

Experience Speaks

The Impact of Mentoring in the Classroom and Beyond

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Dear Colleague:

Several years ago, The AVI CHAI Foundation brought the Jewish New Teacher Project (JNTP) to Jewish day schools (see box, page 2) to attend to the high turnover of, and perceived lack of support for, new teachers in those schools. Our hope was to offer new Jewish day school teachers—particularly in Judaic studies—mentoring support that would facilitate their acclimation to the demands of the job and thereby increase the likelihood that they would remain in the field.

Fairly quickly we saw that the program was doing what we had hoped and much more. We witnessed what in retrospect should have been obvious—the program was as powerful for its mentors as it was for the new teachers, if not more so. We began to see that the mentors were learning a language for thinking about effective teaching and learning that was entirely new to them and was not generally common within day schools as a whole.

As such, we wondered if we could concretely capture and make explicit the tacit knowledge the mentors were accumulating. Simply put, “What were the mentors learning that could help improve the teaching and learning in their schools overall?” This question led to our commissioning the Research Center for Leadership in Action (RCLA) at the Wagner School at NYU (see box, page 3) to work with a team of mentors in making this growing understanding available and writ large for school leaders and colleagues to consider and to imagine operationalizing more broadly.

This report makes clear that the mentors—whether veteran teachers in individual schools or visiting mentors itinerantly serving multiple schools—are becoming

reservoirs of ideas and strategies, for use within and beyond the classroom that would benefit their schools overall. With that said, it is not always obvious how to share practical knowledge within a school (or any other organization for that matter). We therefore recommend that in reading this you consider not only how the ideas resonate with what you would hope to implement in your school but also how you could imagine implementing these ideas for school improvement.

For example, how might you work toward a future in your school wherein a child’s learning no longer depends on the luck of the draw as to which 4th grade teacher she gets? What is the conversation about teaching and learning you want to see happening in your school? How could you help teachers across disciplines and grade levels develop common ways of thinking about instruction and common ways of considering student work?

This report has not captured every lesson learned, nor does it provide you with a roadmap. It is meant to open your eyes to your hidden or potential assets and to propel you on a journey of maximizing the value of those assets. We very much look forward to hearing what you take away from this glimpse at the exemplary practice and thoughtful reflection of the JNTP mentors.

We salute Bethany Godsoe, the report’s lead author, and the team of mentors (see box below) for participating in probing conversations, generalizing from their particular experiences, and offering the field of Jewish day school education this important set of insights.

Sarah Kass and Deena Fuchs
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Learning from Our Mentors

In September 2006, the AVI CHAI Foundation and NYU Wagner's Research Center for Leadership in Action launched a collaborative project with eight Jewish New Teacher Project (JNTP) mentors to document what the mentors are learning from their training and practice with JNTP. Our hunch was that the mentors were developing a unique perspective that could be of benefit to their schools and even beyond.

Because of the non-evaluative "confidant" role mentors play, their relationships with new teachers are safe ones within which individual new teachers feel comfortable discussing challenges. Through their contact with multiple teachers and administrators, mentors also have a bird's eye view of a school. This perspective means that mentors can often be in a good position to observe general issues that exist across classrooms or even across schools and to posit effective solutions.

Through a set of interviews and focus groups, we collected stories from the mentors' experience with new teachers to shed light on the following question:

As a veteran teacher and mentor, what am I learning that could help my school overall?

We found that the mentors are developing tangible and practical insights about how to address critical school challenges. We highlight three general areas in this report:

- Attracting and retaining excellent teachers;
- Ensuring a consistently good educational experience for all students; and
- Fostering professional growth and development for teachers.

We recognize that these are some of the very issues that school administrators grapple with on a daily basis and know that you will have your own insights into the questions raised in this report. We invite you to use the mentors' reflections as a contribution to your own efforts at addressing these challenges.

About the Jewish New Teacher Project

The Jewish New Teacher Project (JNTP), based on work of the New Teacher Center (NTC) at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and funded by the AVI CHAI Foundation, the UJA Federation of New York, and an anonymous foundation, has developed a fully integrated and formative interactive model of teacher support to recruit and retain quality teachers in Jewish day schools. Support strategies and practices promote teacher autonomy through ongoing self-assessment, reflection, planning, and inquiry into practice. The primary goal of the JNTP is to provide a program of support and assessment in which the advancement of skills and knowledge is continuous during the first two years of teaching and beyond.

A strong, supportive relationship between a mentor and beginning teacher is fundamental to the success of all support strategies. New teachers have weekly on-site contact with a mentor, who is an exemplary veteran teacher. Mentors observe and coach, offer emotional support, assist with short and long-term planning, design classroom management strategies, teach demonstration lessons, provide curriculum resources, and facilitate communication with the principal. Guiding mentors in supporting new teachers is an ongoing cycle of formative assessment, which revolves around the development of each teacher's goals and individual learning plan.

Before we delve into the mentors' perspectives on school challenges, it is important to note that the mentoring program itself is already making a difference. First and foremost, JNTP has been a resource to schools supporting new teachers. The stories we gathered from the mentors demonstrated that mentoring:

- Provides moral support through the highly challenging first two years of teaching;
- Establishes a framework for new teachers to help them think about their roles and purposes, concrete tasks such as lesson planning, and student assessment;
- Leads to enhanced instruction, particularly through the use of data and non-evaluative observation;
- Helps new teachers see the broader picture in terms of student development and appropriate learning goals;
- Teaches new teachers how to be reflective about their own practice, a skill that stays with them long after the mentoring ends;
- Facilitates connections to the broader school community and school-wide philosophy, mission, and goals;
- Helps new teachers handle interactions with parents in productive ways; and
- Gives new teachers confidence to contribute more broadly within their schools.

In some schools, the impact mentoring makes on new teachers, their development, and their commitment to their school is so strong that principals highlight their mentoring program when they recruit. These schools are able to attract teachers looking for a place to receive training, guidance, and support as they develop their practice.

Beyond their positive influence on individual new teachers, mentors are developing important educational leadership skills and putting them into practice in their own classrooms and beyond. At times, mentors facilitate exchanges among new teachers, veteran teachers, and administrators. Their work can spark conversations about curriculum, instruction, and learning within and across grades and disciplines while they develop themselves professionally in the process.

Mentors report that the JNTP training provides them with a framework for deepening their own understanding of instruction, even after years of teaching, and as such, it further professionalizes their work. Specifically, mentoring can enhance mentors' listening skills, improve their own reflective practice, and teach them classroom observation skills. They report that it enhances their ability to articulate clear learning goals for their students and returns hard data on whether they're reaching their goals. Many also appreciate the opportunity they've had to connect with one another and develop a sense of community, while enhancing their commitment to their respective schools.

About RCLA

The Research Center for Leadership in Action (RCLA) approaches leadership as a collective achievement. It supports a shift in attention from leaders to leadership and works with practitioners to build knowledge from the ground up. We conduct practice grounded research on leadership; create customized leadership development programs that emphasize reflective practice and action learning; and create structured opportunities for leaders to come together to explore the complexities of their leadership challenges and collectively advance their work. We do this work across the public and nonprofit sectors in the US and globally. Our partners have included the Ford Foundation, Open Society Institute, Annie E. Casey Foundation, AVINA Foundation, Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, and Accenture. RCLA was launched in 2003 with core support from the Ford Foundation.

Attracting and Retaining Excellent Teachers

Through their work with new hires, the mentors have had occasion to reflect on the hiring and induction practices that make for successful teachers. Throughout this report, we describe a framing question, and then reflect a story or comments from mentors in the JNTP project, as well as associated analysis or questions prompted by the mentors' experience.

Framing Question I

Given that resource constraints and the academic calendar often cause schools to hire new teachers at the last minute, what are some predictors of success to look for in candidates and how can we structure the hiring process to assess those characteristics?

Reflecting on their impressions of some of the most successful new teachers they've worked with, the mentors provided insight into characteristics schools might consider looking for in new teachers (beyond content expertise). A portrait of one new teacher, whose success was something of a surprise, raises interesting questions about the hiring process.

One [of the new teachers], who is phenomenal—and I'm delighted that he is back because I didn't think he would be, is someone from another country who [just] ended up in teaching. They were very lucky because he is a very special person. He is one of the best people I've worked with because he was so receptive. When I would observe his classes and we did diagrams of how the dynamic was working in the classroom—who was yelling out and who he was calling on and so on—he just looked at it and got it immediately. It was really a beautiful moment when he said, "Oh wow, I'm doing that?" I didn't have to say a word. I've had many moments like that with him where he is just really receptive and he gets it quickly.

He genuinely loves science and teaching. You know, he genuinely loves kids. There's the real sincere, earnest presence, and you know when you're in his presence that he is thoroughly knowledgeable. It could have gone any way. They had no way of knowing that a [scientist] would really be interested in teaching seventh grade kids.

He comes up with creative lessons every day. He is not content to just kind of float as so many other teachers do. He's just creative. He works hard. He'll go home and come back with ideas and websites and presentations, and he's organized. So they lucked out. Those are just so many good qualities of good teaching.

Considerations

- If receptiveness—to feedback and to new ideas—is an important characteristic of a new teacher, one that allows him or her to rapidly enhance his teaching skills, how could the interview and model lesson be shaped to assess this?
- How might the hiring process help us discover whether a teacher is able to learn quickly?
- How can we use the hiring process to discover the depth of a teacher's passion for education and/or subject area in addition to his or her knowledge of the subject?
- What are some indicators we could use to assess creativity, work ethic, and organizational abilities during the hiring process?
- How might we assess a teacher's commitment to learning and developing his craft at the hiring stage?

The preceding portrait raises several points about the potential importance of new teachers entering their role as learners as well as content experts. Several mentors also noted the importance of recruiting and cultivating teachers who have a strong alignment with the school's philosophy and mission and understand the broader expectations of the school community. One mentor shared a story of a new teacher who was challenged in her first year by not entering with a clear sense of the culture and expectations.

One teacher started off taking over for an assistant teacher who was on maternity leave. She was an Israeli and wasn't even familiar with American culture. Then the head teacher left for maternity leave, and this new teacher became the head teacher. I think what she faced is classic—getting used to a culture, dealing with new expectations, and facing parents who were demanding and not necessarily satisfied. I wondered what would happen if we weren't working together—expectations and protocol are not clearly stated. When we worked together the following year, she still had difficulty with classroom management, but we started off where we left off the year before. We worked on a lot of different things, and she really came into her own. She learned the culture of the school. She had someone to vent to; someone who knew the school and what it was like to be an assistant teacher there; who knew what it was like to be new to the school; and who knew the right people to talk to, the right things to say, how to prevent things, how to fix things; who knew some of the kids, some of the families, and how to talk to parents.

Mentors observed that the hiring process can be an opportunity to begin educating a new teacher about the broader school community and that some schools use it that way. They wonder how discussions of the school's mission and approach during the hiring process can give new teachers a head start on understanding the expectations of the broader community and whether these conversations can be useful in assessing overall fit. This may help to indicate a new teacher's ability to adapt quickly to the school and have early success as well as whether she will stay for the long term.

Framing Question 2

How can schools help new teachers anticipate, prepare for, and deal with some of the early challenges they face?

Mentoring is a very important piece of successful new teacher induction, but it is just one piece in a broader effort to prepare and support new teachers. From their vantage point as a key support resource for new teachers, mentors are often privy to the challenges their new teachers face, and they are learning a great deal about what it takes to help a new teacher develop—both within the mentoring relationship and beyond.

Below we share four vignettes from the mentors' experience with new teachers that help us identify some of the common challenges these teachers face and offer questions that their schools might consider as they seek to address them. We do not imagine that these challenges will be entirely surprising to administrators who think a great deal about new teachers' needs but rather hope that the mentors' unique perspective provides new insight into the challenges and possible solutions.

Challenge: Anticipating student needs and lesson planning

This teacher is just a natural with kids. He had a lot of experience in summer camps, so classroom management was relatively easy for him. His challenges were in terms of structuring the lessons, challenging the group, and then differentiating. We talked through various lesson plans and what the goals were for each particular group.

So this particular teacher had three or four different preps his first year, one of which was that blank slate—a Jewish philosophy class. You know, “teach them whatever you want.” The teacher who had preceded him left the school and did not leave any notes behind. So he asked the kids, “what do you want to do?” and gave them a questionnaire. This is what

he came up with and then I was able to help him find various resources and talk about how long you'd want to spend on one topic versus another, what you might want to cover, and what you might not want to cover.

And then you get the culture, where these kids are at, the barometer of their religious beliefs maybe. So we could talk about that. I was able to be helpful there.

Considerations

- How can we help teachers anticipate student needs by learning to ask the right questions as they develop their first lesson plans? How can we help teachers get to know their students early and well?
- How can we support teachers in developing appropriate lessons when they do not have the benefit of a defined curriculum?
- What might schools do to help their new teachers get up to speed quickly on the culture of the school?

Challenge: Tapping into strengths

I had a new teacher who was actually a huge challenge, and I wasn't sure. I really wasn't sure, and I started to counsel her quietly...I encouraged her to teach the choir within the school. She was very musically gifted, and that opened a whole world of relationships for her with the students. They saw her differently and helped her in her early instruction in the class...The principal saw her differently. She began to see herself differently.

Considerations

- How can schools help new teachers identify and tap into their strengths and talents and bring those to bear on their teaching?

Challenge: Working with parents

There was the time when we were using the tool for analyzing student work. We went through the class, and he had given an exam. We went through. We analyzed. We figured out which kids needed what, what their learning needs were, etcetera, etcetera. He called me up that night, and he said, “I have to tell you a story.” He had given back the exams to the students, and a parent called him, very irate, and said, “I don't understand. My child studied for this exam. I know she studied for the exam. I studied with her. She knew this stuff, and she got fifteen points lower than she did on the last exam. I don't understand what's going on.” And he said, “One second, let me check the data.” And he pulled out our analysis of student work. He says, “You're right. Your daughter really knew the content very well, and her recall was really

good. But she lost points on analysis, and these were some of the questions that looked at her ability to analyze. My next goal for her is to be able to learn to analyze the text better." There was silence at the other end of the phone. The parent was very appreciative that this teacher knew her child and was able to identify the particular area and skill. And he just called me up to tell me what a wonderful, glorious moment that was for him.

Considerations

- What might we do to support new teachers in their interactions with parents?

Challenge: Connecting with colleagues

I remember one new teacher I was working with who was very, very frustrated. This was a school where there was no communal space for teachers. She was struggling with a particular class and curriculum, and I said to her, "I bet there are other teachers in your grade who are struggling as well." I encouraged her to send out an e-mail to all the teachers in that grade and facilitate a meeting. This was a brand new teacher really having a tough time, and she felt empowered to do that. All the teachers in the grade showed up, and in fact, they said that they're all struggling with the same thing. She felt fabulous afterward that she had convened the meeting. So not only did she take the initiative to organize it and bring communication among her colleagues, but in the process, she became reassured that they all were having a tough time with this class. The result was that she took a little more authority in her class, and dialogue was open with her colleagues, which it hadn't been until then.

Considerations

- How can we help new teachers connect with colleagues to share information and resources and get support?

Mentors can be well-positioned to help new teachers through many of these challenges and opportunities, including connecting them with colleagues who can provide additional kinds of support. However, many mentors have noticed that some of the most successful hires have been when the principal considers it "his or her hire." In these cases, mentors' have observed principals investing themselves personally in the development of the new teacher. Some of the things mentors have noticed these principals doing include:

- Checking in, in a non-evaluative way, with the teachers;
- Being present in their classroom on a regular basis— if only for five minutes at a time;
- Making sure the new teacher does not get assigned all the difficult students in year one; and
- Creating a teaching schedule that allows new teachers ample time for preparation and connecting with supportive colleagues between classes.

Ensuring a Consistently Good Educational Experience

As Jewish day schools seek creative ways to ensure that students receive a consistently good educational experience, mentors are learning about what it takes to help new teachers meet that standard. This work with the new teachers has also given some of them a window into strategies for enhancing educational quality more broadly.

Framing Question 3

How can a school ensure that a child's education is not a function of the luck of the draw (i.e., dependent upon which teacher s/he gets)?

Several mentors shared stories of successful strategies they've observed that enhance the consistency and quality of the educational experience. Below we share three stories of different strategies.

Making school-wide goals explicit and supporting teachers in achieving them

This year they brought in someone who specializes in differentiating instruction because their philosophy in this particular school is teaching a whole child. They made it clear to the entire faculty at orientation that this is a goal. To help make that happen, the leadership team is meeting with [the specialist] all year. He's working with them to help them make it happen because he can't get into every classroom. He doesn't have the time, and they don't have the money. They hired him to be their mentor, and he's also doing workshops throughout the year. I was able to sit in on one of his meetings this year. There were six or seven of us in the room, and he just was so open. He gave us his e-mail, his ideas, his websites, places to go for management. He talked about what to do in this case, what the classroom looked like, how we could redesign the room. That was before school started, and he's going to be back throughout the year. It isn't just a wonderful inspiration and then boom. He's been hired to work with that school all year. I think that's a phenomenal gift, and I think that's going to really help this philosophy be implemented.

Providing tools for teachers to manage quality

I remember this teacher just looking at what we were scripting. She just saw it and said, "Wow, I only have three kids who were talking throughout." But she wouldn't have noticed that if it hadn't been written and placed right in front of her. And if I had said it to her, it wouldn't have had the same impact because it would have been, "This is my word; this is what I have observed, as opposed to a data-based system that allows for growth. I went into her classroom last week and saw that again. I also scripted and just showed her the lesson. We were talking about lesson planning this time, and she just saw, "Oh, I lost them over here." She was able to really point to it, and then after she pointed to those

places, we said, "Why?" And she saw that each time she was switching topics. But it only worked because it was really right in front of her, and I didn't say it to her. She just saw it and came to it on her own.

Identifying and addressing common issues

One of the issues that came up in my discussions with all the teachers, which they allowed me to share with the principal, was the issue of how to deal with assistant teachers and what to do with them, especially for a new teacher who doesn't even know what to do with him or herself yet. So I raised that as something that a lot of the teachers were addressing, and he has shared with me that maybe in the summer that will be one of the things we will focus on this year. At the same time, I worked with one of the teachers on writing down a list, a plan, of what would be helpful. With her permission, I told the principal that she had this, and he was going to ask her for it and use it as even just a basis to get feedback from other teachers. We created something as a starting point.

Framing Question 4

Knowing that there are examples of effective teaching in every school, how can schools facilitate the sharing of best practices?

The mentors offered multiple examples of teachers—new and veteran—sharing their practice within and across disciplines in ways that could enhance educational experience for their students. One mentor shared two examples of teachers initiating this kind of sharing themselves:

One of the teachers went to a workshop last year, and she learned all about rubrics. She came back so excited and so motivated to use rubrics. She shared that with me, and we went through it together, and then she used it in her class and told the administrator about it. He asked her to present it to the rest of her colleagues in that grade. Another teacher spent a very long time last year building a writer's workshop program, and her administrator asked her to present it to the faculty at the beginning of this year.

Sometimes this sharing requires a bit of facilitation, though, and some mentors have tried to provide that for the new teachers they support. Below, we share one example from an in-house mentor and pose several questions about what it might take to facilitate this kind of sharing more broadly.

Last year, when I was working with two second grade assistant teachers, we happened to be working on the same topic. Each of them came up with completely different lessons. It was very interesting for me to see, but that wasn't where it ended. When I went into the classroom to watch one

of the teachers, the other teacher came in with me, and we saw the lesson together. Afterward, we all discussed it. They shared their lessons with each other. And after that, I know that the two of them started talking to each other because it was something that they had to prepare every week. They started going over with each other what they were preparing and sharing with each other their ideas in terms of what they were doing.

Considerations

- What might help teachers feel comfortable and confident letting others visit their classes?
- What might come out of a peer-to-peer visit like this?
- What common frameworks or language do teachers need to have a productive conversation about their practice?

In some schools, such as the one in the story below, this kind of peer-to-peer observation is beginning to spread. This more detailed story provides a springboard for considering what comes of this kind of sharing and what might make it possible.

At one point, I was just sitting in the teachers' room with the head of (one) department, who works with teachers as well, and she said to me, "I want to go into my mentee's class, but I am uncomfortable. He is older than I am and knows more of the subject, and even though I am the head of the department and a more experienced teacher, it is just uncomfortable." So I started talking to her about it, "Well, the rule of observation is not to evaluate," I said. "You are coming in just to collect data and then you will look at the data together." That was a totally new idea for her, and it took away the discomfort because the discomfort is only in terms of being an evaluator.

Considerations

- How might we help teachers understand and get comfortable with the notion of non-evaluative observation?

This interaction led another JNTP mentor and me to want to share some of the skills that we had learned with the rest of the school. We knew that (another) department was already thinking about peer mentoring, so we spoke with the head of that department and the administrator at the school about doing a presentation. The head of the Talmud department who I had been speaking with heard about it and said, "Oh, can we join also?" We ended up presenting to both departments, which was helpful to us too because it taught us about effective ways of presenting to this type of a group. Today, the school has teachers visiting each other's classes. The sharing and dialogue about teaching have spread throughout both departments.

Considerations

- What kinds of training might teachers be interested in getting around observation or reflective listening?
- How might mentors serve as a resource to schools looking to promote this kind of exchange?

The same mentor shared a story from a different school, where some teachers are also opening their classrooms to observation.

Just the other day, my mentee and I sat in on two classes with veteran teachers who teach the same students as he does. The observation allowed the new teacher and me to reflect on the teaching we saw, and he followed up by having lengthy conversations with both of these teachers. Interestingly, the veteran teachers were hungry for feedback from the new teacher! The visit and subsequent conversations opened up the lines of communication between the new teacher and two more experienced teachers who could be great resources for him while giving the veteran teachers the opportunity to be reflective about their own teaching—to rethink why they do what they do and why it works (and when it doesn't).

Considerations

- What value do new teachers add to the relationship with veteran teachers? What kinds of insights might they have to share?

Throughout our conversations with mentors, we have been struck by the ways in which their participation in JNTP is affecting their own sense of their professional development and practice. In this section, we share three stories from their experience that might also help us understand how to open opportunities for teachers to learn and grow.

Developing a learning community

I think this is a wonderful thing because the mentors keep learning. I think for me, just as a professional, it's not only doing the work, which I love; but it's also this community that we have as mentors. The mentor forums that keep us talking to each other and raising issues that we have in our own work with our new teachers. The academies also because there is so much to learn. We'll be doing this for ten years, and there is still going to be a new book to read and protocol to try. If a principal can create an environment in a school where we're all learners and we all have different things to learn and to teach each other, that really is a professional learning community. I mean that's the catch-all word these days; but I think when it works, it can become a really enriching part of a school's culture and has messages that go beyond the school building and the community. It's a great thing.

Building commitment to a school

The administration and I both felt that I wanted to do something else in the school besides teach. Somebody mentioned mentoring. You know, I was thinking about going to work in a different school and seeing what they had to offer in some of the different positions, and I had people talking about all kinds of different possibilities. Somehow when I heard "mentoring," that was something that really seemed to click with me, and I think that they also thought it was a good idea.

Preparing to achieve professional goals

It was an opportunity offered that I thought would be very good in terms of opening up new vistas for me because I had experience in informal staff training from summer camping, but nothing in terms of mentoring or working with faculty, and at the time I still ultimately wanted to end up in a position like I have now, which is some kind of administrative position. I thought this would be an excellent skills set to learn, and I think that I was right on all those counts...This lit up a lot of light bulbs over my head for me in terms of reconnecting with my beginning years as a teacher experientially. It made me that much more in touch with my own classroom methodology and shook me up a little bit in a good way...I don't think it's a side benefit. I think it's tremendous. I think it makes the teacher feel valued by the administration and the school culture as a whole that we now just don't trust you to teach kids, we trust you to teach teachers how to teach. And it was a big honor.

In effect, the role of mentor is helping diversify the career path for some teachers. Giving teachers the title "mentor teacher" confers status and acknowledges their achievements. It is clear that the mentors appreciate the opportunities their new role affords them and are contributing broadly to the schools in which they work, thereby increasing the schools' capacity to deliver a strong educational experience. This then raises the question: What other kinds of roles might we imagine creating that would allow teachers to grow, feel appreciated, and contribute their talents more broadly within their schools?

Looking Ahead

The vision of the mentoring project can be stretched to help build school goals and climate because the goals and climate that the mentor wants to establish with the new teacher are in a sense very similar to goals and climate...in a school as a whole. You need the administrators to be involved in shaping this. It has to be part of the faculty, but it also has to come from the top. I would just like to throw to the administrators the question, "How does this or how could this impact me? How could this culture be created, what are the benefits of this culture, and how could this culture impact your school?"

— JNTP Mentor

As a school administrator or teacher, you have no doubt thought a lot about the challenges and questions raised in this report. Here at AVI CHAI, we are interested to learn more about your thinking about this topic. We are interested in discovering with you how mentors might serve as a resource for your work in the areas covered in this report.

We encourage you to take this publication and its findings into your school and start a broader dialogue about the issues presented here. For example, you could use this publication and the following questions as a jumping off

point for a conversation among administrators and new and seasoned teachers:

1. Which of the areas presented in the report seems most pressing in terms of the needs of your school?
2. Are there other challenging areas of work within your school where you think the mentors might have something to add?
3. Which ideas strike you as most compelling? Which seem most do-able?
4. What might it take to begin incorporating some of these ideas in your school's work?

We hope you and your colleagues will explore both the issues behind and strategies toward improving the teaching and learning that happens in your school. We have already gleaned a great deal from the mentors in this project. We hope you can extend these learnings even further, support new teachers, enhance all children's educational experience, and continue to improve the teaching and learning that is central to your school's mission.

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