

**Miami-Dade County Public Schools
Office of Program Evaluation
1500 Biscayne Boulevard
Miami, Florida 33132**

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE PROJECT
ACCOMPLISHED TEACHERS EMPOWERING and ASSISTING MENTEES**

A-TEAM

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Principal Evaluator / Author: Dr. Tarek Chebbi

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS), in collaboration with the New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz, implemented a project to support new teachers in selected high need schools.

The project, titled Accomplished Teachers Empowering and Assisting Mentees (A-TEAM), was designed to prepare, develop, and support new teachers to be successful in meeting the challenges of the diverse population of students in high need schools. M-DCPS' high need schools are located in the School Improvement Zone and Corrective Action Schools. These schools were selected based on the following three criteria: low academic performance for three years, feeder patterns in which low performance is widespread, and leadership capacity. Schools from eight feeder patterns are part of the Zone. The grant funding was used to support a continuum of development — recruitment, selection, training, materials, mentoring, assessment, and compensation — leading to the retention of new teachers in the selected Zone and Corrective Action Schools. It was also the intention of the project to provide a career lattice to accomplished teachers serving as mentors.

The grant proposal included the need to evaluate the project's effectiveness during the 2006-2007 school year.

Specifically, this analysis examined the results of surveys conducted by the Office of Beginning Teacher Program which were administered to a) Principals; b) Mentors; and c) Teachers. Furthermore, this analysis examined binders of logs documenting support and coaching provided by the A-TEAM Mentors to teachers served by the A-TEAM project.

The data revealed that the affiliated principals have a very favorable opinion of the A-TEAM project especially in helping their beginning teachers. The A-TEAM mentors had an even higher rating of the project. Finally, the A-TEAM participating teachers also had a favorable opinion of the program and spoke favorably of the support they received from the mentors.

Based on these conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

1. The A-TEAM project should continue to be implemented in the MDCPS.
2. The A-TEAM project should be expanded and offered at other schools within M-DCPS.
3. Focus group sessions with A-TEAM teachers should be conducted by independent evaluators during the 2007-2008 school year to review the assistance and training provided to these teachers by the A-TEAM 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 in 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, disillusionment, 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 increasing numbers of new teachers. Unfortunately, the District is already experiencing teacher shortages. As of October 20, 2005, there were 260 vacant teaching positions, 132 of which were Elementary Education positions. This shortage will present a greater challenge if new teacher retention is not addressed.

M-DCPS, through its partnership with the New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz, is currently implementing a high-intensity teacher induction program, designed to support teachers entering the profession. The New Teacher Center (NTC) is nationally recognized as a developer and implementer of induction programs, and has assisted numerous districts around the country by sharing their research-based teacher induction program. NTC supports essential research, well-informed policy, and thoughtful practices that encourage teacher development from preservice throughout the teaching career. Opening its doors in August 1998, the New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz is predicated on the belief that the success of our public schools and the achievement of our students depend on the quality of classroom teachers. With this in mind, the NTC dedicates itself to the development of exemplary new teachers who are responsive to the needs of California's and the nation's diverse student population and who embody the professional norms of ongoing inquiry, assessment, and refinement of classroom practice. The NTC supports the development of teacher leadership essential to the success of school reform and teacher retention.

During the 2005-2006 school year, 14 elementary schools received the services of this high-intensity mentoring program through collaboration with the New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Five veteran teachers served as full-time mentors to 62 beginning teachers. As a result of having been awarded this grant, M-DCPS was able to expand this program to six high need schools in the district.

The goal of the induction program is to advance the skills and knowledge of new teachers by providing assistance and support as they enter the profession. This collaborative model focuses on improving classroom practice and on developing reflective teachers who are responsive to the diverse cultural, social and linguistic backgrounds of all students, including students with disabilities.

The expected outcomes of the proposed Project A-TEAM are as follows:

- 90% retention of 25 new teachers at selected high need school(s);
- 20% decrease in the number of students of the mentored teachers scoring at high risk as measured by 2005-2006 Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS);
- 5% point increase will be evidenced in the percentage of all students of the mentored teachers scoring Achievement Level 3 or higher on the 2006 administration of the FCAT;

A-TEAM Teachers in the MDCPS

A review of Table 1 reveals that the A-TEAM teachers are almost evenly distributed among six elementary schools. Each mentor was assigned to serve two schools and an average of 14 teachers. The teachers were assigned to teach grades Pre-K through fifth grade. Additionally, some teachers were assigned to teach special areas such as Physical Education, Music, Arts, and ESE.

Table 1

Distribution of 43 A-TEAM teachers among the three Mentors and the six participating M-DCPS schools

Mentor	School	Teaching Assignment	Number of Teachers
Ellen Rose	Morningside Elementary	First Grade	2
		Second Grade	1
		Fifth Grade	1
		ESE 4th and 5th Grade	1
		Spanish	1
		Art	1
		Total	7

Mentor	School	Teaching Assignment	Number of Teachers
Ellen Rose	Myrtle Grove Elementary	Kindergarten	1
		First Grade	1
		Second Grade	3
		Fourth Grade	1
		Fifth Grade	1
		ESE 4th and 5th Grade	1
		Physical Education	1
		Reading Leader	1
		Total	10

Mentor	School	Teaching Assignment	Number of Teachers
Erica Jones	Edison Park	Kindergarten	1
		First Grade	1
		Second Grade	1
		Fifth Grade	2
		ESE	1
		Physical Education	1
		Total	7

Mentor	School	Teaching Assignment	Number of Teachers
Erica Jones	Little River	First Grade	1
		Second Grade	2
		Fifth Grade	3
		ESE	1
		Total	7

Mentor	School	Teaching Assignment	Number of Teachers
Cynthia Miller	N. B. Young	Second Grade	1
		Third Grade	2
		Fourth Grade	1
		Fifth Grade	1
		Total	5

Mentor	School	Teaching Assignment	Number of Teachers
Cynthia Miller	L. B. Smith	First Grade	1
		Second Grade	2
		Third Grade	2
		Fourth Grade	1
		Music	1
		Total	7

Sources of Data

The source of data for the evaluation of the A-TEAM program in the MDCPS consisted of documents obtained from the Office of Beginning Teachers. Specifically, these documents included the following:

1. Binder of activity logs for each of the three mentors
2. Raw survey data of a) Principals, b) Mentors, and c) Teachers
3. Assessment data of students participating in the A-TEAM project (DIBELS pre and post data, and FCAT)

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

1. ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEYS

1.1 Analysis of the Principals' Surveys

The project A-TEAM was implemented in six (6) elementary schools during the 2006-2007 school year. Of the six principals, three were re-assigned to other schools and therefore were replaced by three new principals. To that end, only three principals responded to the survey.

The survey was administered online and the answers were kept anonymous. The survey included 18 questions to gather principals' feedback and assessment of the program. The following are the highlights of their responses:

- All principals who answered the survey indicated that the A-TEAM project contributed a "great deal" in helping beginning teachers at their schools;
- Principals indicated that the "mentors" provided the most support to their beginning teachers;
- Principals asserted that their beginning teachers demonstrated "an accelerated growth in their teaching" as a result of their participation in the A-TEAM project;
- Principals recommended the allocation of more time to mentor new teachers and model lessons.

1.2 Analysis of the Mentors' Surveys

The project A-TEAM was supported by three teacher mentors. Each mentor was assigned two schools. In each school, each mentor worked, on average, with 7 new teachers.

The survey was administered online and the answers were kept anonymous. The survey included 16 questions to gather mentors' feedback and assessment of the program. All three mentors answered favorably to all questions in the survey. It should be noted that these results were expected.

Of special interest, however, the mentors provided some suggestions on how to improve the program. The following are some of these suggestions:

- Mentors felt that they needed more time for "paperwork (logs, schedules, etc.)" and for "planning workshops";
- Mentors suggested planning and informational sessions for better communication and consistent implementation of the components of the program;

1.3 Analysis of the Teachers' Surveys

The project A-TEAM served 44 new teachers in six schools. Of those, 32 teachers responded to the online survey. The survey contained 24 questions. The demographic breakdown of these teachers is as follows:

- 62% African American, 16% Hispanic, 6% White, and 16% others;
- 69% Female and 31% Male;
- The teachers were assigned to teach grades Kindergarten through fifth grades. Some teachers were assigned to teach special areas such as Physical education and Art;
- 59% of these teachers were education majors;

When asked specific questions about the A-TEAM project, these new teachers indicated the following:

- They ALL prefer to communicate with their mentors in person;
- They characterized their mentors as a colleague, as a role model, as a friend, as an expert. Only few think of their mentor as a "Critic";

- 58% of the responding new teachers indicated that their mentor helped them “a great deal”;
- 87% of the new teachers said that they met with their mentor on a regular basis (weekly and biweekly);
- Overall, the responding teachers thought highly of their mentors and indicated that they benefited from their mentors’ experiences and knowledge.

Furthermore, in their open ended responses, the new teachers thought that the A-TEAM program was very helpful to them and they expressed their desire to see the program expanded and started earlier in the year when new teachers need help the most.

2. ANALYSIS OF ACADEMIC DATA

2.1 Analysis of DIBELS PRE and POST TESTS

The students in Kindergarten through grade 3 who were assigned to new teachers were assessed using DIBELS. These students were given a pre-test and then were given a posttest.

282 students had valid DIBELS scores. The following table lists the distribution of these students by grade level.

	No. of Students tested
Grade 1	45
Grade 2	118
Grade 3	65
Kindergarten	54
Total	282

There were several components of DIBELS that were administered to these students depending on their grade level. The following table lists the number of students who were tested in each of the 4 components of DIBELS. Specifically:

- PSF: Phoneme Segmentation Fluency
- NWF: Nonsense Word Fluency
- ORF: Oral Reading Fluency
- LNF: Letter Naming Fluency

Furthermore, the following table lists the minimum and maximum scores in each subtest, as well as the overall average scores and the standard deviation for each subtest.

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. These growths ranged from a minimum of 9.89 (PSF) to a maximum of 33.11 (ORF).

All Grades	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Growth	Std. Deviation
PSF Pretest	45	0	73	27.07		21.396
PSF Post Test	45	0	61	36.96	9.89	12.314
NWF Pretest	163	0	139	43.39		25.600
NWF Post Test	163	14	183	66.30	22.91	32.864
ORF Pretest	228	0	158	41.06		30.942
ORF Post Test	228	5	195	74.17	33.11	37.462
LNF Pretest	54	0	72	21.20		18.541
LNF Posttest	54	3	87	43.69	22.49	18.133

The following four tables list the results of the DIBELS pre and post tests by grade level. They ALL show substantial growth, especially in grade three.

Grade K	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
LNF Pretest	54	0	72	21.20	18.541
LNF Posttest	54	3	87	43.69	18.133

Grade 1	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
PSF Pretest	45	0	73	27.07	21.396
PSF Post Test	45	0	61	36.96	12.314
NWF Pretest	45	0	73	29.42	17.566
NWF Post Test	45	14	118	57.13	23.345
ORF Pretest	45	0	72	9.76	16.326
ORF Post Test	45	5	118	43.60	27.409

Grade 2	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
NWF Pretest	118	9	139	48.71	26.226
NWF Post Test	118	24	183	69.80	35.296
ORF Pretest	118	1	137	42.00	26.664
ORF Post Test	118	9	176	73.89	35.071

Grade 3	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ORF Pretest	65	0	158	61.02	28.597
ORF Post Test	65	16	195	95.83	32.848

2.2 Analysis of FCAT DATA

Grade 4	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Growth	Std. Deviation
FCAT Reading 2006	105	766	1966	1369.42		206.428
FCAT Reading 2007	107	295	1935	1381.40	11.98	282.596

Grade 5	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Growth	Std. Deviation
FCAT Reading 2006	84	227	1830	1016.10		533.312
FCAT Reading 2007	58	474	2002	1421.28	405.18	248.222

4. ANALYSIS OF TEACHER RETENTION

The project A-TEAM served 44 teachers at the beginning of the year. Of those 42 teachers continued throughout the year. Thus, a 95.6 % retention rate which exceeds the stated goal of 90% retention rate.

5. UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA CRUZ (New Teacher Center)

In interviewing the program director, Ms. Gloria Kotrady, she stated that the University provided continuous support to the project. Specifically, the University provided:

- Training of mentors ;
- Framework for weekly mentor forums ;
- Consultations;
- Ongoing support; and
- Research and best practices on teacher induction.

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 (MDCPS). To address the problem, the MDCPS has undertaken various initiatives including a collaborative agreement with The New Teacher Center.

The data revealed that the affiliated stakeholders (principals, mentors, and new teachers) have a very favorable opinion of the A-TEAM project especially in helping beginning teachers. The A-TEAM mentors had an even higher rating of the project. Finally, the A-TEAM participating teachers also had a favorable

opinion of the program and spoke favorably of the support they received from the mentors.

Based on these conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

1. The A-TEAM project should continue to be implemented in the MDCPS.
2. The A-TEAM project should be expanded and offered at other schools within M-DCPS.
3. Focus group sessions with A-TEAM teachers should be conducted by independent evaluators during the 2007-2008 school year to review the assistance and training provided to these teachers by the A-TEAM project in order to ascertain the effectiveness of these initiatives.

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APPENDIX A
Survey of Principals

A-TEAM Principal Survey

Introduction:

The purpose of this survey is to assess the effectiveness of components of the A-TEAM project. Your opinions are an important part of the evaluation.

1

The number of beginning teachers participating in the A-TEAM induction program at your school:

2

How do you estimate the contribution of the A-TEAM in helping beginning teachers at your school?

- A great deal
 - Quite a bit
 - Some
 - Hardly at all
 - Not at all
 - Unable to rate
-

3

In your opinion, from what source(s) did your beginning teachers receive the most support? (check all that apply)

- Mentor
- A-TEAM Seminars
- New Educator Support Team (NEST) sessions

-
- Working with colleagues
 - Other professional development
 - Site administrators
 - Other, please specify

4 Which of the following methods did you use to evaluate the performance of your beginning teachers? (check all that apply)

- Classroom walk-throughs
- Formal/informal observations
- Student performance on assessments
- Student artifacts
- Other, please specify

In answering the following questions (Q5-Q7), please indicate the level of agreement with the following statements:

5 The services provided through the A-TEAM project were beneficial to the beginning teachers at my school.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree

Unable to rate

6

When conducting classroom walkthroughs, I observed the effective use of a variety of instructional strategies by the beginning teachers that I can attribute to the A-TEAM project.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Unable to rate

7

Beginning teachers participating in the A-TEAM project demonstrated accelerated growth in their teaching practices compared to beginning teachers in prior years who did not participate.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Unable to rate

8

In your opinion, what do you consider the most valuable feature of the A-TEAM project in assisting new teachers.

9 Please provide any suggestions on how to improve the program.



Survey Page 1

A-TEAM Principal Survey

10 The number of beginning teachers participating in the A-TEAM induction program at your school:

11 Of the success of your beginning teachers, what portion would you attribute to the assistance/support provided by the mentor assigned to your school?

- A great deal
 - Quite a bit
 - Some
 - Hardly at all
 - Not at all
-

12 From what source did your beginning teachers receive the most support? (check all that apply)

- Mentor

-
- A-TEAM Seminars
 - New Educator Support Team (NEST)
 - Working with Colleagues
 - Other Professional Development
 - Site Administrators
 - Other, please specify

13 How did you evaluate the performance of your beginning teachers?
(check all that apply)

- Classroom Walkthroughs
- Formal/informal observations
- Student performance on assessments
- Student artifacts
- Other, please specify



Survey Page 2

A-TEAM Principal Survey

14 The services provided through the A-TEAM project were beneficial to the beginning teachers at my school.

- Strongly agree

- Agree
- Neutral
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree

15 When conducting classroom walkthroughs, I observed the effective use of a variety of instructional strategies by the beginning teachers.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

16 Beginning teachers participating in the A-TEAM project demonstrated accelerated growth in their teaching practice compared to beginning teachers in prior years who did not receive this level of support.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree



Survey Page 3

A-TEAM Principal Survey

17

Please list the most valuable features of your support program.

18

Please list any changes or suggestions to improve the program.



Survey Page 4

APPENDIX B
Survey of A-TEAM Teachers

A-TEAM New Teacher Survey

About You

1

Ethnic group you most identify with?

- White
 - African American
 - Hispanic
 - Asian
 - Indian
 - Multi-racial
 - Other, please specify
-

2

Your gender:

- Male
 - Female
-

3

Your teaching assignment:

- Kindergarten
- First Grade
- Second Grade

A-TEAM New Teacher Survey

4

How long do you plan on staying in the profession?

- 1 - 3 years
 - 4 - 6 years
 - 7 - 10 years
 - More than 10 years
-

5

Are you an education major?

6

My preferred method of communicating with my mentor is:

- In person
- Telephone
- Email

7

I would characterize my mentor as (check all that apply):

- Colleague
- Role Model
- Evaluator
- Collaborator
- Friend
- Therapist
- Expert Guide
- Advocate
- Critic
- Other, please specify

8

Of the success you've had as a beginning teacher, what portion would you attribute to help from your mentor?

- A great deal
- Quite a bit
- Some
- Hardly at all
- None at all

9

From what source did you receive the most support?

- Mentor
- A-TEAM Seminars
- New Educator Support Team (NEST)
- Working with Colleagues
- Other Professional Development
- Site Administrators
- Other, please specify



Survey 1

A-TEAM New Teacher Survey

My Mentor and I...

10

My Mentor and I met:

- Daily
- Weekly
- Every two weeks
- Monthly or less often
- Never

11

Meeting with my mentor influences my teaching practice.

- Strongly agree
- Strongly disagree
- No Opinion
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

12

My mentor and I talked about my work:

- Daily
- Weekly
- Every two weeks
- Monthly
- Never
- Other, please specify

13

Talking about my work influenced my teaching practice.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- No Opinion
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

14

My mentor and I have observed veteran teachers teach.

YES NO

15

Making veteran teacher observations influenced my teaching practice.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- No Opinion
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX C

Survey of A-TEAM Mentors

A-TEAM Mentor Survey

Introduction:

This survey is being conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the A-TEAM project. Your opinions are important.

1

District staff provided support to A-TEAM mentors with the implementation of the new teacher induction program.

- Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
 - Do Not Know
-

2

School site administrators and staff supported the efforts of A-TEAM program mentors.

- Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
 - Do Not Know
-

3

Program orientation was an integral part of the A-TEAM activities.

- Strongly Agree

- Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
 - Do Not Know
-

4 Mentor seminars were an integral part of the A-TEAM activities.

- Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
 - Do Not Know
-

5 During the school year, my beginning teachers and I met:

- Daily
 - Weekly
 - Every two weeks
 - Monthly or less often
 - Never
 - Other, please specify
-

6 The duration of meetings with individual beginning teachers lasted approximately:

-
- One hour weekly
 - Two hours weekly
 - Less than one hour weekly
 - More than two hours weekly
 - Other, please specify

7

Professional development has been consistently delivered to beginning teachers on a monthly basis.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Do Not Know



Survey Page 1

A-TEAM Mentor Survey

8

Four out of five school days per week were spent providing support to beginning teachers, in their classrooms.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree

-
- Strongly Disagree
 - Do not know

9 Activities provided to beginning teachers by their mentors included the following (Check all that apply)

- Observation
- Co-Teaching
- Modeling
- Lesson Planning
- Confering/problem solving
- Classroom visitations to veteran teachers
- NEST sessions
- Other, please specify

10 Participation in weekly Mentor Forums provided opportunities for mentors to further their professional practice:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Do Not Know

11 Institutionalization of the A-TEAM program would enhance beginning

teachers' practice across the school district.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Do Not Know

12

The A-TEAM video, addressing the importance of implementation of differentiated instruction strategies in the classroom and components of the program, will be a useful tool for new teachers.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Do Not Know

13

New Educator Support Team (NEST) sessions were easily scheduled and convened.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Do Not Know

14

Veteran teacher observations, facilitated by mentors for beginning

teachers, provided meaningful information regarding classroom instruction.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Do Not Know



Survey Page 2

A-TEAM Mentor Survey

15

In your opinion, list the three most valuable aspects of the A-TEAM program:



16

Please list changes or suggestions to improve the program.



Survey Page 3