Miami-Dade County Public Schools

Office of Program Evaluation

1500 Biscayne Boulevard

Miami, Florida 33132

AN ANALYSIS OF THE PROGRAM

EARLY CAREER / EARLY PLACEMENT SUPPORT

IN

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mentoring and Induction for New Teachers

M. I. N. T.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the 2006-2007 school year, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) received grant funding from the Florida Department of Education that enabled the District to implement an induction program at six high-need schools. The induction program, *Assisting Teachers to Empower and Assist Mentees* (A-TEAM), was modeled after the induction program at the New Teacher Center, University of California, Santa Cruz. The District employed three Curriculum Support Specialists to serve as full-time mentors to 44 new elementary teachers in six high-need schools. As a result of the support provided, 95.6% of teachers in the program were retained. Additionally, the achievement of students of new teachers to whom a full-time mentor had been assigned increased as evidenced by the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) Report and Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) (Evaluation of the A-TEAM program, August 2008).

Successful implementation and completion of the A-TEAM project contributed to the creation of a district-wide mentoring and induction program for new teachers: *Mentoring and Induction for New Teachers* (MINT).

The MINT project was designed to provide new teachers with all the elements that are essential to impact teacher retention. These elements include: release time during the school day for mentors to observe and work with new teachers in their classrooms; careful selection, training, and support of mentors; mentoring related to professional teaching; support for administrators to understand and meet the needs of new teachers; and provision of new teacher networks through participation in professional learning communities and seminars.

It should be noted that through the ***FDOE Early Career/Early Placement Support Grant***, the District was able to provide additional support during the 2007-2008 to new teachers at selected six high-need schools. These six high need schools will be referred to as **MINT Treatment Schools (MINT-TS).** The additional support consisted of the following two components:
1. Full time mentoring support
2. Science training provided by FIU College of Arts and Sciences

The College of Arts and Science at Florida International University, provided new secondary science teachers with two days of training, including follow-up support, designed to increase content knowledge in specific areas, (i.e., biology, chemistry, physics, environmental science, etc.). This aspect of new teacher training is part of M-DCPS' district-wide effort to disseminate the State of Florida's new Math and Science Standards.

The grant proposal included the need to evaluate the project's main goal which was to "empower and retain highly qualified teachers and to increase student achievement." Specifically, the evaluation was designed to address the following two objectives of project MINT-TS:

1. Improve the retention of new teachers (education and non-education majors) who are assigned to teach at selected high-need schools.

2. Improve student achievement in reading by :

2.1)   increasing the number of regular students scoring at level 3 or higher as measured by comparing the 2007 to the 2008 FCAT scores, and

2.2)   decreasing the number of students scoring at high risk as measured by the 2007-2008 Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy (DIBELS).

The nation is currently experiencing a problem of retaining qualified school teachers. This problem is particularly pronounced in urban school districts, like the Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS). The M-DCPS has undertaken various initiatives to address this problem. Such an initiative is the implementation of the MINT program in six M-DCPS schools through funding from the Florida Department of Education. The evaluation of the implementation of the MINT-TS program revealed the following findings:

➢ The analysis of the retention data of the new teachers revealed that forty-five (45) out of 47 (or 96%) of the new teachers remained in the teaching profession. This exceeded the project goal of 90%. The other 2 teachers (or 4%) are still in the profession but as "Substitute teachers". Moreover, the majority of these new teachers (33 teachers or 70%) remained at the same MINT-TS schools.

➢ On average, students at the MINT-TS schools showed a modest 43 point increase in the SSS Developmental Scores as measured by the 2008 FCAT results in reading. Moreover, a comparison of the achievement of students in the MINT-TS schools and their counterparts in the control schools, as measured by the number of students scoring at level 3 or above on the reading portion of the FCAT, reveals that MINT-TS schools slightly outperformed the control schools (32.6% versus 30.9%).

➢ The percent decrease in the number of students at high risk ranged from a low of 15.3% (Oral Reading Fluency) to a high of 80% (Phoneme Segmentation Fluency). Overall the percent decrease in the number of students at high risk in reading as measured by DIBELS was 33.3% which far exceeded the project goal of 20%.

➢ The survey data of the new teachers revealed that the new teachers had a favorable opinion of the MINT-TS program especially in helping beginning teachers. They spoke favorably of the support they received from the mentors.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are made:

RECOMMENDATION ONE   :   *The MINT-TS project should continue to be implemented in the M-DCPS.*

RECOMMENDATION TWO   :   *The MINT-TS project should be expanded and offered at other M-DCPS schools.*

RECOMMENDATION THREE :   *Focus group sessions with MINT-TS teachers should be conducted by evaluators during the 2008-2009 school year to review the assistance and training provided to these teachers by the MINT-TS project in order to ascertain the effectiveness of these initiatives.*

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

Providing quality education to ALL children in Miami-Dade is one of the most important obligations of Miami-Dade County Public Schools and doing so hinges on the recruitment and retention of qualified and effective teachers. During a time when our nation is facing a critical shortage of teachers, M-DCPS needed to recruit more than 3,000 new teachers for the 2005-2006 school year. Recruiting these teachers poses a challenging task. Retaining these teachers is equally challenging because of the varied levels of education, experience, and expertise that these new teachers possess. M-DCPS recruits teachers through projects such as Teach for America and The New Teacher Project/Miami Teaching Fellows. They enter from other professions with limited training and experience in the field of education. Many of these new teachers are participants of the Alternative Professional Preparation Program. In most cases, these teachers are assigned to teach in high need schools. Thus, students who are most at risk are assigned teachers who have the least experience.

Within their first five years, nearly 30 percent of new teachers leave the education field. That number increases to 50 percent in low performing and difficult to staff schools (Gonzalez & Sosa, 1993). Research shows that 9.3 percent of new teachers do not even make it through their first full year (Weiss & Weiss, 1999). The reason for the vast number of promising teachers leaving is reportedly due to exhaustion, lack of confidence, and inadequate support (DePaul, 2000). Inevitably, the more "beginners" that leave the field, the more money that must be spent on recruiting, hiring, and training their replacements (Halford, 1999).

M-DCPS is the fourth-largest district in the nation, serving more than 370,000 students in a geographic region encompassing 2,000 square miles. The challenge of successfully preparing a student body that is multicultural, multilingual, and includes students with disabilities for postsecondary and career experiences is severely exacerbated by the high incidences of poverty and the limited English proficiency of many students the district serves. Miami Dade County's poverty rate is significantly higher than the national rate. Additionally, the City of Miami, where the high need schools targeted in this proposal are located, is among the poorest in the nation. M-DCPS strives to ensure that highly qualified teachers serve all students. The number of students projected to enter our school system within the next decade is estimated to increase by 40,000. In order to accommodate the student increase, the District is required to recruit and retain new teachers.

During the 2006-2007 school year, M-DCPS received grant funding from the Florida Department of Education that enabled the District to implement an induction program at six high-need schools. The induction program, *Assisting Teachers to Empower and Assist Mentees* (A-TEAM), was modeled after the induction program at the New Teacher Center, University of California, Santa Cruz. The District employed three Curriculum Support Specialists to serve as full-time mentors to 44 new elementary teachers in six high-need schools. As a result of the support provided, 95.6% of teachers in the program were retained. Additionally, the achievement of students of new teachers to whom a full-time mentor had been assigned increased as evidenced by the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) Report and Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT).

Successful implementation and completion of the A-TEAM project contributed to the creation of a district-wide mentoring and induction program for new teachers: *Mentoring and Induction for New Teachers* (MINT).

The development of the MINT program was influenced by a deep reflection on the lessons learned from the implementation of the A-TEAM project. Specifically:

LESSON ONE: *The new teacher's mentor is the single most important component of a high-quality mentoring program.*

Implementation of A-TEAM at the local level validated the research findings of Ellen Moir & Janet Glass, New Teacher Center, University of California, Santa Cruz which found that the most important feature of any high-quality induction program is the new teacher mentor. In their article, *Quality Induction: An Investment in Teachers*, Moir and Gless state that, "Occasional mentoring and "feel-good" support overlook the enormous instructional impact induction programs can have when they are focused on a teacher's classroom practices."

LESSON TWO: *New teachers need more than one year of support.*

Feedback received from new teachers that participated in the A-TEAM revealed that they would have preferred to receive another year of mentoring support. This finding confirms the findings of Harry K. Wong (2004), which indicated that induction involves more than just mentoring; it is a process of a new teacher becoming acclimated to all aspects of the district, and it continues for at least two to three years. MINT was developed to be a comprehensive three-year mentoring and induction program designed not only to acclimate new teachers to the District, school, and community but also to accelerate their use of best practices by providing sustained support during the first three years in the classroom.

LESSON THREE: *Increase the number of days of orientation prior to the start of the school year to prepare teachers that come from non-education backgrounds to teach in schools.*

During the 2006-2007 school year, 49.6% of the new teachers hired in the District were non-education majors. During the 2007-2008 school year, this number increased to 55%. In most cases, these mid-career new teachers never worked in a classroom setting. To that end, the District identified differentiated tracks that address the individualized needs of teachers that are hired from varied educational and experiential backgrounds, including education majors, non-education majors, and experienced teachers.

LESSON FOUR: *Professional development designed to meet the needs of new teachers is vital to their growth and development.*

All teachers participating in MINT will complete five core courses covering topics that, according to the research, have been deemed critical for new teacher development. In order to build capacity to provide large numbers of new teachers in the District with access to Core Learning Courses, the District will identify a cadre of National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) that will serve as instructors.

Based on the above lessons learned from the implementation of the A-TEAM project, the goals and objectives of the newly designed MINT program consisted of the following:

➢ MINT provided new teachers with all the elements that are essential to impact teacher retention. These elements include: release time during the school day for mentors to observe and work with new teachers in their classrooms; careful selection, training, and support of mentors; mentoring related to professional teaching; support for administrators to understand and meet the needs of new teachers; and provision of new teacher networks through participation in professional learning communities and seminars.

➢ MINT provided training to teachers serving as mentors, strategies for conducting weekly mentor forums, current research, and formative assessment tools. The District will work collaboratively with a consultant from the university who will serve as an advisor and resource.

➢ MINT contracted with the College of Arts and Science at Florida International University, to provide all new secondary science teachers with two days of training, including follow-up support, designed to increase content knowledge in specific areas, (i.e., biology, chemistry, physics, environmental science, etc.). This aspect of new teacher training is part of M-DCPS' district-wide effort to disseminate the State of Florida's new Mathematics and Science Standards.

DESIGN OF THE EVALUATION

1.   THE SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

To define the scope of the evaluation of the *"Mentoring and Induction for New Teachers (MINT)"* program, a number of evaluation questions were formulated based on the goals and objectives that were submitted by Miami-Dade County Public Schools to the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) in November 2007. The MINT application was a response to the FDOE request for proposals for their program entitled "*Early Career/Early Placement Support for Teachers in High Need Schools and Content Areas"*

2.   TARGET POPULATION

The target population of the evaluation consisted of several stakeholders. Specifically:

- ➢ New teachers assigned to teach at schools served by the MINT-TS program;
- ➢ Students taught by new teachers at schools served by the MINT-TS program;
- ➢ Students taught by new teachers at schools "comparable" to schools served by the MINT-TS program;
- ➢ Faculty and staff from Florida International University; and
- ➢ M-DCPS staff.

3.   PERFORMANCE MEASURES TO BE ANALYZED

As stated in the grant application, this evaluation will examine all the goals, objectives, and performance measures of the project. Specifically, the MINT-TS project is expected to achieve the following outcomes:

- ➢ 90% of new teachers in this program who are education majors and are teaching at selected high-need schools will remain in the profession for at least three years;

- ➢ 80% of new teachers in this program who are non-education majors and teach at high-need schools will remain in the profession for at least three years;

- ➢ Students of teachers in this program will demonstrate a 5% increase in the number scoring at Level 3 or higher in reading on the 2008 administration of the FCAT as compared to the 2007 administration of the FCAT;

- ➢ Students of teachers mentored through this program will demonstrate a 20% decrease in the number scoring at high risk in reading as measured by the 2008-2009 Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy (DIBELS).

Furthermore, the following analyses will also be conducted:

- ➢ A comparison of data collected from the high need-schools where teachers are participating in the MINT-TS program will be compared to the data collected from selected comparable high-need

schools where teachers are not supported by this program. The comparable schools will be selected based on the demographics of the schools and their designation as "high need" schools.

➢ The extent of new teachers' mastery of the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (FEAPs) and Teacher Effectiveness will be evidenced by their annual evaluation using the Professional Assessment and Evaluation System (PACES).

4.   SOURCES OF THE DATA

The source of data for the evaluation of the MINT-TS program in M-DCPS consisted of documents obtained from the Office of Beginning Teachers. Specifically, these documents included the following:
1. Binder of activity logs, documentation, and products (presentations, booklets, etc…)
2. Assessment data of students participating in the A-TEAM project (DIBELS pre and post data, and 2007 and 2008 FCAT results).
3. The survey instrument and raw data obtained from surveying new teachers.

RESULTS OF EVALUATION

1.   M-DCPS SCHOOLS PARTICIPATING IN THE (MINT-TS) PROGRAM AND SELECTION OF CONTROL SCHOOLS

The opportunity to submit an application for an Early Career/Early Placement continuation grant was received from the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) in November, 2008. In February, 2008, the State requested revisions to the proposal. Of these revisions, the District was asked to include control schools as well as treatment schools. The assignment of full-time mentors had been established at six low performing schools with new teachers since October, 2007, the challenge was in identifying comparable control schools. This activity took place in March, 2008. The control schools were selected to match, as much as possible, the treatment schools based on demographic, academic, and geographic variables. Specifically, each treatment school was matched to an M-DCPS school based on the following criteria:
1. Geographic vicinity within the District;
2. Grade configuration;
3. Percent of students on Free/Reduced Price Lunch;
4. Percent of Minority students;
5. Number of new teachers, and;
6. 2006 and 2007 school grades.

Given the priority of serving the neediest schools, the identification of comparable schools was difficult. Therefore all variables were not a perfect match. The following table (Table 1) lists the six MINT-TS schools and their matched control schools.

Table 1: Participating M-DCPS schools in the MINT-TS (Treatment) and the six Control schools.

Treatment Schools	Control Schools
Miami Park Elementary	Rainbow Park Elementary
Pine Villa Elementary	Kelsey Pharr Elementary
West Homestead Elementary	Holmes Elementary
Horace Mann Middle	Brownsville Middle
Miami Central Senior	Miami Norland Senior
Miami Jackson Senior	Miami Edison Senior

Table 2 lists the demographic and academic characteristics of the treatment schools as well as the control schools. A closer look at these characteristics reveals that the MINT-TS schools are low performing, high poverty, and high minority schools.

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of the six participating M-DCPS schools in the MINT-TS (Treatment) and the six M-DCPS schools used as Control schools.

School (T: Treatment, C: Control)	Loc.	Grade Span	No. of Students	School Grade 06	School Grade 07	FRL %	Minority	# of New Teachers
Miami Park Ele. (T)	3301	PK-05	562	C	F	82	99	7
Rainbow Park Ele. (C)	4541	PK-05	571	B	D	93	100	6
Pine Villa Ele. (T)	4461	PK-05	801	D	F	87	97	4
Kelsey Pharr Ele. (C)	4401	PK-05	483	D	D	88	100	4
W. Homestead Ele. (T)	5791	PK-05	827	B	F	95	98	11
Holmes Ele. (C)	2501	PK-05	327	C	D	96	99	4
Horace Mann Mid. (T)	6411	06-08	901	C	D	82	98	8
Brownsville Mid. (C)	6031	06-08	917	C	F	86	100	6
Miami Jackson Snr. (T)	7341	09-12	1535	F	D	54	99	10
Miami Edison Snr. (C)	7301	09-12	1026	F	D	60	99	7
Miami Central Snr. (T)	7251	09-12	2237	F	F	56	100	7
Miami Norland Snr. (C)	7381	09-12	2223	D	F	44	99	6
Total (Treatment)			**6,863**					**47**
Total (Control)			**5,547**					**33**

2.   ANALYSIS OF TEACHERS RETENTION AT MINT-TS SCHOOLS

The 2007 and 2008 work locations of all new teachers who were assigned to teach in MINT-TS schools in 2007 were compared. Forty-five (45) out of 47 (or 96%) of the new teachers remained in the teaching profession. This exceeded the project goal of 90%. The other 2 teachers (or 4%) are still in the profession but as "Substitute teachers".

Furthermore, an analysis of the retention of these 47 new teachers reveals that the majority of them (33 teachers or 70%) remained at the same MINT-TS schools. The other 14 teachers (30%), including the two substitute teachers, moved to other M-DCPS locations. Table 3 further details this analysis by elementary, middle, and senior high school levels.

Table 3: The Number and Percent of Teachers who stayed at the same MINT-TS school versus those who moved to other M-DCPS locations.

School Level	Total number of teachers who participated in the MINT-TS program	No. and Percent of MINT-TS participants who remained in teaching (as *Regular Teachers* or as *Subsititute Teachers*) and …		No. and percent of MINT-TS participants who remained in M-DCPS as *Regular Teachers*
		Moved to another M-DCPS location	Stayed at the same MINT-TS school	
Elementary Schools	25	9	16	24
		36.0%	64.0%	96.0%
Middle Schools	8	2	6	7
		25.0%	75.0%	88.0%
Senior High Schools	14	3	11	14
		21.4%	78.6%	100.0%
Total	**47**	**14**	**33**	**45**
		29.8%	**70.2%**	**96.0%**

3.   ANALYSIS OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT DATA

3.1   Analysis of FCAT Data

The reading scores of students of new teachers in the MINT-TS schools as well as the comparable schools were collected. These scores were from the reading portion of the FCAT test that was administered in 2007 and 2008. Specifically, the FCAT reading level as well as the Developmental score in reading were collected for each student for 2007 and 2008 (if applicable). A group analysis of the data was then performed. The data in Table 4 reveals that, on average, students at the MINT-TS schools showed a modest 43 point improvement in reading as measured by the FCAT and as reflected by an increase in their SSS Developmental Scores.

Table 4: Two year comparison of the SSS developmental FCAT reading scores of students in the MINT-TS schools.

	Number of Students Tested	Average SSS Developmental Score	Improvement
2007 FCAT Reading	89	1201.23	
2008 FCAT Reading	409	1244.84	
			43 Points

Furthermore, a comparison of the achievement of students in the MINT-TS schools and their counterparts in the control schools, as measured by the number of students scoring at level 3 or above on the reading portion of the FCAT, reveals that MINT-TS schools slightly outperformed the control schools (32.6% versus 30.9%). Table 5 lists the details of this comparison.

Table 5: Comparison between the MINT-TS schools and the control schools on the number of students scoring at level 3 or above on the 2008 FCAT reading.

2008 FCAT READING LEVELS	MINT-TS Schools	Control Schools
1	138 (38.7%)	90 (37.5%)
2	102 (28.7%)	76 (31.7%)
3	93 (26.1%)	52 (21.7%)
4	15 (4.2%)	17 (7.1%)
5	8 (2.2%)	5 (2.1%)
Percent of students scoring 3 and above	**116 (32.6%)**	**74 (30.9%)**
Number of students with valid FCAT scores	356	240

3.2   Analysis of other achievement data (DIBELS and Teacher Made Tests)

The students in Kindergarten through grade 3 who were assigned to new teachers were assessed using Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). There were several components of DIBELS that were administered to these students depending on their grade level. Specifically:
  ➢ PSF: Phoneme Segmentation Fluency
  ➢ NWF: Nonsense Word Fluency
  ➢ ORF: Oral Reading Fluency
  ➢ LNF: Letter Naming Fluency

3.2.1   Analysis of the achievement growth of students as measured by DIBELS

The students in Kindergarten through grade 3 were given a pre-test and then were given a posttest. Valid DIBELS scores were available for 235 students. The following table lists the number of students who were tested in each of the 4 components of DIBELS. Furthermore, for each DIBELS subtest, the overall average scores of students who were taught by new teachers at the six MINT-TS schools. for each subtest are listed.

An analysis of this table reveals that there was a growth of student achievement as measured by the difference between the pre and post test in ALL subtests of the DIBELS assessment. These ranged from a minimum of 11.09 (Phoneme Segmentation Fluency) to a maximum of 33.25 (Nonsense Word Fluency).

Table 6 : Pre-test and Post-test comparison of the DIBELS scores of students in the MINT-TS schools.

Pre-Test and Post-Test	No. Tested	Mean score	Growth (PostScore - PreScore)
Pre-Oral Reading Fluency	89	53.94	
Post-Oral Reading Fluency	89	79.11	
			25.17
Pre-Phoneme Segmentation Fluency	28	28.54	
Post-Phoneme Segmentation Fluency	27	39.63	
			11.09
Pre-Nonsense Word Fluency	44	47.00	
Post-Nonsense Word Fluency	44	80.25	
			33.25
Pre-Letter Naming Fluency	75	28.49	
Post-Letter Naming Fluency	75	42.23	
			13.73

Additionally, 17 students were assessed using Teacher Made Tests. A comparison of the average scores of students on the pretest and posttest also revealed a modest growth of 0.47 (using a scale from 1 to 4), which represents an increase of about 12%.

Table 7: Pre-test and Post-test comparison of the Teachers Made Test scores of students in the MINT-TS schools.

Teachers Made Tests	No. Tested	Mean score	**Growth(PostScore - PreScore)**
Pre-Teacher Made Test	17	2.26	
Post-Teacher Made Test	17	2.74	
			0.47

3.2.2   Analysis of the decrease in the number of students scoring at high risk in reading as measured by DIBELS

As mentioned above, students in Kindergarten through grade 3 were given a pre-test and then were given a posttest using one or more of the four subtests of the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy (DIBELS). Students scoring at high risk in reading were identified at the completion of the pre-test. After treatment, each student was given a post-test and again students scoring at high risk were identified. It should be noted that the tests were administered by the teachers independently from each other and therefore there was no specific date for these administrations of the pre and post test.

Table 8 lists the number of students who were identified as scoring at a high risk of failing in reading as measured by DIBELS during the pre-test and post-test sessions. The percent decrease in the number of students scoring at high risk is also computed. This table reveals that the percent decrease in the number of students at high risk ranged from a low of 15.3% (Oral Reading Fluency) to a high of 80% (Phoneme Segmentation Fluency). Overall the percent decrease in the number of students at high risk in reading as measured by DIBELS was 33.3% which far exceeded the project goal of 20%.

Table 8: Percent decrease in the number of students scoring at HIGH risk in reading as measured by DIBELS in MINT-TS schools.

Pre-Test and Post-Test (DIBELS)	No. students at high risk	Percent decrease in the number of students scoring at HIGH risk in reading as measured by DIBELS
Pre-Oral Reading Fluency	26	
Post-Oral Reading Fluency	22	
		15.38 %
Pre-Phoneme Segmentation Fluency	5	
Post-Phoneme Segmentation Fluency	1	
		80.00 %
Pre-Nonsense Word Fluency	7	
Post-Nonsense Word Fluency	4	
		42.85 %
Pre-Letter Naming Fluency	22	
Post-Letter Naming Fluency	13	
		40.90 %
Total Pre-Test (DIBELS)	**60**	
Total Post-Test (DIBELS)	**40**	
		33.33%

4.   ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEY OF NEW TEACHERS

As stated above the MINT-TS project was implemented in six M-DCPS schools that hired 47 new teachers. During the 2007-2008 school year a MINT Mentor Support survey was sent to all Project MINT teachers, including the 33 teachers at the control schools (See Appendix A for a copy of the Survey Questions). A total of 49 responses were submitted. Overwhelmingly the responses were positive. Out of the 49 teachers surveyed, 90% of respondents felt comfortable contacting their mentor about teaching or challenges in the classroom and overall, 77% of the Project MINT teachers rated their mentor's impact as either highly effective or effective. Additionally, 62% claimed that as a result of their mentor, they had become more efficient in their teaching practices.   Other areas that teachers rated highly as a result of their mentor impact were improved student achievement, organization and time management, and increased self-confidence about their teaching. Of special interest, however, the mentees provided some suggestions on how to improve the program. The following are some of these suggestions:

➢ Incorporate an introduction for new teachers in strategies to prepare students for the FCAT

➢ Observation of mentor or other veteran teachers should occur as early as possible in the year and increase the number of required observations

5. ROLE OF FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY IN THE PROGRAM

In interviewing the program director, Ms. Gloria Kotrady, she stated that she collaborated with Ms. Gladys Barrios, from Curriculum and Instruction, and provided new science teachers with two days of trianing. The training was developed and implemented by faculty from the College of Arts and Science at Florida International University. The training included follow-up support, designed to increase content knowledge in specific science areas. This aspect of new teacher training is part of M-DCPS' district-wide effort to disseminate the State of Florida's new Math and Science Standards. Specifically, FIU provided:

➢ Faculty and teaching assistants who developed and implemented the workshops;
➢ Classroom space and educational materials necessary for the workshops;
➢ Supplementary teaching resources; and
➢ Training support for workshop leaders from the MINT program.

The science workshops, based on reform science teaching methods, were designed to improve new high school science teachers' content knowledge and teaching strategies. Workshop objectives were guided by the new state science standards. Teachers were provided with active engagement materials that were immediately transferable to their classrooms and an opportunity to explore concepts as active participants in reform models of science instruction to develop a greater depth of understanding.

The workshop curriculum addressed topics in physical science, geology, and earth space science that are commonly misunderstood and/or new to the state science standards. FIU faculty and workshop leaders rotated through the day-long programs so that workshop participants received training from content area and pedagogy experts.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The nation is currently experiencing a shortage of qualified school teachers. This problem is particularly pronounced in urban school districts, like the Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS). The M-DCPS has undertaken various initiatives to address this problem. Such an initiative is the implementation of the MINT program in six M-DCPS schools through funding from the Florida Department of Education. The evaluation of the implementation of the MINT-TS program revealed the following findings:

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➢ The survey data of the new teachers revealed that they had a favorable opinion of the MINT program especially in helping beginning teachers. They spoke favorably of the support they received from the mentors.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are made:

RECOMMENDATION ONE   :   *The MINT-TS project should continue to be implemented in the M-DCPS.*

RECOMMENDATION TWO   :   *The MINT-TS project should be expanded and offered at other M-DCPS schools.*

RECOMMENDATION THREE :   *Focus group sessions with MINT-TS teachers should be conducted by evaluators during the 2008-2009 school year to review the assistance   and training provided to these teachers by the MINT-TS project in order to ascertain the effectiveness of these initiatives.*

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APPENDIX A
NEW TEACHERS SURVEY
Survey developed by Progress Education Corporation in Collaboration with M-DCPS (2008)

SECTION 1

To obtain data on overall MINT implementation, whether mentors like the program, and their perception of program effectiveness. The scale was purposely created without the middle point to make the mentors make a choice one way or the other. This method is copied from items of surveys created by the National Center for Educational Statistics.

Directions: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following items.

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I understand all aspects of the MINT program.	O	O	O	O
I am able to implement the MINT program as it is intended.	O	O	O	O
The MINT program is easy to implement.	O	O	O	O
The MINT program should continue in its current format.	O	O	O	O
The Core Learning/AP3 courses for MINT teachers are meeting their needs.	O	O	O	O
The MINT Mentor training for mentors is meeting our needs.	O	O	O	O
My mentee(s) and I have a good working relationship.	O	O	O	O
My mentee(s) uses the advice I give him/her.	O	O	O	O
In general, I like the MINT program.	O	O	O	O
MINT teachers seem to like the program.	O	O	O	O
My principal seems to like the MINT program.				
The time required of me to implement MINT correctly is reasonable.	O	O	O	O
The time required of MINT teachers to implement the program correctly is reasonable.	O	O	O	O
The MINT web site is useful.	O	O	O	O
Because of MINT, classroom management skills of my	O	O	O	O

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
mentee(s) have improved.				
Because of MINT, instruction in the classroom of my mentee(s) has improved.	O	O	O	O
Because of MINT, family communication skills of my mentee(s) have improved.	O	O	O	O
The mentor professional development offerings have helped me better my mentoring skills.	O	O	O	O
I have the support I need from the district to be an effective mentor.	O	O	O	O
I have the support I need from my principal to be an effective mentor.	O	O	O	O
I am able to effectively guide my mentee(s) in reflecting on their practice.	O	O	O	O
I am able to effectively assess the skills of my mentee(s).	O	O	O	O
I am able to effectively set goals with my mentee(s).	O	O	O	O
I am able to effectively assist my mentee(s) with classroom management skills.	O	O	O	O
I am able to effectively assist my mentee(s) with family communication.	O	O	O	O
I have become a better teacher as a result of being a MINT mentor.	O	O	O	O
The MINT Mentor E-log is easy to use.	O	O	O	O

SECTION 2

To determine which specific aspects of MINT are perceived to work well. The scale was selected instead of a "check all that apply" approach in order for us to know the difference in whether a failure to check the box means that the mentor thinks the component in question is "not effective" or whether the mentor "does not know" the component. If it is deemed that all mentors should know every component listed, a "check all that apply" approach could be used.

Directions: Which aspects of the MINT program do you believe are effective in contributing to MINT teachers becoming better teachers overall?

	Effective	Not Effective	Don't Know
New Teacher Orientation strand for new teachers with education degrees	O	O	O
New Teacher Orientation strand for new teachers with non-education degrees	O	O	O
New Teacher Orientation strand for experienced teachers who are new to the district	O	O	O
Mentor observation of their mentee(s)	O	O	O
MINT teacher observation of their mentor/veteran teacher(s)	O	O	O
Monthly meetings between mentor and mentee(s)	O	O	O
Reflection	O	O	O
Self-assessment	O	O	O
Goal setting activities	O	O	O
AP3/Core Learning courses	O	O	O
Participation in professional learning communities (NEST)	O	O	O
MINT E-Logs	O	O	O
Elluminate Webinars	O	O	O
Principal meetings with MINT teachers	O	O	O
On-line mentoring for teachers with some experience	O	O	O
New Teacher Helpline	O	O	O

SECTION 3

This section is designed to collect data that can be used as potential predictor or control variables in the analyses.

Q1: On average, how many hours did you spend per week performing MINT mentor duties during the first half of the school year?

Q2: On average, how many hours do you spend per week performing MINT mentor duties during this second half of the school year?

Q3: Has being a mentor been a positive experience for you?   Yes   No

Q4: Would you like to continue to be a mentor?   Yes   No

Q5: Which of the following statements best describes your opinion of MINT?

1) I like the MINT program in its current form.

2) I like the MINT program but it needs some revisions.

3) I like aspects of the MINT program but some components should be discontinued.

4) I do not like the MINT program.