be recommended by a colleague, a building representative, or a building administrator but access to Professional Support is by self referral only. Participation would be voluntary.

Participation in Professional Support activities will not be reflected in any personnel materials unless the teacher includes such references.

Excerpts from Section 52 of the Contractual Agreement Between the City School District of Rochester, New York and the Rochester Teachers Association, July 1, 2000 - June 30, 2002.

Intervention

Nearly every school district includes a few veteran teachers who have long-term, chronic, and serious professional problems. Often these problems have been ignored or swept under the rug, largely because the process for dismissing a tenured teacher is so onerous and because little help is available for getting the teacher back on track. Instead, problem teachers are often shifted from school to school in a ritual many districts grimly refer to as "the dance of the lemons."

In most districts, firing a tenured teacher requires an administrator to spend many hours over several years accumulating extensive documentation that can withstand legal scrutiny. Many administrators are discouraged from pursuing such cases by the effort involved. When termination cases are pursued, teachers are usually entitled to a formal hearing, with the teachers' union providing legal representation. The process is generally an adversarial one, with a district seeking to dismiss a teacher, and a union seeking to protect its member's rights. It is also expensive. Between 1990 and 1993, the average cost for a teacher dismissal hearing in New York State was $149,445 (Murray, Grant, and Swaminathan, 1997).

Rochester's Career in Teaching Plan addresses the problem of tenured teachers in serious professional difficulty through a program called intervention, which involves lead teachers in helping to find a solution. As in the professional support program, the goal of intervention is to improve teaching through a system of peer support and assistance. In intervention, the teacher is also evaluated by the mentor.

In the 13 years during which the program has operated, 70 teachers have participated in intervention. In 1999-2000, there was one teacher in intervention; in 1998-1999, there were two. This represents a decline from previous years. Carl O'Connell, who coordinates the program, speculates that the decline may be due to the training and counseling out provided by the mentor/intern program, which prevents some of the problems that lead to intervention. Similarly, he thinks that in some cases professional support may have prevented a problem from getting to the intervention stage.

Approximately ninety percent of the interventions have resulted in a recommendation to continue the teacher's employment because of improvement in the teacher's performance. The remaining ten percent have resulted in dismissal, resignation, or retirement. These results are consistent with the intent of the program–to improve performance and cultivate good teaching, not simply to weed out the few teachers who are having trouble in the classroom.

Intervention can begin at any time during a school year. A teacher experiencing severe difficulty may be recommended to the CIT Panel for intervention by a school administrator or by the teacher members of a School-Based Planning Committee meeting separately. Recommendation for intervention is intended to follow an administrator's exhaustion of all reasonable strategies to improve the struggling teacher's performance.

The CIT Panel reviews the recommendation and decides whether intervention is, indeed, the appropriate course of action. Although the Panel decides if a teacher is a candidate for intervention, participation in the program is voluntary. A teacher accepted for intervention may decline, but does so at his or her own risk. Refusal to enter intervention may result in the district initiating disciplinary action.

Intervention offers a kind of second chance. If a teacher chooses intervention, no disciplinary action for substandard teaching performance can be taken until *after* intervention is completed and the CIT Panel has issued its final report on the matter.

Once a teacher agrees to intervention, the CIT Panel appoints a mentor to work with the teacher. Because intervention is more intensive than the mentoring that an intern gets, O'Connell may give a mentor who takes on an intervention a lighter load–perhaps two interns and one intervention, rather than the usual case load of four interns. O'Connell chooses experienced mentors for intervention cases. In some cases he selects a mentor who has worked successfully with a problematic intern.

The mentor, school principal, and the teacher in intervention together develop an action plan with specific goals and a timetable that all parties sign off on. The mentor's role is much as it is in the mentor/intern program–to counsel, observe, provide professional development, make recommendations for ways in which the teacher's practice can be improved, and finally, make a recommendation as to whether the teacher should continue to work in Rochester. The task is not an easy one.

Edie Silver, a mentor who has worked with several teachers in intervention cases, says, "It's hard to develop trust in these situations, but it's crucial." She relates a specific story:

> I had one case where, for the first two months, the teacher would only meet me in a local pool hall. Then, I was invited to her house. The first couple of times, she had friends there and we just looked at her art work. [The teacher in intervention was an art teacher, as is Silver.] She wanted me to accept her as an artist, which I could do. But she was terrified of me. I couldn't even get into her classroom until December. When I did, I saw that it was beyond chaotic. This was a teacher who had been in the district for 20 years and had been moved from school to school. All her evaluations [rated her as] "satisfactory."
>
> I started by reorganizing her grade book and her classroom. I ended up believing this teacher needed a different kind of professional help than I could give and helped her seek [psychological counseling]. With my encouragement, she took a leave from the district, came back part-time a year later, and continued to call me. She's now a part-time teacher in the district and has moved from middle school to the elementary level. She's doing OK.

Silver relates another intervention episode:

> I worked with a 17-year veteran. She'd been teaching at the elementary level and had just been assigned to a middle school. She had real behavior management problems and she'd had a series of different ... administrators [who hadn't helped her]. We'd meet for lunch and I would work with her. I got her back on track. She's still teaching full-time in the district and is quite successful.

Intervention mentors submit status reports to the CIT Panel twice a semester. In the final report at the end of the second semester of intervention (or when intervention is terminated, if it is in less than two semesters), the mentor renders a judgment as to whether or not the intervention has succeeded. The mentor makes one of three recommendations to the CIT Panel: that the teacher be allowed to return to the classroom unsupervised; that he or she should continue intervention support; or that additional assistance is unlikely to produce improved results and next steps need to be considered.

If the CIT Panel determines that intervention was successful, the matter is closed. Intervention records, including mentor reviews, are maintained by the CIT Panel. According to agreements negotiated between the district and the union, only the teacher's decision to participate in intervention and the CIT Panel's final report become part of a teacher's personnel file.

Should the Panel determine that intervention was not successful, the district may initiate disciplinary action, which usually means moving to dismiss the teacher. In most school districts, the burden of proof in dismissal cases is on the *district* to prove the teacher is not competent. In Rochester, a key arbitration decision has established that for a teacher who has participated in intervention, and for whom the summary determination is that the intervention was not successful, the burden is on the *teacher* to prove competence.

In 1992, Rochester moved to dismiss a tenured teacher with many years' experience in the district. The teacher had been rated as "not meeting professional expectations" and referred for intervention. She had agreed to participate in the program and the CIT Panel had assigned a mentor to work with her.

After intervention, which included numerous classroom observations and more than 40 conferences between the teacher and the mentor, the mentor concluded that remediation had failed. The CIT Panel unanimously concurred and so informed the superintendent and the union president. The district began due-process dismissal action. The teacher challenged the proposed termination, and the case proceeded to arbitration[2].

The district, in making its case that the teacher should be dismissed, relied on intervention records and the testimony of two CIT Panel members, both of whom were RTA representatives. The teacher was represented by an attorney appointed by the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT)[3].

The teacher's attorney argued on the teacher's behalf that the CIT records of intervention did not reach a high enough standard of proof and that the intervention process was flawed. He asserted that the teacher was never adequately informed she was in professional jeopardy and that no one on the CIT Panel, which made the recommendation to dismiss, had actually observed the teacher teach, relying instead on "secondary evidence" from the mentor's report. Therefore, he said, the teacher could not be fired.

[2] Under the terms of the teachers' contract, a teacher who is subject to dismissal has the choice of a panel hearing under section 3020a of New York State's Education Code or a hearing arbitrator.

[3] In order to ensure that teachers' due-process rights are protected in dismissal cases, the RTA provides indirect legal counsel by referring teachers to NYSUT, the state AFT affiliate.

The arbitrator's 50-page ruling was clear and unequivocal. "This case," he said, "basically addresses the issue of whether [the teacher] was competent to continue to teach children in the City School District of Rochester. I must examine whether the district was reasonable in taking the position that a person who does not meet the district's professional standards should be subject to discipline, up to and including discharge. The answer has to be 'Yes.'"

The arbitrator said that it was clear that the teacher was in intervention because she had serious professional problems: "I find that [the teacher] knew or reasonably should have known that her participation in the Career in Teaching Intervention Program was because she was a teacher with serious difficulties in the performance of her professional duties and that a lack of improvement in this program could result in her being disciplined or discharged."

On the legitimacy of the CIT Panel relying on the mentor's observations, the arbitrator wrote,

> The District and the Association had a person with substantial expertise in the grievant's subject matter doing the observations, assisting the teacher, and writing reports concerning progress being made. The lead teacher [mentor] had more contacts and did more observations of [the teacher] than one would ever expect to find in a 'normal' school situation. [Moreover], there is no doubt in my mind that the teachers who enter into the intervention program have the possibility of receiving much more help with their instructional deficiencies than they would ever receive in a 'normal' school setting.

Therefore, concluded the arbitrator:

> I find that the testimony presented on the record is ample to sustain a discharge for 'good and sufficient' cause. There was virtually no substantive evidence presented to convince me that the [CIT] Panel and the Superintendent of Schools were incorrect in their determinations. There is no doubt that the District and/or its agents made an effort to discover whether [this teacher] met the District's current standards before it disciplined her.

What was clear is that ... [the teacher] [did] not believe she was a 'teacher in crisis' or a teacher with 'serious difficulties.' That is unfortunate. She brought forth no one to support her contentions on these issues. Once the burden of proof switched to her, she had the responsibility to show [the arbitrator] that what had been said about her was not true. She gave no concrete rebuttal.

The teacher was dismissed. No challenge to an intervention decision has been made since this case was decided.

Intervention is a process that, in most cases, helps a problem teacher to meet professional expectations. But where this is not possible, it is a faster, more efficient, and cheaper way to remove an unsatisfactory teacher that stands in stark contrast to the traditional administrative process for dismissing tenured teachers. In Rochester, the school district and the union work together to give the public confidence that a teacher who does not meet professional expectations will not continue to teach there.

The Intervention and Remediation component of the CIT Plan is designed to offer all available resources to help improve the performance of experienced teachers who are having serious difficulties in the performance of their professional duties.

A teacher can be recommended in writing for Intervention and Remediation by a building principal, other appropriate supervisor or teacher constituency of the School-based Planning team meeting as a separate group.

Teachers participating in Intervention and Remediation will continue to receive assistance until the CIT Panel determines that no further assistance is needed or would be productive, or until the teacher in Intervention and Remediation no longer wishes to participate. The duration of the Intervention and Remediation program for any one teacher shall not extend beyond the start of one third full semester from the date of the initiation of the assistance program.

Participation in Intervention and Remediation is voluntary on the part of the referred teacher. If a teacher refuses Intervention and Remediation, nothing herein shall prohibit the District from proceeding with further disciplinary action after that refusal.

Excerpts from Section 52 of the Contractual Agreement Between the City School District of Rochester, New York and the Rochester Teachers Association, July 1, 2000 - June 30, 2002.

4

Performance Appraisal Review for Teachers

Once a teacher has been awarded tenure, the usual evaluation process in states and districts across the country is a formal observation by an administrator once a year. The administrator schedules the observation, observes for 30 or 40 minutes, writes up the observation using an official format or checklist, and holds a post-observation conference with the teacher.

In Rochester, the traditional system is an annual 30-minute observation by the supervisor followed by the supervisor's completion of a form that rates a teacher as "meets professional standards," "needs improvement," or "unsatisfactory" on elements of the district's professional expectations.

The education literature is rife with critiques of this traditional teacher evaluation model. This system is criticized because:

- it is top down and requires little actual involvement by teachers themselves;
- it applies the same teaching standards and criteria, which often are ill defined, to all teachers, regardless of level of experience or discipline;
- it puts evaluative authority solely in the hands of principals who often are not well trained for the task (Wise, Darling-Hammond, McLaughlin, and Bernstein, 1984) and do not have adequate time to do it well; and

- it rarely touches on such critical issues as the quality of instruction and the quality of student learning (McLaughlin and Pfeifer, 1988; Iwanicki, 1998).

Traditional evaluation plans usually assume that the purpose of teacher appraisal is to certify minimum competence, not to improve practice. Rochester's alternative to the traditional evaluation system, Performance Appraisal Review for Teachers (PART), takes the approach that the evaluation of tenured (or professional) teachers offers an opportunity for professional development. Instead of being observed by an administrator, teachers undertake projects that involve documenting and assessing their instruction. These projects are reviewed by colleagues as well as by an administrator. PART is open only to tenured teachers whose practice is not in question. They can choose either traditional evaluation or PART; about half of Rochester's tenured teachers choose PART.

PART stands in strong contrast to traditional methods of evaluating tenured teachers, in the following ways:

- It is not necessarily focused on individual teachers; teachers are encouraged to participate in groups.
- It encourages teachers to work together to design new instructional strategies and to reflect on and document their practice.
- It is long term, extending over three years, rather than based on a single annual observation.
- During the first two years of the three-year cycle, it is formative evaluation, aimed at changing practice; a summative rating is applied only at the end of the third year.
- The focus of the work to be assessed is chosen by the teacher.
- It judges teachers based on whether they have assessed evidence of student learning and changed their practice over time.
- It involves peers, as well as administrators, in assessing teachers' work.
- It requires teachers to play active roles in assessing their own practice.

How PART Works

In October, teachers elect to participate in PART. Those who choose the program, either as an individual or as part of a group, must develop a written proposal that:

1. describes the main features of the PART work to be undertaken;
2. indicates the way in which the proposed work will address each of the five areas of professional expectation–pedagogy, content, school quality, home involvement, and professional development;
3. describes the relationship of the PART project to the School Improvement Plan of the teacher's (or teachers') work site; and
4. suggests the kinds of data and evidence the teacher or team plans to collect along the way, such as long- and short-range lesson plans, tests and study guides, video- or audiotapes of classroom activities, written reflections on teaching, indicators of student performance, narratives from peer observations, and results of student and parent surveys.

Each proposal is reviewed by two people selected by the teacher or team and a meeting is held to discuss the proposal. Reviewers, who are other teachers or administrators, are asked to comment on aspects of the proposal that appear particularly promising, raise questions, suggest professional expectations to which the teacher(s) should pay particular attention, and offer ideas about how the proposal could be made more rigorous. A teacher may not serve as a reviewer of a report by a teacher in her own PART group. While the involvement of an administrator is not required at this stage in the process, some principals choose to be involved by participating in the proposal discussion, or in some cases, giving teachers individual feedback on their proposal.

PART teachers have the option of designing their work around one of five suggested models:

1. *Program/school-linked performance appraisal* is designed to reflect both team and individual performance. It is most commonly employed by a school team that wants to work collaboratively on a particular school-based program. The focus of their work must be student engagement and achievement.
2. *Goal setting* is the most popular PART model. Individuals or groups identify particular instructional goals and develop plans to achieve them and measure progress.
3. *Project-based* is a model that focuses on particular aspects of teachers' work and examines it in detail.
4. *Comprehensive peer appraisal* involves developmental assessment of a teacher by peers.
5. *Portfolio development* allows teachers who choose this model to collect classroom and professional artifacts that document both the successes and failures of their work and then to offer an analysis of their classroom practice.

Teachers are also free to adapt these models and choose their own paths.

Once the proposal is approved, PART work begins and extends over a three-year period. PART participants are required to submit an annual progress report between May 1 and June 15 and there is a discussion between the teacher(s) and the reviewers about the report. Here again, the participation of an administrator is not mandatory, but some do choose to participate in these discussions.

Some PART Examples

What kinds of PART work have teachers done? Here are some examples:

- A group of teachers at Clara Barton School #2, working with the University of Rochester's Graduate School of Education and Human Development, redesigned the way the school is scheduled and staffed, and documented and assessed the effects. A two-person team, composed of a specialist teacher in an area such as music or art, and another classroom teacher, was assigned to each classroom. Special education students were fully included and a number of blended-grade classrooms were created. The Clara Barton teachers also made a conscious effort to coordinate their work with that of city and county programs to provide social and medical services at the school. Clusters of teachers at Clara Barton focused their teaching on increasing students' literacy and math skills as well as on issues such as conflict resolution, nutrition, and family involvement. The goal was to provide students with a wide range of needed services and new opportunities, while also focusing on academics.
- A group of teachers at East High School decided to work together to improve school attendance. They began by proposing to the school's School-Based Planning Team that East require students to attend classes at least 85% of the time in order to pass. If students fell below that standard, teachers would offer after-school make-up sessions, at least for a limited number of absences. By the end of the three-year period of the PART project, student attendance had improved by 8%, and the course passing rate, particularly at the ninth-grade level, had also improved.
- A Franklin High School special education teacher assembled a portfolio for her PART work. The portfolio served as a repository for regular journal entries about student learning, classroom activities, and the progress and setbacks of her nine learning-disabled students. She included written perspectives from other teachers who worked

with her students and used the portfolio as a way to analyze and adjust her own work.

- Teachers at School #29 wanted to review their curriculum and modify it in a way that they believed students would find more meaningful. The teachers initiated a project called Tree of Peace, which provided the focus for a year-long multidisciplinary curriculum. Teachers' lessons revolved around various aspects of the peace theme. Students became involved not only through regular lessons, but through activities such as writing letters to community members and inviting them to visit their classes to discuss peacemaking. The teachers used PART to document and assess the project.
- Nearly all tenured school psychologists in Rochester are members of a PART group that has selected the peer appraisal model. Psychologists typically are singly assigned to a school and rarely are supervised by an administrator who has detailed knowledge of their practice. As a group, psychologists adapted the district's professional expectations to fit their work. They arranged for observations in order to conduct peer reviews of practice, and developed written feedback procedures for participants.

Performance Appraisal

At the conclusion of the three years, a formal PART debriefing is held. A central feature is a one- to two-hour structured interview involving the teacher (or team), the two reviewers who have overseen the PART work, and the immediate supervisor. In advance of the interview, PART teachers submit a one-page synthesis of the work as it relates to the professional expectations; evidence of student performance, including test results and student work samples, with an explanatory focus on ways in which student outcomes have caused the teacher to adjust practice; and evidence of parent and student input over time. Organized as a professional conversation, reviewers raise questions about the work and the project data submitted.

After reviewing all of the available data and at the conclusion of the interview, the team of reviewers issues a summative appraisal, a professional judgment about whether or not the PART teachers' work meets professional expectations. Teachers must receive a satisfactory rating in all five areas (pedagogy, content, school quality, home involvement, and professional development) in order to be judged as meeting professional expectations.

Teachers who successfully complete the three-year PART cycle may reelect to participate in PART for another three years, and there is no limit to the

number of times they may do so. They must submit a new plan, indicating whether they intend to continue work begun in the first PART cycle or proceed in a different direction. The PART process then begins again. Any teacher who does not meet professional expectations is automatically subject to annual evaluation by a school administrator.

An appeal mechanism is in place. Teachers or administrators may appeal summative appraisals in writing to the CIT Panel within ten days of receiving the evaluation. Grounds for appeal include situations in which reviewers cannot agree on a rating or a teacher or administrator disagrees with the majority reviewers' conclusions.

The appeal is taken up by a three-person panel. Appointed jointly by the superintendent and the president of the Rochester Teachers Association, the panel is empowered to render a final and binding decision. Since PART's inception, the panel has never been constituted; no formal appeals to PART decisions have been lodged.

As noted earlier, about half of Rochester's tenured teachers participate in PART. The others choose the traditional method. In talking about the pros and cons of the two approaches, several principals agreed that some teachers see PART as more work than the traditional observation. Michael Cirrincione, Principal of School #58, prefers the traditional approach, as does his faculty. Last year, all of them chose the traditional model. Cirrincione feels that "the administrative model is easier." He also believes that teachers want feedback from him.

Other principals are strong supporters of the process. They promote it with their faculties and have high PART participation. For these principals, PART represents an opportunity to encourage reflective practice and professional growth and collaboration among their faculty. They play an active role in the process, helping teachers to see that their PART project needn't be onerous and that it can and should be connected to work the school is already doing.

For example, Robert Pedzich, the former principal of Monroe High School, says that the majority of his faculty there chose to do PART as a group for the entire school. "If you can collectively agree on PART," he explains, "it has benefits for individuals and for the entire school." The Monroe faculty put together a joint proposal that each teacher could adapt to his own work. PART became the staff development program for the year.

For Pedzich, "PART says to a person, as a professional, what do you want to accomplish? You know what the district standards are. You set the goals, then you sit down with colleagues and your administrator and we challenge you at

least twice during the year. How are you doing? What evidence do you have? It's a way to grow professionally."

Similarly, Marie Cianca, former Principal of School #30 and now a lead principal working at the district office, encouraged the teachers in her school to look at the school plan and grade-level goals and focus their PART proposals on these. Because teachers' PART proposals were closely connected to grade-level goals, when teachers discussed instruction at grade-level meetings, this became part of the PART process as well. Cianca gave feedback on the proposals, and at the end of the year provided individual feedback to each teacher. "The administrator has to be involved and understand what's going on," she says. "PART takes work, but it's more interesting. The value of PART is reflecting and sharing work that teachers are already doing." Cianca sees PART as providing an opportunity for teachers to get feedback from their colleagues as well as from the principal. She finds that the process "helps teachers to grow, whether they're giving or getting feedback."

Michelle Hancock, Principal of School #5, is also a big supporter of PART. When Hancock first came to the school, many of the teachers in the building chose observations over PART. "They thought their PART project had to be huge. [In the past], they put together massive portfolios, did tons of work." To convince the faculty that PART could be manageable, Hancock gave each teacher a spiral-bound notebook to use as a teaching journal. She told them that they could submit a synopsis of the journal as their annual progress report. "Teachers will pick observation because they think it's easier," Hancock says. "[But] we want teachers to move toward reflective practice."

For Hancock, the structured interview at the end of a PART project is "an opportunity for teachers to really explain their year, to talk about challenges, both those they've turned into opportunities and those that remain challenges. The structured interview gives you a sense of professional joy."

It would appear, then, that PART works best when it is woven into the ongoing life of the school, and when the principal is committed to the values embedded in PART: collaboration and ongoing reflection on practice among teachers.

Professional Teachers who choose the PART/Summative Appraisal process shall participate annually in the Performance Appraisal Review for Teachers (PART) according to procedures established by the Career in Teaching Joint Governing Panel. PART is based on an assumption of competence, provides opportunities for peer review, and focuses on and promotes developmental and professional growth.

Excerpt from Section 52 of the Contractual Agreement Between the City School District of Rochester, New York and the Rochester Teachers Association, July 1, 2000 - June 30, 2002.

5

Governance of the Career in Teaching Plan

It is 3 p.m. on a Monday afternoon in late September and twelve people are gathered in a conference room at the headquarters of the Rochester Teachers Association (RTA). Half of them are teachers, appointed by the union; half are school and central office administrators, appointed by the school district. This is the weekly meeting of the Joint Governing Panel, which manages the Career in Teaching Plan.

Known informally in the district as the CIT Panel, the Joint Governing Panel is co-chaired by two members–a union representative, Tom Gillett, who is vice president of the RTA, and a district representative, Cassandra Frierson, who is the district's director of human resources.

Gillett calls the meeting to order. First there is a report on the mentor/intern program from Carl O'Connell, the program's coordinator. He reports that there are 50 interns who do not yet have mentors. There are already 186 mentors assigned to interns, the largest program they've ever had. He tells the group that he is doing a "sift down" to see if there are interns, especially those who have taught previously, who don't need mentors, so that their mentors can be reassigned. O'Connell informs the Panel that there is a shortage of mentors in some subject areas–foreign language, math, and special education. They have put out a special call for teachers to apply for these positions by a deadline of October 5. O'Connell suggests doing interviews immediately after the deadline. (Pairs of Panel members interview all mentor candidates.) O'Connell predicts that they will have more than 600 interns by the end of the school year; there are already 502. He tells the group that there have been five resignations of interns so far and that there will be a sixth by the end of the day.

Cassandra Frierson informs the group that she and O'Connell have met with the district's budget person to request an increase in the program's budget to cover the need for additional mentors. The increase has been approved for up to 200 mentors.

O'Connell reminds everyone that there will be a meeting of the mentors on October 16 at 4 p.m., which they will need to attend. At that meeting, each of them will meet with the mentors whom they've been assigned to oversee. Each Panel member will be responsible for up to 15 mentors.

Now the group turns to some new business. Gillett announces that there has been a request for an intervention and that the paperwork is now in. The referral is for a teacher of children with dyslexia (the details have been disguised here to respect confidentiality).

"There are significant difficulties in doing this," O'Connell tells the group. "We have no mentors in this area and the documentation dates back only a couple of years because he wasn't really supervised." It turns out that the teacher serves specific children in several different schools and that his supervision has been spotty.

O'Connell recommends assigning a team of two mentors who are reading specialists to go out and investigate.

"How long has the teacher been in the district?" asks a teacher member of the Panel.

"Eleven years," O'Connell tells her.

"Are we at the point of him agreeing to intervention?" asks another Panel member. (Intervention is always voluntary.) O'Connell tells her that they're not, that they don't have the documentation that is required before an intervention can take place.

Another panel member who has been reading from the file that is being passed around asks, "Has employee assistance been involved?"

Frierson explains that employee assistance counseling is voluntary and confidential and so would not appear in the file.

A principal on the Panel asks, "Why has this gone directly to intervention and not to professional support?"

O'Connell responds that the request has come from an administrator who asserts that he has been unable to get in touch with the teacher for long periods and that the teacher has not been prepared for formal meetings about the individual education plans of the children to whom he is assigned.

The Panel is in a bit of a quandary because the file lacks the usual evaluations of the teacher that would lead up to an intervention request. Gillett intervenes. "Let me make a suggestion," he says. "There may be a problem here for students. The appropriate documentation and due process steps haven't been taken. We could go back to the administrator and say do the due process steps. What we've done in the past is meet with the teacher and the supervisor and try to find out if there's an agreement that there are some problems. Sometimes that means we do professional support while other things [evaluations] get done."

O'Connell calls the question. "Does everyone concur to get the sign-off [from the teacher] on professional support? If the teacher won't sign, I'm coming back to you."

"Let's get a report from the mentor around the semester mark," suggests Gillett. "Then we can assess whether to go with intervention. We can get someone to him in a couple of weeks."

They move to the next item of business.

Serving on the Joint Governing Panel is a big job. The Panel meets after school for two hours every week throughout the school year and in the summer. In addition to weekly meetings, there are interviews of prospective mentors and observations and meetings with current mentors. Panel members receive an annual stipend of $5,000 for their work.

The Panel is responsible for governing all aspects of the Career in Teaching Plan. Its responsibilities include:

- delineating roles, responsibilities, expectations, and measures of success for each of the four teacher career levels;
- recommending to the district's human resources department the appropriate career level (intern or resident) for each full-time teacher given a probationary contract with the Rochester City School District;
- selecting, assigning, and evaluating the work of mentors (each Panel member is responsible for evaluating 12 to 15 mentors);
- reviewing mentors' and administrators' reports on interns and making recommendations regarding each intern's continuing employment by or termination from the district;
- resolving discrepancies between mentors' and administrators' reports on interns;
- hearing appeals from interns who disagree with their evaluations; and
- overseeing the intervention program for teachers in serious professional trouble, including reviewing mentors' intervention reports and making recommendations to the superintendent and RTA president regarding the extent to which intervention has or has not been successful.

The CIT Panel makes de facto personnel decisions. The Taylor Law, New York State's public employee collective bargaining law, prohibits unions from being directly involved in teacher hiring and firing decisions. Thus, teachers who serve as mentors make recommendations regarding interns' employment status to the CIT Panel, which, in turn, makes recommendations to the superintendent and the RTA president. The final determination as to an employee's status is made by the Rochester school board. As an indicator of the authority and legitimacy of the CIT Panel's decisions, nearly all of its recommendations are affirmed by the final actions of the school board.

Seven votes on the CIT Panel are required to approve an action. Thus, neither teachers nor administrators acting alone can carry the day. While this operating rule acts as an important safeguard for the integrity of the program,

according to Panel members, decisions seem not to be predictable by role. Says CIT Panel member and teacher Jennifer Tomm DiPasquale, "You'd think teachers and administrators would protect their own. But they don't. [In voting on a proposed action], they call it as they see it." A principal on the Panel concurs: "The Panel rarely aligns by constituency. It's very collaborative." Almost every decision is made by consensus.

Over the years that CIT has operated, a handful of Panel decisions have been reversed by the district school board. In these cases, the school district has rehired someone the Panel recommended for termination. But, as RTA Vice President Tom Gillett notes, the joint teacher-administrator Panel's recommendations "have been confirmed by time." Two of those teachers whose negative CIT employment recommendations the school board did not heed left the district within a year of being awarded their continuing teaching contracts. A third has had what Gillett describes as a "rocky and colorful" career in the district. Most recently, three intern teachers who were not recommended for rehire at the end of 1998-99 were rehired by the district. All three were fired within a few months of the new school year.

The CIT Plan shall be directed by the Joint Governing Panel. The 12-member Joint Governing Panel shall be composed of six members appointed by the Rochester Teachers Association and six members appointed by the Superintendent of Schools.

The chair will rotate annually between the two parties, with a Panel year defined as July 1-June 30.

The Panel will propose on an annual basis, costs of Panel and program operation to the Superintendent and the RTA President. Members of the Joint Governing Panel may be compensated for services consistent with Procedures developed by the Panel and approved by the Superintendent of Schools and the RTA President.

A Quorum shall require the presence of seven members of the Panel. Decisions of the Panel shall require an affirmative vote of at least seven Panel members.

The Joint Governing Panel will develop and make program and policy recommendations concerning the implementation of the CIT Plan to the Superintendent of Schools and the RTA President. The Panel will implement policy and will delineate the roles, responsibilities, expectations, and success measures for each career level. In addition, Panel responsibilities may include but are not limited to: assuring coordination of activities with appropriate departments; monitoring and evaluating program developments; and monitoring teacher career development and advancement under the Career in Teaching Program.

Excerpt from Section 52 of the Contractual Agreement Between the City School District of Rochester, New York and the Rochester Teachers Association, July 1, 2000 - June 30, 2002.

6

Involving Parents in Teacher Evaluation

Rochester's Career in Teaching Plan provides opportunities for teachers to give feedback and assistance to their colleagues and even to evaluate them. But what about parents? Do they have a role in evaluating teachers?

One of the professional expectations that frame teaching in Rochester is "home involvement": "Teachers reach beyond the school to make connections with students' homes and families in order to provide a school experience that addresses the needs and interests of each child." Saying that teachers have a professional responsibility to connect with students' families, however, is quite a different proposition from directly involving those families in appraising teachers' work. Rochester has taken a first step toward such involvement; its efforts have met with mixed results.

Until 1998, the parent role in teacher appraisal in Rochester was rather informal. Teachers were asked to think about the kind of parent input they find useful and the kind they receive from parents, the difference parent input makes in their teaching practice, and the ways in which parental involvement affects a child's education. "Evidence of parent input" was, by contract, a required element of evaluation, but teachers had a great deal of latitude regarding what constituted parent input and gathered evidence of it by various means, some more systematic than others. As a parent representative on the district's negotiating team puts it, "[Parent] involvement was optional.

We wanted it to be less optional." As a result of the 1996-2000 contract between the union and the district, soliciting parent input became more systematized.

Giving parents a formal role in teacher appraisal was not without controversy. The district wanted parents to assess teachers' knowledge of subject matter, their classroom management techniques, and their teaching strategies. The union insisted that parent input for teacher evaluation be limited to areas about which parents would be most likely, according to union officials, to have knowledge: communication with home, a teacher's general responsiveness to parent and student issues, connecting the home to instruction, and the teacher's interaction with the child and the family.

Some teachers expressed concern about parent involvement in teacher appraisal. As one teacher remarks: "[Parents] have preconceived ideas about teaching mostly drawn from their own youth. I don't want someone's recollection of childhood ... coloring my evaluation and pay." That concern has not been entirely quelled. Nonetheless, with the assistance of the New York State Director of Conciliation for the State Public Employment Relations Board, the union and district finally reached agreement on the parent component of teacher evaluation and when the issue was brought before teachers, an overwhelming majority voted to proceed.

The Parent Survey

Parent input is collected by a survey developed by a six-member committee, three of whom are appointed by the district and three by the union. The survey, which was designed and distributed to all parents of Rochester public school students for the first time in 1998, is limited to three areas: parent-teacher communications, home involvement, and aspects of the child's academic progress that parents might reasonably observe.

To develop the survey, the joint union-management committee reviewed parent input forms from other districts, including the Wake County Public School System in Raleigh, North Carolina; District of Columbia Public Schools in Washington, DC; and the Department of Defense dependents' public schools. But the committee found that these surveys focused generally on issues of school climate and quality and placed little emphasis on individual teacher performance. This was not what Rochester was looking for; Rochester wanted a way to solicit parent responses to individual teachers.

Rochester's survey consists of four parts (see Appendix E for a copy of the survey). Part 1 assesses parents' school-related level of activity by asking them to

indicate whether they have, for example, visited the child's school or classroom, attended a parent-teacher conference, contacted the school when the child was absent, and signed and returned all report cards. The remaining 20 survey questions ask parents to rate teachers on a five-point scale.

Parents were prepared for the surveys in a number of ways: the district developed an informational video and a brochure, parents staffed phones during a "hot-line" night to answer questions, and a series of regional meetings with district officials was held.

The school district, which had the responsibility of managing survey details, distributed 145,000 forms to schools in January 1998. The surveys were sent home with students the week of February 1. Each student was given a form for each of his or her teachers. Elementary students took home at least two survey forms; middle and high school students took home seven. Accompanying the surveys was a pamphlet explaining the form and its use and a letter from the superintendent encouraging parents to complete and return the forms. Sending surveys home with students had somewhat predictable results. "[The surveys] hit the streets, literally and figuratively," says the RTA's Tom Gillett.

Completed surveys were returned directly to the teacher, although parents were informed that they had the option of sending a copy to the teacher's supervisor as well (the surveys were printed on carbonless duplicate forms). Results of the survey may be become input for a teacher's evaluation *if the teacher so chooses*, although administrators may also use the results of any surveys sent directly to them as input in evaluating a teacher.

Rochester hired a polling firm to analyze the approximately 20,000 surveys that were returned to principals in 1998 (surveys that were submitted only to teachers were not analyzed). On the surveys analyzed, most parents gave teachers high marks for communication, home involvement, and efforts to engage parents in their children's learning. Perhaps not surprisingly, but indicating a potential area of concern, parents of middle school- and high school-age students–who generally tend to be less involved in their children's school lives than parents of younger children–gave somewhat less positive reviews. But the results, across the board, were quite positive.

In addition to providing a window on parents' views about their children's education, the survey may have had another salutary benefit. The intent of the survey, says one parent who advocated for it, is to "improve communication between parent and teacher." She adds, "This is the first step in parent involvement in teacher evaluation. The fact that the survey comes from the district gives it power, authority, and sanction."

In 2000, the opinions of principals who are asked about the survey range from neutral to negative. One elementary school principal says that the surveys are sometimes useful to the individual teacher. "For example," she explains, "if a parent says she doesn't understand the child's homework, it can be an opportunity to respond to the parent." She doesn't, however, find the surveys useful as a tool for evaluating teachers. At her school, the response rate is only about 30%.

Another elementary school principal concurs that the surveys are not useful in evaluating teachers. "Parents with an ax to grind may see it as an opportunity to get the teacher," she explains. "I take them with a grain of salt. I rely more on my personal experience of the teacher."

A third elementary school principal says that he looks over the forms, but doesn't really use them. "Ninety-nine percent are positive," he explains. "Some are out of left field." At this school, the faculty has just developed its own parent input form.

A high school principal is more negative about the surveys, terming them "a total waste of paper," even though "the vast majority of forms that come back are positive." He explains that at the secondary level, where parents have one form to fill out for each of a child's teachers, there's a low response rate. If a parent has more than one child in middle school or high school, the number of forms is truly daunting.

Although the survey has been distributed each year since 1998, there has not been an analysis of the results from any year after the first one.

Rochester's experience with a parent survey of teacher performance provides some lessons for other districts that are considering doing something similar:

- The development and implementation of the survey was a contentious issue in Rochester, with negotiations between the district and the teachers' union resulting in a survey that doesn't really satisfy anyone. For example, as noted above, teachers wanted to be sure that parents' own level of involvement in their children's education would be represented on the survey, along with parents' assessment of the teacher's performance. Some feel that these questions intimidate parents, while the union contends that these issues are important to establish the nature of the parent-teacher partnership.
- Because the survey is limited to an assessment of parent-teacher communications and a child's progress in the class, it does not provide much information on parents' perceptions of a teacher's instructional performance. This can be viewed as a limitation, but it can also be

viewed an as appropriate recognition of the fact that most parents have little basis on which to make such an evaluation.

- Because the survey is focused on assessment of individual teachers, it has resulted in onerous paperwork for parents, particularly at the secondary level, where parents may be asked to fill out forms for as many as seven teachers for each child.
- Low response rates at many schools have led teachers and administrators to discount the surveys. Survey responses do not appear, for the most part, to be very useful to teachers in improving their communication with parents. Nor does the survey provide public information to parents about their child's school.

While the Rochester parent survey process will need to be substantially refined if it is to be more useful, Rochester remains one of the few districts in the country in which parents' views are formally solicited.

The [parent] survey will be designed by a committee composed of three (3) designees of the Superintendent of Schools and three (3) designees of the President of the RTA.

The survey questions will be limited to home involvement and parent-teacher communications, and may address relevant aspects of a child's progress on which the committee is in agreement that parents can effectively and appropriately comment.

Completed surveys may be produced by the teacher during annual review, and the evaluator may similarly produce any forms which were copied to administration by parents.

Excerpts from Section 52 of the Contractual Agreement Between the City School District of Rochester, New York and the Rochester Teachers Association, July 1, 2000 - June 30, 2002.

7

Conclusion

Rochester's Career in Teaching Plan set out to restructure teaching and improve teachers' knowledge and skills, with the ultimate goal of contributing to student achievement. It is reasonable to ask, thirteen years later, whether there is evidence that these goals are closer to being realized.

Results of the Mentor/Intern Program

A National Center for Education Statistics study (Henke, Chen, and Geis, 2000) found that nationally, the attrition rate of new teachers who had participated in an induction program was only 15% within the first three years of teaching, as compared with 26% for teachers who had not received any induction support. For participants in well-developed, high-quality induction programs, attrition rates are even lower. Rochester's mentor/intern program provides a model of such a program. The Career in Teaching Plan has had dramatic effects on the retention of new teachers. As noted earlier, in 1998, 95% of those who entered teaching in Rochester ten years earlier and who received mentoring were still teaching there.

However, Rochester faces new difficulties in attracting and retaining qualified teachers. By the mid-1990s, Rochester, once a leader in teacher salaries, lagged in comparison with other school districts in the region. Starting salaries for teachers increased by only $1,000 in

real terms between 1985 and 1990. By contrast, salaries for starting teachers in two other large New York State cities, Syracuse and Buffalo, increased by about $7,000 during the same period (Lankford, Wyckoff, and Papa, 2000). In 1997-98, of twenty districts in the area, Rochester ranked last in median teacher salary: $44,339, compared with a high of $59,289. Rochester competes for teachers with the nearby districts of Brighton, Fairport, Gates-Chili, Greece, and Pittsford, all of which have higher teacher salaries. Consequently, the supply of new teachers for Rochester has tightened as new teachers choose to begin their careers in these higher-paying districts.

At the time of this writing, the district had not released figures that would make it possible to update its beginning teacher retention rates beyond June of 1998 (see page 26). Carl O'Connell believes that overall teacher retention has declined in the district over the last two years, as better salaries and working conditions have lured Rochester teachers to nearby suburban districts. And indeed, even as of 1998, retention rates had declined for those who began teaching in the mid-90s. There is a higher rate of retention, even after eight years, for teachers who began teaching in 1990, when salaries were higher, than there is for those who began in 1997, when salaries dropped.

Problems with the supply of teachers to Rochester are exacerbated by increased demand for teachers in the district. In addition to gradually increasing enrollments, Rochester's recent efforts to reduce class size have increased its need for teachers. Further, the district offered early retirement incentives three times during the 1990s, swelling the number of available teaching positions. And some experienced Rochester teachers are leaving for jobs in neighboring suburban districts where the salaries and working conditions are better.

For all of these reasons, Rochester needs to hire (and retain) a lot of new teachers. The current superintendent, Clifford Janey, who came to the district in 1995, estimates that Rochester may need to replace up to half its teaching staff over the next three to five years. The mentor/intern program will be needed more than ever before.

Rochester's new hires increasingly tend to be teachers with little or no classroom experience other than student teaching. In 1996-97, only 64% of new hires had less than a year of teaching experience; by 1999-2000, this figure had risen to 92%; and by 2000-01, it had risen to 97%, another sign that Rochester is failing to attract desirable new hires–teachers with experience. In 1998-99, 7.1% of Rochester's teachers had no prior teaching experience, as compared to only 5.3% of the teaching force in the surrounding suburbs. In that same year, 19.7% of Rochester teachers had less than three years' experience, as compared to 15.4% in the suburbs (Lankford, Wyckoff, and Papa, 2000).

In addition, some teachers say that the district hires too late in the year, after many teaching candidates have found other jobs. On the positive side, many new teachers in Rochester are, in fact, familiar with Rochester schools, since more than half student-taught in the district.

An induction program cannot in and of itself solve all of a district's problems with teacher hiring and retention. Many people in Rochester say that the supply of candidates for teaching positions is getting slimmer and that many newly minted teachers are choosing the suburbs over Rochester. Suburban districts are often eager to hire Rochester teachers after they have completed their first year of teaching because they know that these teachers have received a solid introduction to the profession.

An induction program cannot overcome problems of noncompetitive salaries, inadequate recruiting, and late hiring. It can, however, improve the skills of the people who are hired and it can help to keep them in teaching.

What About Student Achievement?

It is risky, at best, to try to establish a simple one-to-one correspondence between any single project in a large, complex district and student test scores, the usual measure of achievement. Many factors have an impact on scores, including students' socioeconomic status, the availability of qualified teachers, and the many other programs, policies, and projects that are in effect at any moment in time.

It is difficult to track Rochester's student achievement results over the period of the Career in Teaching Plan because state tests have changed over that period. Furthermore, there have been sharply increasing rates of poverty among Rochester students, which strongly influence average achievement scores. Between 1987 and 1996, the percentage of Rochester students receiving subsidized lunches increased from 44% to 80%, with no change in criteria (Murray, Grant, and Swaminathan, 1997). By the Fall of 1997, 89.2% of Rochester's students were entitled to a free or reduced-price lunch; the county-wide figure (including Rochester) was only 40.5% (New York State Department of Education, 1999).

Examining the newly introduced state tests in that context, Rochester's students performed above the levels of districts with similar student populations on the 4th grade English language arts examination in 2001 but below statewide averages for districts that have much lower levels of poverty. For example, in 2001, 41.9% of Rochester's fourth-graders scored at levels 3 or 4 (on a scale of 1 to 4) on New York State's Elementary Language Arts

assessment, as compared to 35.7% of fourth-graders in Buffalo, a school district with similar poverty rates to Rochester, and 60% of public school fourth-grade students statewide.

A study by the Rochester Department of Research and Evaluation specifically examining the Rochester Mentor Program (MacGowan, 2000) concluded that some aspect of these results can be attributed to the presence of mentors for beginning teachers. The study suggested that:

> ... the RCSD Mentor Program is having a positive effect ... on student performance on the new State ELA-4 Tests. This evidence comes from multiple sources: (1) The results of the *Rochester City School District English Language Arts 4th Grade Assessment: A Longitudinal Study* (Montes, 2000), suggest that first year teachers with a mentor may be performing at levels higher than teachers without a mentor; (2) In the two years of the new State Tests, from 1998-99 to 1999-2000, the number of first year teachers in the fourth grade nearly quadrupled, from nine to thirty-one - and yet student performance on the ELA-4 substantially increased (p. 2).

The study notes that the results were not as noteworthy in mathematics, however, where scores essentially remained stable over the two years of the study.

Conclusion

The Career in Teaching Plan is located in a complex context in which there is an increasingly needy student body paired with an increasingly inexperienced teaching force and, at the district level, both supports for and impediments to reform (Murray, Grant, and Swaminathan, 1997).

The case of Rochester suggests that teaching quality is constructed from multiple factors: strong preparation of teachers; effective recruitment and hiring of qualified teachers; a salary structure that attracts highly qualified new teachers and retains accomplished, experienced teachers; support for new teachers in their first years in the profession; professional development for experienced teachers; policies that confront the problem of unsatisfactory teachers; and schools that are organized for student and teacher learning. The Career in Teaching Plan successfully addresses some of these, including induction for new teachers, leadership opportunities with salary differentials attached for experienced teachers, new forms of performance appraisal that focus on improving practice, and a process for helping (or dismissing) unsatisfactory teachers. The future of Rochester's teachers and students depends in large part on how the other factors are confronted and addressed.

The newest Rochester teacher contract, which is retroactive to July 2000, does attempt to address the issue of recruiting and attracting qualified teachers with provisions to ensure that Rochester is once again competitive with other districts in the county. Salaries for entry-level teachers and for those reaching five and ten years of service in the district will increase. The contract commits both parties to a formula assuring continuation of salary adjustments benchmarked to be competitive with the median of the teacher salaries in the five highest-paying school districts in Monroe County. It also includes a desirable new incentive: effective February 2001, the district pays for new teachers' master's degrees, which is a requirement for permanent state certification.

In September 2000, when the terms of the new agreement were announced, people in the district were optimistic that it would help in recruiting and retaining the highly qualified teachers that Rochester needs. The human resources division was beginning to get a few calls from teachers who had left the district, asking to come back.

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Appendix A

Intern Needs Assessment

Intern's Name:_____ School:_____

Mentor's Name:_____ Date:_____

➡➡ **TO THE INTERN:** As part of the needs assessment process, you are being asked to identify areas of concern on this form. You and your mentor will use this information to develop a personal plan of action.

YES	NO	
☐	☐	a. Planning: _____
☐	☐	b. Incorporates multi-cultural/multi-lingual perspective: _____
☐	☐	c. Assessment and evaluation: _____
☐	☐	d. Making assignments: _____
☐	☐	e. Developing work study habits: _____
☐	☐	f. Recognize and provide for individual differences: _____
☐	☐	g. Accessing student records: _____
☐	☐	h. Developing and writing IEPS (Special Ed. and appropriate teachers): _____

PLAN: _____

_____

_____

II. CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT:

YES NO

☐ ☐ a. Classroom facilitation and control: _____

_____

☐ ☐ b. Interaction with pupils: _____

_____

☐ ☐ c. Classroom routine: _____

_____

☐ ☐ d. Classroom organization: _____

_____

☐ ☐ e. Use of strategies and personnel to assist student with special needs:

_____

☐ ☐ f. Handling difficult assignments: _____

_____

☐ ☐ g. Handling difficult problems: _____

_____

☐ ☐ h. Understanding the diverse needs of urban youth: _____

_____

PLAN: _____

_____

_____

III. PRESENTATION OF SUBJECT MATTER:

YES NO

☐ ☐ a. Curriculum: _____

_____

☐ ☐ b. Employing interdisciplinary approaches: _____

_____

☐ ☐ c. Teaching techniques and materials: _____

_____

☐ ☐ d. Questioning techniques: _____

_____

☐ ☐ e. Motivational techniques: _____

_____

PLAN: _____

_____

_____

IV. COMMUNICATION SKILLS:

YES NO

☐ ☐ a. Oral and written communication skills: _____

_____

☐ ☐ b. Speech, articulation and voice quality: _____

_____

☐ ☐ c. Communication with parents: _____

_____

PLAN: _____

_____

_____

V. PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS:

YES NO

☐ ☐ a. Understands District Mission Statement: _____

_____

☐ ☐ b. Workshops, inservices or graduate courses: _____

_____

☐ ☐ c. Using district-wide resources (e.g., Dial-A-Teacher, SETRC, UleaD, EAP):

_____

☐ ☐ d. Learning about the community and community resources: _____

_____

☐ ☐ e. Working with colleagues to improve teaching skills: _____

_____

☐ ☐ f. Home involvement: _____

_____

☐ ☐ g. Understanding district operations: _____

_____

PLAN: _____

_____

_____

VI. MISCELLANEOUS:

YES NO

☐ ☐ a. Needs a building orientation: _____

_____

☐ ☐ b. Understanding building procedures: _____

_____

☐ ☐ c. Understanding your contractual rights: _____

_____

☐ ☐ d. Understanding the role of Student Support Services: _____

_____

☐ ☐ e. Interpreting district policies: _____

_____

☐ ☐ f. Understanding district evaluation process: _____

_____

☐ ☐ g. Understanding annual testing requirements: _____

_____

☐ ☐ h. Understanding your mentor's role:_____

_____

☐ ☐ i. Understanding your responsibilities as an intern:_____

_____

☐ ☐ j. Understanding the Career in Teaching Program:_____

_____

PLAN: _____

_____

_____

Appendix B

Intern Status Report

November ☐ February ☐ Other ☐

Intern's Name: _____ School: _____

Certification: _____ Grade/Subject/Level: _____

Mentor's Name: _____ Telephone Number: _____

Observation Dates: _____

Conference Dates: _____

PROFICIENT: Performance meets or exceeds professional expectations for interns.
SHOWS GROWTH:Performance continues to improve in areas indicated
NEEDS ADDITIONAL WORK:Performance needs improvement in areas indicated.

1. Teaching and Learning:

Connects to the student's world and content
Celebrates the learning process
Uses knowledge of human development
Creates a positive learning environment

☐ Proficient
☐ Shows Growth
☐ Needs Additional Work

2. Classroom Management:

☐ Proficient
☐ Shows Growth
☐ Needs Additional Work

3. Professional Development and Collegial Interaction:

☐ Proficient
☐ Shows Growth
☐ Needs Additional Work

4. Professional Involvement Beyond Established Service Delivery: The Classroom

☐ Proficient
☐ Shows Growth
☐ Needs Additional Work

5. Home Involvement:

- ☐ Proficient
- ☐ Shows Growth
- ☐ Needs Additional Work

6. Community Relationships:

- ☐ Proficient
- ☐ Shows Growth
- ☐ Needs Additional Work

7. Promoting and Enhancing the Status of the Profession:

- ☐ Proficient
- ☐ Shows Growth
- ☐ Needs Additional Work

Mentor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Intern's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Intern may attach a response or comments.
Please return form, under seal, to Mentor Program Coordinator, CIT Office, CO-2.

Appendix C

Intern Mid-Year Unsatisfactory Report

NOTE: Complete this report if an intern is having serious difficulty in fulfilling one or more of the professional expectations for teachers. This report is to be submitted to the Mentor Program Coordinator by January 15.

Intern: _____ School: _____

Mentor: _____ Date: _____

Date of Early Warning Report: _____

Name of Intern's Immediate Supervisor: _____

Date(s) of contact(s) with Administrator: _____

Describe the comments of the Intern's immediate Supervisor regarding the Intern's performance. _____

_____

_____

_____

Please describe the continuing area(s) of serious difficulty and summary of actions taken by the mentor. _____

_____

_____

_____

Prognosis/additional CIT Panel supports requested: _____

_____

_____

Intern Comment: (may be submitted with this report or sent under seal to the Mentor Program Coordinator, CIT Office, CO-2).

_____ _____

Intern's Signature* Date

*Signature indicates that this report has been seen only, not approved.)

_____ _____

Mentor's Signature Date

Send report under seal to Mentor Program Coordinator, CO-2.

Appendix D

Status Report on Mentor

Mentor's Name:_____ Date:_____

Intern's Name:_____ School:_____

Please comment on the ways in which your mentor worked with you in the areas listed below. Feel free to add other appropriate comments about your work with the mentor.

1. In what specific ways has your mentor advanced your knowledge of teaching and learning (i.e., connecting the student's world and content; celebrating the learning process; using knowledge of human development; creating a positive learning environment)?

2. In what specific ways has your mentor helped you advance your skills in the area of classroom management?

3. In what specific ways has your mentor encouraged your professional development, collegial interaction, and involvement beyond the classroom (i.e., school/district activities, workshops, etc.)?

4. In what ways has your mentor assisted your participation in home involvement?

5. In what specific ways has your mentor assisted your participation in community relationships?

6. In what specific ways has your mentor helped you enhance your sense of teacher professionalism (i.e., responsibilities to the profession, membership in professional organizations, etc.)?

Intern's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Mentor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Mentor may attach a response or comment. Please return under seal to Mentor Program Coordinator, CIT Office, CO-2.

Appendix E

Parent Survey

Rochester City School District

Parent Input Form

PART 1 – Please indicate the ways in which communication between you and your child's teacher has occurred during this school year by checking all the following boxes that apply:

- ☐ I phoned the teacher.
- ☐ Teacher phoned me.
- ☐ I wrote to the teacher.
- ☐ Teacher wrote to me.
- ☐ I came to the school.
- ☐ Teacher made a home visit.
- ☐ I visited or helped in the classroom..
- ☐ I attended a parent-teacher conference.
- ☐ I attended open house.
- ☐ I attended other school activities.
- ☐ I contacted the school when my child was absent.
- ☐ I signed and returned all report cards.
- ☐ I gave the school my home phone number.
- ☐ I gave the school an emergency phone number.
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

PART 2 – For each of the following statements, check the box of the response that best reflects your knowledge. Feel free to add comments in the spaces provided.

PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION

1. My child's teacher is accessible and responsive to me when I call or want to meet.
   - ☐ 1 Usually
   - ☐ 2 Sometimes
   - ☐ 3 Rarely
   - ☐ 4 Don't Know
   - ☐ 5 Doesn't Apply

   Comment: _____

2. The teacher makes clear what my child is expected to learn in this class.
   - ☐ 1 Usually
   - ☐ 2 Sometimes
   - ☐ 3 Rarely
   - ☐ 4 Don't Know
   - ☐ 5 Doesn't Apply

   Comment: _____

3. The teacher makes clear how my child is expected to behave in class.
   - ☐ 1 Usually
   - ☐ 2 Sometimes
   - ☐ 3 Rarely
   - ☐ 4 Don't Know
   - ☐ 5 Doesn't Apply

   Comment: _____

4. The teacher contacts me promptly with concerns about my child's academic or behavioral performance.
   - ☐ 1 Usually
   - ☐ 2 Sometimes
   - ☐ 3 Rarely
   - ☐ 4 Don't Know
   - ☐ 5 Doesn't Apply

   Comment: _____

5. The teacher responds clearly when I have questions about application of classroom rules to my child.
   - ☐ 1 Usually
   - ☐ 2 Sometimes
   - ☐ 3 Rarely
   - ☐ 4 Don't Know
   - ☐ 5 Doesn't Apply

   Comment: _____

6. At parent-teacher conferences, and when I ask, my child's teacher explains the meaning of grades and how they were achieved.
   - ☐ 1 Usually
   - ☐ 2 Sometimes
   - ☐ 3 Rarely
   - ☐ 4 Don't Know
   - ☐ 5 Doesn't Apply

   Comment: _____

7. The teacher informs me when my child's attendance or punctuality becomes a concern.
   - ☐ 1 Usually
   - ☐ 2 Sometimes
   - ☐ 3 Rarely
   - ☐ 4 Don't Know
   - ☐ 5 Doesn't Apply

   Comment: _____

8. The teacher deals with me in a fair and respectful manner.
   - ☐ 1 Usually
   - ☐ 2 Sometimes
   - ☐ 3 Rarely
   - ☐ 4 Don't Know
   - ☐ 5 Doesn't Apply

   Comment: _____

HOME INVOLVEMENT

9. When I ask, the teacher suggests ways I can help my child learn at home.
   - ☐ 1 Usually
   - ☐ 2 Sometimes
   - ☐ 3 Rarely
   - ☐ 4 Don't Know
   - ☐ 5 Doesn't Apply

   Comment: _____

10. My child's teacher encourages continuation of learning at home and in the community.
    - ☐ 1 Usually
    - ☐ 2 Sometimes
    - ☐ 3 Rarely
    - ☐ 4 Don't Know
    - ☐ 5 Doesn't Apply

    Comment: _____

11. My child's teacher welcomes me to visit the classroom at mutually convenient times.
    - ☐ 1 Usually
    - ☐ 2 Sometimes
    - ☐ 3 Rarely
    - ☐ 4 Don't Know
    - ☐ 5 Doesn't Apply

    Comment: _____

12. The teacher welcomes and considers information which I provide in order to help my child.
    - ☐ 1 Usually
    - ☐ 2 Sometimes
    - ☐ 3 Rarely
    - ☐ 4 Don't Know
    - ☐ 5 Doesn't Apply

    Comment: _____

13. As needed, the teacher and I develop a cooperative strategy to help my child.
    - ☐ 1 Usually
    - ☐ 2 Sometimes
    - ☐ 3 Rarely
    - ☐ 4 Don't Know
    - ☐ 5 Doesn't Apply

    Comment: _____

Child's name: _____

Teacher's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian's Name: (PLEASE PRINT)

_____

Signature of Parent/Guardian:

_____

Date: _____

Please return the completed form directly to your child's teacher no later than February 27, 1999. Thank you.

ASPECTS OF MY CHILD'S PROGRESS

14. My child's teacher assigns clear and meaningful homework.
    - ☐ 1 Usually
    - ☐ 2 Sometimes
    - ☐ 3 Rarely
    - ☐ 4 Don't Know
    - ☐ 5 Doesn't Apply

    Comment: _____

15. My child's teacher provides feedback on homework and tests.
    - ☐ 1 Usually
    - ☐ 2 Sometimes
    - ☐ 3 Rarely
    - ☐ 4 Don't Know
    - ☐ 5 Doesn't Apply

    Comment: _____

16. The teacher supports my child in developing good study habits.
    - ☐ 1 Usually
    - ☐ 2 Sometimes
    - ☐ 3 Rarely
    - ☐ 4 Don't Know
    - ☐ 5 Doesn't Apply

    Comment: _____

17. The teacher recognizes and builds upon my child's interests and abilities.
    - ☐ 1 Usually
    - ☐ 2 Sometimes
    - ☐ 3 Rarely
    - ☐ 4 Don't Know
    - ☐ 5 Doesn't Apply

    Comment: _____

18. The teacher encourages my child to work hard to succeed.
    - ☐ 1 Usually
    - ☐ 2 Sometimes
    - ☐ 3 Rarely
    - ☐ 4 Don't Know
    - ☐ 5 Doesn't Apply

    Comment: _____

19. The teacher shares my high expectations for my child's learning and behavior.
    - ☐ 1 Usually
    - ☐ 2 Sometimes
    - ☐ 3 Rarely
    - ☐ 4 Don't Know
    - ☐ 5 Doesn't Apply

    Comment: _____

20. Any additional relevant comments:

    _____

    _____

    _____

National Commission on Teaching & America's Future

Web site: http://www.nctaf.org

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