Labor Relations’ Influence on New Teachers’ Induction Experiences and Commitment Levels

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Introduction

In the wake of increased federal and state oversight of school quality through standardized testing, districts continually face pressure to recruit and retain “highly qualified” and highly effective teachers (Hess, Rotherham, & Walsh, 2004). One way schools and districts work to improve teacher quality and retain effective teachers is through induction programs such as a) mentoring; b) opportunities to collaborate with colleagues; c) orientations, seminars and workshops; and d) additional classroom or instructional assistance (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Novice teachers also often receive informal support from colleagues within their schools and districts through the establishment of professional relationships. Teachers who receive formal and informal initiation into the profession are more likely to develop norms encouraging professional growth and greater commitment to the profession (Rosenholtz, 1989, Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

A teacher’s “commitment” encompasses relating to work as a form of vocation, which includes working for individual success and collaborating with colleagues to accomplish shared goals (Lane & Wolf, 1990). Teacher commitment has been found to be associated with teachers’ efforts and effectiveness (Ebmeier, 2003), as well as with teachers’ career decisions (Weiss, 1999). Ingersoll (2001) found that high rates of teacher turnover affect teachers’ commitment as well as the effectiveness of schools as organizations. Therefore, teacher commitment may significantly and directly impact student outcomes and individual teacher retention decisions, as well as organizational effectiveness (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

Collective bargaining agreements and labor-management relations potentially have strong effects on novice teacher commitment because contract provisions specifically “shape and reflect some of the important parameters of teachers’ work lives in technical and normative terms” (Bascia, 1997, p. 444). Through collective bargaining, teacher unions often either directly or indirectly influence district human resource decisions, teachers’ salaries and benefits, their working conditions, teacher evaluation practices, and induction support and professional development (Fuller & Izu, 1986; Fuller, Mitchell, & Hartman,
Collective bargaining agreements and labor-management relations, therefore, may affect novice teacher commitment because they partially determine the social contexts in which teachers work and what resources are available to novice teachers through their social relations.

This empirical study uses social capital theory to better understand relationships between labor relations and novice teacher commitment. This paper stems from an ongoing study of early career teachers’ induction experiences and the social relations in their schools. Using data from the first year of data collection, this paper begins to address two questions: How do collective bargaining provisions and labor relations at the district and school levels affect induction activities for beginning teachers and their professional relationships with their mentors and colleagues? How do collective bargaining and labor relationships, through their impact of novices’ induction experiences and relations with colleagues, shape the commitment of early career teachers to their schools and to the profession? We argue that teacher unions and collective bargaining affect novice teachers’ commitment a) by creating structural variations in the resources available to teachers, b) by influencing their social relationships by impacting human resources decisions and c) more generally, through labor-management relations at the school and district levels (see Diagram 1 in the Appendix).

In the first section of this paper, we describe the rationale and context for this study by reviewing the research literature concerned with collective bargaining and novice teachers. Next, we present the conceptual framework that we used to devise our research design and analyze our data. The research methods are then explained, followed by our data analysis. This paper concludes with implications for future research concerning beginning teachers, collective bargaining, and labor/management relations.

Research on Teacher Unions

Teacher unions have traditionally focused on increasing teachers’ salaries and benefits, achieving standardized working conditions and practices, lowering student-teacher ratios, and protecting against job losses (Stone, 2000). Most collective bargaining agreements follow the industrial union model where there is a premium on years of experience with more senior teachers generally receiving higher salaries, more attractive teaching assignments, and greater job protection. For these reasons, novice teachers sometimes view unions as less relevant to their work lives (Kerchner & Cooper, 2003). In order to help address the needs of novice teachers, some local unions have expanded their roles into negotiating over curricular and instructional reforms, peer assistance and review (PAR) programs, alternative salary schedules, and induction support and professional development for teachers (Koppich, 2005). This continues to be the exception rather than the rule, and there has been limited research on the effects of
collective bargaining on the experiences of beginning teachers or their levels of commitment to their schools or the profession.

Since teacher commitment has been found to be related to teacher effectiveness and teacher turnover, one might expect unions and districts to be concerned with increasing teacher commitment (Weiss, 1999; Ingersoll, 2001; Ebmeier, 2003). This seems particularly important in hard-to-staff schools that serve high percentages of low-income, racial minority students, where teacher turnover is significantly higher than in schools serving higher percentages of white, middle- and upper-income students (Boyd et al., 2002; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Teacher commitment has been found to be associated with workplace conditions (Weiss, 1999), as well as with the degree of collaboration in a school (Rosenholtz, 1985). This has implications for not only addressing the physical resources that novice teachers need, but also the human resources that provide support to new teachers. Research though “has not fully explored the effects of school social organization on their commitment and willingness to stay” (Weiss, 1999, p. 862). It is important to investigate collective bargaining and labor relations when considering novice teacher commitment, because these factors impact the physical resources available to teachers and also the social contexts in which they work.

**Teacher hiring.** One way in which unions and collective bargaining may shape the experiences and work lives of teachers is by influencing the hiring process. The initial match of teacher to school/classroom has been found to be a key element in the distribution of teacher quality across schools, and ultimately in their labor market decisions (Boyd et al., 2002). Union critics often claim that collective bargaining places unnecessary restrictions on districts a) by specifying criteria for hiring teachers, such as regulating teacher candidate qualifications, b) by influencing the timing and quality of hiring decisions through burdensome transfer policies, and c) through the diversion of fiscal resources (Hoxby, 1996; Ballou, 2000; Moe, 2005). In the view of such critics, these types of restrictions may inhibit school administrators from building qualified and committed school faculties. It should be noted that in several states unions are restricted from bargaining over human resource decisions such as hiring (Eberts & Stone, 1984). Additionally, Liu & Johnson (2006) suggest that regardless of contract provisions concerning hiring and transfers, bureaucratic and financial constraints often contribute to information-poor human resource decisions. So although unions are often blamed for restricting human resources policy, there is a lack of evidence that in their absence most districts would behave any differently.

Not all collective bargaining agreements are overly restrictive in dictating hiring provisions. In 1997, for example, the Seattle Public Schools and the Seattle Education Association established that schools could consider any teacher from inside or outside the district who was certified to fill the position (Johnson & PNGT, 2004). The Boston Public Schools and Boston Teachers Union have collaborated to move the hiring process earlier in the year, with the hopes of finding higher quality teachers before they
are hired by other districts (Johnson & PNGT, 2004). These are just two examples, but they indicate that both unions and district administrations acknowledge that better district hiring practices have the potential to improve the match between teacher and classroom, improve teacher commitment, and reduce teacher attrition.

**Induction.** There is some evidence that induction programs can reduce teacher attrition rates and provide teachers opportunities for growth (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Strong & Fletcher, 2004). Additionally, induction activities related to curriculum, assessment, and teacher evaluation can help shape the instructional expectations that are placed on new teachers and create opportunities for novices to engage in learning activities (Grossman & Thompson, 2004; Johnson & PNGT, 2004; Stein & D’Amico, 2002; Achinstein, Ogawa, & Speiglman, 2004; Youngs, 2007). The quality of induction activities may determine whether novice teachers see the activities as needed support or as pressure to conform to norms and expectations.

Some induction programs were originally initiated by teacher unions. Further, while some induction programs are run by districts or schools, when districts face budget shortfalls, unions often step in to help deliver induction support and additional professional development (Poole, 2000; Bascia, 2003). Generally there are three types of professional development associated with unions: a) workshops, seminars, and conferences; b) formal mentoring, peer coaching, and other induction activities; and c) informal collaboration with colleagues (Bascia, 2003). In addition, unions may encourage professional development by connecting some elements (such as continuing college credit) to increases in salary (Bredeson, 2001). Since teachers’ work days typically provide little time for professional development, unions negotiate extra paid days/hours or extended contracts for summer work in order to meet the needs of teachers (Bredeson, 2001).

At the same time, union involvement in induction and professional development may draw their focus away from bread and butter issues such as teachers’ salaries, benefits, and work conditions. In Koppich’s words, “It would be a mistake for anyone to assume that all teacher union locals (or all districts) have embraced education improvement and teacher quality as an essential part of their mission” (2005, p. 91). Many people believe that union involvement in such non-economic areas reduces public control, limits the flexibility of school administrators, and may negatively influence district and school decisions about resource allocations (Bredeson, 2001).

**Teacher evaluation.** One of the main functions of unions is to promote job security and to ensure that teachers receive due process under the law. In states with tenure laws, unions often negotiate over the steps to tenure within a district, including the scope and types of evaluation and induction programs that are involved. Critics claim that tenure too often protects sub-par teachers. According to Kerchner, Koppich, and Weeres, “The assault on tenure now forming in state capitals is partly the result of the
failure of school systems to create substantive evaluation systems and the failure of unions to develop peer review or other robust professional means of ensuring quality” (p.157, 1997). Untenured teachers, though, are at-will employees and, therefore, have fewer legal job protections. That is why negotiations over novice teacher evaluation and the provision of induction and professional development are key elements in shaping the work lives of novice teachers; and they have the potential to greatly affect their commitment and retention decisions.

Traditionally, neither labor nor management has had much faith in the ability of teacher evaluation instruments to measure or promote teacher quality (Mitchell et al., 1981). The evaluation instruments have usually consisted of checklists, and it has been rare for teachers to receive unsatisfactory ratings (Murnane & Cohen, 1986; Kerchner & Koppich, 2000). Part of the challenge in creating effective evaluations has to do with identifying necessary teaching skills, finding ways to objectively measure them, and determining how to connect them to student outcomes (Mohrman, Mohrman, & Odden, 1996). Many local unions have opposed using student standardized test scores in the evaluation process (McDonnell & Pascal, 1988). Traditional teacher evaluation systems, though, may have little impact on the work lives of novice teachers, because they generally provide little feedback or support to them.

In recent years, some unions have negotiated the use of evaluation systems that reflect the understanding of teaching as complex work, such as peer assistance and review (PAR) programs or the use of more goal-centered evaluations. By collaborating with administrators in developing an evaluation system aimed at providing support to novice teachers, unions may not only help increase the quality of the new teachers’ performance, but also augment the unions’ relevance in the eyes of these teachers (Kerchner & Cooper, 2003). This support is seen as a way to increase teacher commitment and retention while weeding out teachers who continue to under-perform. This may have implications not only for the commitment of individual teachers, but also for overall organizational effectiveness.

Layoffs and transfers. Unions typically negotiate for a combination of seniority and credentials to be used as criteria in determining teacher layoffs and transfers (Eberts & Stone, 1984). This means that novice teachers are often the first to be released from their positions and/or are more likely to be involuntarily transferred to different schools and classrooms (Ballou, 2000). These provisions meet an underlying principle of many collective bargaining agreements, which is to protect the jobs of more senior teachers even at the expense of novices (Eberts & Stone, 1984; Babcock & Enberg, 1999). More traditional teacher unionists have expressed concern that changing seniority provisions in determining layoffs and transfers would negatively affect teachers by decreasing teacher solidarity and removing protections against nepotism and favoritism (Webster, 1985). How novice teachers view such provisions may have implications for their commitment and retention decisions. For example, if they see seniority provisions as a future benefit for job protection it may actually work to increase their commitment.
This paper builds on existing research by examining how collective bargaining impacts novice teacher commitment. More specifically, we investigate how contract provisions and labor/management relations impact novices’ induction experiences and commitment levels by creating positional variation between novice teachers and veteran teachers. By using such information, unions and districts can work to improve teacher commitment and potentially increase teacher retention and effectiveness (i.e., student learning). This study has implications for district policies concerning human resources management, state laws governing the scope of collective bargaining, union-district collaboration in providing support to novice teachers, and labor relations management within districts and schools.

Conceptual Framework

This research study is grounded in the theoretical ideas of social capital and social networks. Bourdieu (1985) defines social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition” (p. 248). With regard to teachers, this notion of social capital highlights the resources that are available through social relations with colleagues and suggests that different types of relations will – to varying degrees – facilitate access to resources, changes in instructional practices, and commitment to teaching (Coleman, 1988). At the same time, social capital may not always be positive, having potentially negative consequences such as: a) exclusion of outsiders, b) excess claims on group members, c) restrictions on individual freedoms, and d) downward leveling norms (Portes, 1998).

This study uses the ideas of social capital as the manifestation of supports and pressures (Bidwell, 2001; Frank, Zhao, & Borman, 2004), along with the notion of variations in levels of social capital as proposed by Lin (1999). In particular, Lin (1999) describes two types of causation forces that are important in the analysis of inequality of social capital: a) structural variation, and b) positional variation. Collective bargaining both directly and indirectly affects the flow of financial and human resources within a school creating structural variations between and within districts (Eberts & Stone, 1984; Hoxby, 1996). This then partially determines what physical resources, such as curricular resources and human resources (e.g. expert teachers), are accessible to novice teachers. Structural variations include the type of induction support and professional development available for novice teachers, as well as the availability of resources, materials, and equipment as perceived by the novice teachers.

Positional variation, the primary focus of this paper, is related to a teacher’s social, political, and economic status within a social network, which impact their ability to access resources and deal with pressures and expectations. Positional variation includes input into school policies and practices, as well
as measures of novice teachers’ perceived alignment with others within the school.¹ Social networks consist of relationships of individuals within a social system, which vary in their strength and in their ability convey support or pressure. A novice’s position within the school may greatly impact their ability to access resources through their relationships. The ideas of social capital and social networks can help us to understand a) how novice teachers’ social relationships shape the supports and pressures they experience and b) how collective bargaining and labor-management relations can impact beginning teachers’ social relationships as well as the supports and pressures they experience.

Collective bargaining influences the distribution of financial, physical, and human resources within a school or district which may impact the levels of social capital available to teachers (Eberts & Stone, 1984; Hoxby, 1996; Moe, 2005). Many collective bargaining provisions are also specifically designed to protect the economic rewards and jobs of more senior teachers even at the expense of novice teachers (Eberts & Stone, 1984; Babcock & Enberg, 1999). For example, untenured teachers are often the first to be involuntary transferred and the first to be laid-off (and last to be called back), and they often receive the least desirable teaching assignments (Eberts & Stone, 1984; Ballou, 2000). Further, the labor relations climate within a school may affect levels of relational trust and collective responsibility, which may impact novice teachers’ access to resources and support (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Desimone et al., 2002; Kardos et al., 2001).

In sum, it seems likely that collective bargaining and labor management relations can affect new teachers’ access to support and experiences with pressures in their school environment. The purpose of this study was to investigate how these factors influence the positions of novice teachers within schools, and how their positions, social relationships, and school contexts seemed to affect their commitment.

Research Methods

This research stems from a larger ongoing study of early career teachers directed by Peter Youngs and Ken Frank known as the Michigan Indiana Early Career Teacher (MIECT) Study. The larger MIECT study included four districts in Michigan in 2006-07 and was then expanded to include six Michigan districts and five Indiana districts in 2007-08 (including the four districts that participated in the study in 2006-07). This paper is based on year 1 data from the four Michigan districts in 2006-07, and includes data from interviews with district and union officials, analyses of collective bargaining agreements, and surveys of early career teachers and their school-based colleagues.

¹ Alignment can refer to beginning teachers having similar teaching assignments, beliefs about teaching, and/or instructional practices as their mentors or colleagues (Bidwell, Frank, & Quiroz, 1997).
District sample. For this analysis, the goal was to recruit medium-to-large districts that served varying student populations with regard to race/ethnicity and socio-economic status. It was also a goal to recruit districts that had significant numbers of early career teachers. Because of declining enrollments and tight fiscal budgets in Michigan in 2006-07, many districts that served large numbers of low-income and minority students did not meet the criteria for inclusion in this study because they were not hiring new teachers. In fact, many districts in Michigan, including a few in this study, laid off teachers at the end of 2005-06 and 2006-07 (the first year of data collection) although many of these teachers were later called back and offered teaching positions.

In spring and summer 2006, we recruited four Michigan districts to participate in this study: Daus, Greenberg, Kaline, and Whitaker. All four of these districts were covered by collective bargaining agreements, and all were represented by local unions affiliated with either the Michigan Education Association or the Michigan Federation of Teachers. These districts ranged in size from about 9,400 students to more than 27,000 students in 2006-07. Further, in two of the districts, Whitaker and Kaline, about 30 to 40 percent of the students were eligible for free and reduced-price lunch while in the other two districts, Daus and Greenberg, about 50 to 65 percent of the students were eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. Finally, one of the districts, Whitaker, primarily served white students; 80 percent of its enrollment was white in 2006-07. In contrast, in 2006-07 50 percent of the students in Kaline were racial minorities as were 80 percent of the students in Greenberg. In Daus, more than 85 percent of the students in 2006-07 were classified as white, although this includes a large percentage of students of Middle Eastern decent. Table 1 summarizes enrollment and demographic information from the Michigan Department of Education for these four districts in 2006-07.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Total Enrollment</th>
<th>% Free/Reduced Lunch</th>
<th>% Non-white</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daus</td>
<td>19,055</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenberg</td>
<td>27,066</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaline</td>
<td>9,448</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitaker</td>
<td>12,354</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Early career teacher sample. In 2006-07, we invited to participate in the study all core content area teachers (math, science, social studies, English/language arts, and elementary general education) in the four districts who taught in grades 1-8 and who were in their first two years of teaching in public

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2 Pseudonyms have been used for district names to help ensure confidentiality.
schools as certified teachers. In order to provide greater context on the effects of collective bargaining on novice teacher commitment, a total of nine first- and second-year general education teachers in three districts were interviewed twice each in 2006-2007 about their experiences as novice teachers including their relationships with colleagues, administrators, and union representatives. The interviews also provided information on the types of support and pressure novices experienced from their colleagues, administrators, districts and unions, and how these factors influenced their commitment to the profession. In addition, questions were asked about their experiences with the hiring process, their assignment, and their perceptions related to job security. Data from those interviews are not included in this paper, though they will be used in future reporting.

In fall 2006 and spring 2007, first- and second-year elementary and middle school teachers from the four districts completed surveys that asked about their instructional practices; the frequency and substance of interactions with their mentors, colleagues, and administrators; their perceptions of social relations within their schools; the manageability of their work; and their future career plans. In addition, the spring 2007 survey included measures of novices teachers’ interactions with union representatives, their participation in union activities, and their views on what union priorities should be (e.g., securing health benefits, promoting job security, providing professional development, etc). Items that asked about teacher background, such as degrees, certification, and college attended, were also included in the spring 2007 survey.

Of the 80 teachers in the four districts who were eligible to participate in the study in 2006-07, 58 completed surveys in fall 2006 (n=58) and 32 of these 58 teachers completed surveys again in spring 2007 (n=32). While we were pleased with the response rate in fall 2006 (72.5 percent), we felt that the response rate in spring 2007 (40 percent) and the low overall number of participants were not fully satisfactory. Thus, for 2007-08, we recruited seven additional districts (two in Michigan and five in Indiana) and implemented the Dillman five-contact method in order to attain high response rates (Dillman, 2007). In fall 2007, 255 out of 380 eligible first-, second-, and third-year teachers in the 11 participating districts completed fall surveys (n = 255; response rate of 67 percent).

**Mentor/Colleague Sample:** In order to collect egocentric social network data, the fall 2006 survey for beginning teachers asked them to list their mentor and other key colleagues with whom they discussed professional issues such as curriculum, instruction, and classroom management. For each novice teacher in the sample who completed a fall 2006 survey, we contacted their mentor teacher and up to four of their colleagues (whom they had identified on the fall survey) and invited them to complete an experienced teacher survey. Therefore the social network analysis is not based on a sample of all teachers in the school, rather just those nominated by the novice teachers as key colleagues. These mentors and colleagues (n=71) were surveyed in the spring 2007, and many of the questions asked were the same as
those directed to the novice teachers. More specifically, they were asked about their instructional practice, their perceptions of social relations within their schools, the manageability of their work, and their interactions with union representatives, their participation in union activities, and their views of what should be union priorities.

Additional background information was gathered from the experienced teachers, such as years of experience, certification, and degrees. These may serve as imperfect proxies for a) the expertise of the mentors and colleagues and b) novice teachers’ access to resources. Additionally, alignment between mentor and novice (or between colleagues and novice) in such areas as certification may have important implications for novices’ access to resources. Through analyzing 1999-2000 SASS, Smith and Ingersoll (2004) found that having a mentor in one’s field reduced the likelihood of leaving teaching at the end of the first year by 30 percent and that being able to collaborate with colleagues on instructional issues reduced the risk of leaving by 43 percent.

*Human resources and union information:* Data collection in 2006-07 included interviews with local teacher union presidents (n=3) and human resource directors (n=3) in the four districts. Interview questions addressed how union and administration leaders viewed their role in providing support to novice teachers, and how novice teachers perceived the role of the union and the district in their work lives. Information was also gathered regarding teacher hiring, placement, induction/professional development, teacher evaluation, transfers, and layoffs. The collective bargaining agreements in the four districts for 2006-07 were also analyzed with particular attention paid to teacher hiring, induction, evaluations, transfers, and layoffs.

**Collective Bargaining Agreements and District Contexts**

To better understand the district contexts in which the new teacher study participants were working, we examined collective bargaining agreements in all four districts and conducted interviews with three district union presidents and three directors of human resources in these districts. In analyzing the contracts and interview data, particular attention was given to contract language and district policy concerning teacher hiring, induction and professional development, teacher evaluation, transfers, and layoffs and recall.

*Hiring.* According to the four collective bargaining agreements analyzed, authority for teacher hiring rested solely in the hands of district and school administrators in these districts. Contract language and state and federal regulations required that all teachers were certified to teach their subject

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3 In 2007-08, we will interview the local teacher union presidents and district directors of human resources in all 11 participating districts.
matter/grade level, in order to fulfill the Highly Qualified Teacher provision of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. When asked about the union’s role in the hiring of new teachers, for example, the union president in Whitaker responded, “None. Part of me thinks that is good. There are certain administrative decisions I don’t want to be a part of, and there certain union decisions I don’t want them part of.” He believed that hiring was an area where the building administrator should have the key role in putting together a teaching staff that could fit and work together.

In three of the four districts, the majority of the screening and interviewing of teacher candidates was done at the school level where building principals were instrumental in matching teacher candidates to the culture of the school. The director of human resources (HR) in Daus noted that principals “have their own network of people that they know and trust and those kind of things, they are also likely to identify people for interviews who have applications online.” So even though his district had a centralized application system, he stated, “It’s been my experience that principals hire people that they are most familiar with.” In this district, this often led principals to recommend the hiring of substitute teachers and student teachers with whom they were more familiar. Similar hiring practices took place in Kaline and Whitaker.

In contrast to Daus, Kaline, and Whitaker, teacher hiring in Greenberg was done in a much more centralized manner with teacher allocation decisions being performed in the human resources department. Greenberg was the largest district in our sample and had the highest percentage of low-income and minority students. According to the HR director in this district, there were high rates of teacher turnover in certain schools and declining enrollments made the shifting of personnel more common. From this administrators’ point of view, this instability required a more centralized process of teacher allocation.

Differences in hiring policies may impact positional variation through the initial matching of new teachers to schools. If novices are hired without considering their alignment with other teachers within their school, it may ultimately leave novice teachers isolated, on professional and/or personal levels. A hiring process in which beginning teachers have little familiarity with the teaching staff, school administrators, and students in the school may also lead them to accept positions for which they are not fully prepared. Additionally, new teachers are often hired to work in the most hard-to-staff schools and placed in the most challenging classes which may ultimately affect their commitment levels. The centralized hiring process in Greenberg may have made it more difficult for building administrators to form cohesive school cultures that were supportive of novices. If teacher candidates in Greenberg were simply applying for any open positions within the district and had little contact with principals and other teachers during the application process, they may not have been able to make informed decisions about where they wanted to teach. The union president in Greenberg indicated that there were schools within
the district which are primarily staffed by novice teachers, which may have resulted from ill-informed hiring decisions on the part of the district and the new teachers.

*New teacher induction.* In addition to their efforts to hire high quality teachers, districts and sometimes unions work to improve novice teacher instructional quality and commitment through induction efforts, including orientations, mentorships, and other forms of support. Michigan state law requires new teachers to be provided a mentor and receive professional development in their first three years of the profession. In addition, each district has its own policies regarding new teacher induction that may not be part of the negotiated contract, but for this study we were particularly interested in how these policies may be shaped by collective bargaining and labor relations.

No mention of new teacher induction was included in the Daus collective bargaining agreement; the human resources director in Daus reported that they tried to align mentors and mentees by grade level or subject matter within a building, but that it was not always possible for certain teachers such as special education teachers. He continued, “And we try to make sure that they understand that to the degree that they are involved in the mentor-mentee relationship it will be successful.” Although the law requires novices to have a mentor, it cannot guarantee that a productive relationship will be established. The district union president in Daus put it this way, “They are following the basic requirements of the law, but we’re not doing anybody a service.” Additionally, the union president reported the professional development wasn’t targeted at the issues that new teachers face and there was little follow up to see if the professional development is successful.

In contrast, the Greenberg collective bargaining agreement went into detail about the mentoring program and orientation program in the district. Although the other three districts in the sample also provided orientation for new teachers, the Greenberg district was the only one that included the provision of an orientation in the collective bargaining agreement. The district orientation was to provide information about the district’s mentoring program, district/building policies and procedures, teacher evaluation, state statutes, instructional resources, school/program improvement, professional development, and special education/general education relationships, and it was to include an introduction to the local teacher union. With regard to the mentoring program, the collective bargaining agreement stated, “The purpose of the mentor assignment is to provide the new teacher with a peer who can offer assistance, resources and information in a non-threatening and collegial fashion” (p. 127). The human resources director in Greenberg, though, felt that the mentoring program was not living up to its expressed goals. She indicated that mentors and mentees were meeting too infrequently, sometimes only once a month, because teachers were too busy and the program was too structured.

The Kaline district’s collective bargaining agreement indicated that the purpose of the mentor/mentee relationship was to acclimate the teachers to the profession and to provide necessary
assistance to improve the quality of their instruction, and that the relationship should be confidential and not be included in the evaluation of the mentor teacher or the mentee. Similarly, the Whitaker collective bargaining agreement stated that the mentor-mentee relationship should not be used as part of the evaluation process. The Whitaker collective bargaining agreement, though, went into some detail about the state-required professional development for probationary teachers. At the same time, the union president in Whitaker felt that the induction program had suffered in recent years, indicating that when money got tight the induction program was one of the first things to be cut. In his words, “The new teachers still have mentors, but not at the same level. The association’s involvement is not at the same level either.”

The inclusion of new teacher induction and orientation programs in a collective bargaining agreement may help to formalize the expectations placed on novices within the districts, as well as ensure that new teachers receive support. With regard to induction, a new teacher’s novice status may place them in a better position to access resources if their school or district offers specific support for them. By law, each new teacher is assigned a mentor, but collective bargaining agreements and district policies can offer more support and set expectations for the mentor-mentee relationship. For example, special consideration is often given to the alignment of mentor and mentee, and to the amount of time that is given for them to meet. The Greenfield collective bargaining agreement stated that new teachers and mentors would be matched within the same building or program to the extent reasonably possible; and principals were also instructed to allow release time for mentor-mentee collaboration. It was not clear, though, whether having formal contract language concerning new teacher induction affected the quality of induction in this district. Additionally, as the Kaline HR director indicated, improperly implemented induction programs may add unnecessary burdens and duties on new teachers that detract from possible benefits.

**Teacher evaluation.** The Michigan Teacher Tenure Act requires that evaluations of probationary teachers must take place each year and include at least two observations sixty days apart. In addition, each of the four collective bargaining agreements provided detailed information about the evaluation process for probationary teachers. The human resources director in Daus indicated that the evaluation system is a goal-oriented system, similar to the Danielson Model (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). Daus’ evaluation system has a rubric based on five professional standards of teaching, each standard has several elements, and each element has a description of unsatisfactory, proficient, and outstanding performance. The human resources director stated, “The nice thing about the teacher evaluation program is that it’s not

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4 In addition to having a mentor for three years, probationary teachers were required by the state to attain 15 days (90 hours) of professional development in their first three years.
5 The Charlotte Danielson model focuses on domains of teaching that include: 1) planning and preparation; 2) the classroom environment; 3) instruction; and 4) professional responsibilities
a checklist; it’s actual feedback. It’s identifying goals and giving them feedback.” Early career teachers in this district meet with their building principals to go over their individualized development plans (IDPs) and they identify various elements from all of the standards to work on during each of the four years of their probation. For each year, they focus on a different element, with classroom management usually the focus for first-year teachers. The HR director in Daus indicated that this evaluation system, along with principal training in evaluation, has helped the district identify underperforming probationary teachers before they are granted tenure, provide them with assistance, and force continuing problematic teachers to leave the district before they are granted tenure.

The Greenberg district also used an evaluation system based on the Danielson model called the Progressive Evaluation Process (PEP). Prior to the first evaluation, new teachers are to meet with the principal to review Initial Performance Objectives written by the novice (they are not required to develop more than five PEP objectives). Additionally, the new teacher and administrator review available resources and determine the assistance the administrator will provide to help the new teacher improve. The administrator must observe each probationary teacher at least once before the winter recess, and provide written feedback on suggested areas of improvement. The beginning teacher then has 15 days to respond in writing outlining specific steps she/he has taken to address the written recommendations. Teachers who receive an unsatisfactory interim evaluation are supposed to receive assistance from district resource personnel.

A third district in the sample, Whitaker, implemented an evaluation system described by the district union president as being based on the Danielson model. The focus was on self-evaluation and domain components. Probationary teachers usually focus on classroom management the first year, instruction the second year, and professional responsibilities the third year. The district union president stated, “As they worked their way through the tenure process, they were introduced to more pieces, still being held accountable as they moved on for everything else, but not be like ‘ok, you’re a teacher now you need to do everything proficient’.”

In Kaline, the district human resources director indicated that they were piloting a new evaluation system based on standards and teacher improvement. He indicated that the union was initially hesitant about a new system, but eventually supported it because the committee that developed it included a diverse group of administrators and teachers. The collective bargaining agreement indicated that the evaluation system aimed “to ensure a positive, growth-oriented system beneficial to the teacher.” For teachers who were rated unsatisfactory, the evaluator, with input from the teacher, developed a plan of improvement to meet the expectations of the IDP. Specifically, the plan a) identified areas that need improvement; b) provided the teacher with specific written criteria for improvement that can be measured.
and/or observed; c) developed a workable timeline for such improvement; and d) devised a program to assist in the implementation of the recommendations.

Each of the four districts had moved or were in the process of moving to an evaluation system based on professional goals, substantive feedback, and support for new teachers. The HR directors and union presidents who were interviewed all indicated that the new evaluation systems were improvements over older checklist systems, and that they provided greater guidance and support to novice teachers. By aiming to improve novice teacher classroom management and instruction, these evaluation systems may have helped to improve novices’ position within schools and districts. That is, the systems not only potentially gave them greater access to support, but they may have also advanced their standing within their schools as their instructional quality improved.

Transfers. There are two general types of transfers that are addressed in the collective bargaining agreements, voluntary and involuntary. Generally speaking, in all four districts certification and qualifications were the top criteria for determining both voluntary and involuntary transfers. This was due in part to negotiations between union and management as well as the HQT provision of NCLB and state requirements. Where the districts differed was in the role that seniority played in determining both voluntary and involuntary transfers, and the consideration that was given to probationary teachers in voluntary transfers.

In the Daus district, probationary teachers were not allowed to request a voluntary transfer. For tenured teachers, those who wished to be voluntarily transferred and were certified and qualified for the position could not be denied the right to apply. When teaching staff reduction was necessary, thus forcing involuntary transfers, the Daus collective bargaining agreement stated, “If possible, teachers with greatest seniority who possess the required qualifications and certification will remain in the building or system-wide department.” The surplus teachers were to apply for vacant positions within the district, and selection of teachers to these assignments was based on: a) appropriate certification and qualification; b) North Central requirements (if applicable); and c) major or minor in the field. The contract, though, specified, “If seniority is not followed in making the selection, any unsuccessful teacher applicant with more seniority than the teacher selected may, upon request, be given the reason(s) for the Administration’s decision in writing.” The contract additionally stated that, “It is understood that the Superintendent has the right to reassign a union member for valid and demonstrable reasons.”

Greenberg’s transfer philosophy was described in their collective bargaining agreement. It stated, “Since frequent transfers of employees are disturbing to the educational process and interfere with optimum employee performance, the Association and the Board agree that the transfer of employees should be minimized.” Similar to the Daus agreement, it reiterated that the Superintendent had the sole right to assign employees to positions for which they were qualified. The criteria for filling vacancies,
transfers, and assignments included: a) teacher’s certification; b) teacher’s qualifications; c) student needs (e.g., the need for bilingual staff); d) teacher’s willingness to perform the extra training, duties, and responsibilities; e) teacher’s willingness to complete new requirements/training; and f) seniority in the district. Therefore, this district not only hoped to minimize transfers, but it also made seniority the lowest consideration in evaluating transfer candidates.

Yet according to both the district HR director and the union president, there was considerable teacher turnover and shifting enrollments in Greenberg; this often left many openings that were filled internally. Seniority did play a key role in transfers in some cases. The contract indicated that an employee with 12 or more years of experience who faced involuntary transfer could displace another teacher with seven years or less experience, given that they had the appropriate certification and qualifications outlined in the contract. Further, no employee with appropriate certification and qualifications was to be involuntary transferred out of a middle school or high school if it were possible for a less senior person to be transferred out of that building. The displaced teacher would be eligible for a lateral move into an open position within their building or program, or they would become the top applicant for the next available vacancy.

With regard to voluntary transfers, the Kaline collective bargaining agreement stated that transfer requests should be honored whenever possible given that: a) the teacher was certified and qualified for the position, b) first consideration was given to present Kaline staff, and the receiving principal approved the transfer. In terms of involuntary transfers, it stated, “Some involuntary transfers from one building to another or reassignments may be unavoidable.” Those affected by involuntary transfer or reassignment were entitled to a meeting where they were to be notified of the reasons. The HR director in Kaline indicated that involuntary transfers rarely occurred, that the district tried not to cause rifts within staffs, and that there was no formal policy regarding seniority and transfers not related to reduction in staff. Yet, when reassignments occurred due to reduction in personnel, seniority was used to reassign staff that are certified and qualified for open positions.

In Whitaker, a teacher could request a transfer to another school for the ensuing school year. As the Whitaker union president stated, “You are not guaranteed a transfer, you are guaranteed an interview.” He also indicated that the district had the right to transfer and assign any teacher as long as they were certified and qualified for that position, and this had been upheld through the grievance process. With regard to involuntary transfer, the collective bargaining agreement stated, “In case of a mandatory transfer because of reduction in a building staff, the teacher with the least number of years of Whitaker teaching at (1) the elementary school level (K-5) or (2) discipline level in the secondary schools, or (3) special areas, will be transferred first.” Therefore, in addition to certification and qualifications, seniority was a key element in determining who is involuntary transferred.
Although certification and qualifications were the primary determinants of which teachers were transferred to particular positions, in each of the four districts seniority played some role in determining the order of involuntary transfers. The Greenberg collective bargaining contract listed seniority last in its criteria for determining involuntary transfer, but if all certifications, qualifications, and trainings were equal seniority was still a key factor. The lack of protection for novices’ teaching assignments may have placed them in weaker positions within the school system. Further, if a particular new teacher was frequently transferred early in her career, this could make it difficult for her to develop personal and professional relationships that provided her with necessary support. Additionally, transfer policies based on seniority may have placed novice teachers in the least desirable schools and classroom that were the most difficult to teach in, thus further weakening novices’ position within the school system.

Layoffs and recall. Closely related to involuntary transfers is the issue of layoffs and recall; these actions are often necessary due to teachers returning from leave, declines in student enrollment, and changes in district and state economic conditions. Policies concerning layoffs and recall were influenced both by the collective bargaining agreements and the Michigan Teacher Tenure Act. Under this law, tenured teachers had rights over probationary teachers with regard to losing their positions when necessary reductions in the teacher workforce occurred. Additionally, surplus tenured teachers were to be recalled before any non-tenured teacher. Although tenured teachers had priority over non-tenured teachers, the law did not address the use of seniority beyond tenure status in layoffs and recall. Therefore, in each of the four collective bargaining agreements analyzed for this study, a combination of certification, qualifications, and seniority were used in determining the order of layoffs and recall, with the most senior teacher certified and qualified for a job being the last to be laid off and the first to be recalled.

The Daus collective bargaining agreement stated that “the Board will retain those union members qualified and certified for existing positions having the longest creditable service in the P-12 program.” Additionally, in addition to the provisions of the Michigan Teacher Tenure Act, order of recall was based on P-12 seniority. The Kaline labor contract stated, “The Board and the Local Association realize that education, to a large degree, depends upon the financial resources available to the Board, and in accordance with this realization, understand that in some instances it may be economically necessary to reduce the educational program and subsequently the staff when funds are not available.” When layoffs were necessary, probationary teachers were to be laid off first where any tenured teacher whose position had been curtailed was certified and qualified to perform the job of the probationary teacher. After that, certification, seniority within classification, and qualifications were used in determining layoff order. Seniority teachers were to be recalled in inverse order of layoff for new positions for which they were certified and qualified.
The Greenberg collective bargaining agreement indicated that layoffs were done in reverse order of seniority based on district subject area/ certification needs and employee’s next year’s teaching assignment. Recall was then done in the reverse order of the layoff procedure. Efforts were made to return the recalled teacher to their original building, but only if that did not violate the rights of other employees. The contract, though, contained language specifically aimed to retain teachers with bilingual qualifications because of the high need for bilingual teachers within the district. Finally, the Whitaker collective bargaining agreement stated that when reductions in personnel were necessary due to decreases in enrollment or operating funds, “The order of for reduction shall be: 1) Temporary employees; 2) Probationary teachers according to qualifications and certification; and seniority; and 3) Tenure teachers according to qualifications, certification, and seniority.” Recall was based on first available vacancy in the district for which they were qualified and certified in reverse order of seniority.

In all four districts, along with certification and qualifications, seniority played a key role in determining the order of layoffs and recall. Similar to the instances of involuntary transfer, seniority provisions concerning layoffs and recall may have placed novice teachers in a different position than their tenured and more senior colleagues. Due to their at-will employee status and seniority provisions concerning layoffs, probationary teachers had fewer job protections which may have impacted their professional relationships as well as their commitment levels.

For example, at the end of the 2006-2007 school year, approximately 118 teachers were laid off in Daus. Both the Daus HR director and the union president believed that conflict over issues of pay raises for teachers and job protection was a main issue. Due to the negotiated salary schedule and stagnant aid from the state, the HR director indicated that “generally speaking the (tenured) teachers would prefer us to lay people off to have enough money to give them a raise even if class sizes have to go up.” The union president polled his members to see if they would rather see a contract that preserved jobs or gave increases in wages, and according to him 55 percent indicated that they wanted increased wages. He stated, “I was appalled. The comments that I got was ‘you work for me’. Yes, but I also work for that person that is laid off.” A collective bargaining proposal that would have preserved jobs while temporarily freezing wages was narrowly defeated at the end of the 2006-2007 school year, resulting in layoffs. When asked about the seniority system and the willingness of tenured teachers to sacrifice the jobs of untenured teachers for raises, the HR director responded, “We call it eating their young.” He continued, “To answer your question, the people that are getting laid off can’t help but be resentful.” This illustrates a potential positional variation and conflict between tenured teachers and novice teachers.

Overall, the review of district collective bargaining agreements and interviews with district and union personnel provide part of the context in which novice teachers in these districts were working in 2006-07. The hiring processes, induction supports, evaluations, transfer policies, and layoff/recall
policies all helped determine the positional variations of teachers within their schools and districts. For example, being a novice teacher may mean one had additional resources through increased induction support, yet at the same time novice teachers may have been displaced from their positions or lost their job all together due to seniority provisions in collective bargaining agreements. Therefore, their relative positions within their schools and districts may have impacted their access to resources and their development of collegial relationships, which may have ultimately impacted their commitment levels.

Survey Data Analysis

This section of the paper reports 2006-07 data from surveys of 32 novice teachers and 26 veteran teachers whom the novices named in fall 2006 surveys as being their mentors or key colleagues. The data provide insights into the possible impacts on novice teacher commitment of district policies concerning hiring, induction, teacher evaluation, transfers, and layoffs. The framework in this paper proposes that district collective bargaining agreements and labor relations within schools and districts may produce positional variations within schools and districts, and that these variations may be associated with differences in their access to social capital and ultimately their commitment levels. Because of the relatively small sample size, no conclusions can be drawn from the data, but results may provide indications for further exploration from subsequent MIECT data collection.

In the first part of this section, we present findings related to new and veteran teachers’ perceptions of labor/management relations and local unions’ roles and discuss possible associations between variations in collective bargaining agreements and these results. Second, we present data on teachers’ perceptions of alignment, relational trust, and collective responsibility in their schools, and consider possible connections between the bargaining agreements and labor/management relations, and these results. Finally, we report findings concerning teachers’ commitment levels and feelings of job manageability and examine possible relationships between the bargaining agreements, labor/management relations, and measures of alignment/school conditions, and these key outcomes (commitment and job manageability).

Perceptions of labor/management relations. Teachers’ perceptions of labor relations in their schools and districts may be associated with variations in collective bargaining agreements. In addition, issues that teachers identify as key priorities for union activity may indicate particular areas of concern that they have related to labor relations and their work. Both the novice and veteran teachers were asked to rate the overall labor-administration relations in their school as either: 1-Poor, 2-Fair, 3-Good, or 4-Excellent. As seen in Table 2, in all four districts, the mentors/colleagues on average indicated better labor-administration relations at the school level than the novices (referred to in all of the Tables as early
career teachers (ECTs)). This may indicate that veteran teachers perceive better labor relations within their schools because they are protected by due process under tenure law while novice teachers are at-will employees thus making them more sensitive to administrative demands. It should be noted, though, that a Wilcoxon test indicated no statistically significant difference between the means of novices and their mentors/colleagues (referred to in all of the Tables as M/Cs), but this is an area that will be continued to be explored in future data analysis.

Table 2. Overall Labor/Management Relations - 1-Poor, 2-Fair, 3-Good, or 4-Excellent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>ECT N</th>
<th>ECT Mean</th>
<th>M/C N</th>
<th>M/C Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daus</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenberg</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaline</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitaker</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The novice teachers in the Greenberg district reported the lowest levels of labor/management relations. As discussed above, there was a centralized hiring process in Greenberg which may have lead to unfavorable matches between new teacher and school. If there was not a proper fit personally and/or professionally among teachers and between teachers and the administrators, it may have resulted in poorer labor/management relations within the schools. Also, in districts that experienced layoffs in 2006-07 (e.g., Daus and Greenberg), labor/management relations within schools may have become strained.

Union effort. In addition to overall labor/management relations, novice and experienced teachers were asked to indicate the amount of effort (1-No effort at all, 2-A little effort, 3-Some effort, 4-A lot of effort) that they felt the union should spend on the following issues: a) improving job security, b) negotiating standards and procedures for teacher evaluation; c) providing professional development opportunities; d) providing new teacher induction activities; and e) giving teachers more input into their teaching assignments and transfers. On average, novices indicated that their unions should put significant effort into improving job security, along with giving teachers more say in their teaching assignments and transfers, although this varied by district. When tested for differences in means between novices and their mentors/colleagues, the only difference that was statistically significant (at the 10 percent level; \( P > |S| = 0.0689 \)) was the item that addressed effort towards improving job security. On this item, mentors and colleagues indicated that they felt the union should put in slightly less effort into improving job security (mean = 3.31), as compared to the novices (mean = 3.48). This may reflect the fact that in addition to due process protection under tenure law, in all four collective bargaining agreements seniority played
some role in determining layoffs and involuntary transfers, and this offered more job protection to senior teachers.

**Table 3. Union Effort** - 1-No effort at all, 2-A little effort, 3-Some effort, 4-A lot of effort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Daus</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Greenberg</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Kaline</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Whitaker</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job security</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluations</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>2.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Induction</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>3.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment &amp; transfers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>3.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Greenberg novice teachers reported the highest means with regard to desire for union effort towards improving job security and more say in assignments/transfers. This may have been related to the fact that the district had experienced layoffs for the past few years and, due to this, there had been higher rates of teacher reassignment. Although the Greenberg collective bargaining agreement put seniority last in its list of priorities for determining involuntary transfers and layoffs, veteran teachers were somewhat less concerned with job security than the novices in the district (M/C mean = 3.10 compared to ECT mean = 3.56), which may indicate that veteran teachers felt they had more job security due to their tenure and more senior status.

Overall, the results from the survey data on labor/management relations and union effort indicate that novice teachers were greatly concerned about job protection. The Whitaker union president stated clearly, “What new members are worried about right now is ‘am I going to have a job’.” The Michigan tenure law and seniority provisions in collective bargaining agreements were designed to protect jobs, but primarily the jobs of tenured teachers and those with the most seniority. The results from this survey indicated that novice teachers wanted their unions to put significant effort into improving their job security and to help give them more input into their teaching assignments and transfers. Additionally, the novice teachers indicated lower average perceptions of labor/management relations than their veteran colleagues, though there was not a statistically significant difference. Yet, if novice teachers perceived lower levels of support from both their administration and their union, it may have impacted their commitment to teaching. This is not to suggest that novice teachers do not necessarily see value in tenure laws and seniority provisions that aim to protect jobs, because they may see these things as necessary to protect their jobs in the future. It is not clear though whether or not the lack of job protection offered by the tenure law and collective bargaining is generally associated with teacher commitment.
**Professional and personal alignment among colleagues.** To help gauge teachers’ perceived fit within their schools, novice teachers and their mentors/colleagues were asked the extent to which they agreed (1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Agree, or 4-Strongly Agree) with six statements aimed at measuring their professional and personal alignment with their school-based colleagues. A composite variable was created from the means to these statements.\(^6\) Overall, as shown in Table 4, the majority of early career teachers in the sample either agreed or strongly agreed that they were well aligned with their school-based colleagues (mean = 3.24). Yet, the information from the mentors and colleagues in the sample indicated that they may have felt better aligned with their colleagues, with a mean of 3.68. A Wilcoxon test produced a p-value \(P \geq |S|\) of 0.0918, which suggests that there is a statistically significant difference between the means of novices and veterans at the 10 percent level. This makes sense because senior teachers often have more say in determining their teaching assignment due to contract provisions concerning seniority preference in assignment and transfers, as well as protection from reduction in force.

Table 4. Professional and Personal Alignment - 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Agree, or 4-Strongly Agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>ECT N</th>
<th>ECT Mean</th>
<th>M/C N</th>
<th>M/C Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daus</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenberg</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaline</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitaker</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The levels of alignment also varied by district. For example, Kaline novice teachers reported higher levels of alignment than novices in other districts and even higher levels of alignment than the mentors/colleagues in their own district. The Kaline district had a decentralized hiring process which may have allowed principals to hire teachers who were better aligned with other teachers within their schools. Additionally, teachers may have been better able to select schools and positions in which they felt comfortable and confident. Lastly, the Kaline HR director indicated that transfers in the district were rare, which may have allowed novices to form fairly deep personal and professional relationships with their colleagues. In contrast, both the novice teachers and veteran teachers in Daus reported the lowest overall levels of alignment. Similar to the Greenberg district, there were layoffs and reassignments in Daus in 2006-07, which may have destabilized relationships among school staffs.

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\(^6\) To measure alignment teachers were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed to the following: 1) My approach to teaching fits in this school; 2) My professional interests are the same as those of other teachers in this school; 3) I identify with other teachers in this school; 4) My professional goals are the same as those of other teachers in this school; 5) I matter to other teachers in this school; and 6) Other teachers in this school matter to me – the coefficient alpha was 0.93
Relational trust among colleagues. We were also interested in measuring perceived levels of relational trust among teachers and their colleagues. Novice teachers and their mentors/colleagues were asked the extent to which they agreed (1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Agree, or 4-Strongly Agree) with four statements that addressed relational trust, from which a composite variable was created from the means.\(^7\) In all four districts, veteran teachers reported higher levels of trust than their novice colleagues. The Wilcoxon test produced a p-value P>|S| of 0.0558, indicating a statistically significant difference in means for novice teachers and their mentors/colleagues at the 10 percent level. Again, the positional variation among teachers within a school may have contributed to the different perceptions of relational trust within the schools. Additionally, it may be likely that it takes time for teachers to build trusting relationships and therefore experienced teachers may be more likely to report higher levels of relational trust. Similar to the results from the alignment variable, the novice teachers in Kaline indicated the highest levels of relational trust while the novice teachers in Daus indicated the lowest levels. As pointed out by the HR director and union president in Daus, there were some conflicts among teachers over wanting the union to negotiate higher salaries for teachers versus job protection for teachers. This conflict may have lead to lower levels of trust among novices and their colleagues.

Table 5. Relational Trust - 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Agree, or 4-Strongly Agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>ECT N</th>
<th>M/C Mean</th>
<th>M/C N</th>
<th>M/C Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daus</td>
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<td>2.42</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenberg</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.56</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kaline</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitaker</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Collective responsibility. To gauge perceptions of collective responsibility within schools, teachers were asked to report the proportion of teachers in their schools (1-None, 2-Less than half, 3-About half, 4-Most, 5-All) who took responsibility throughout the school for student discipline, academic work, and the quality of teaching. A composite variable was built from these six questions.\(^8\) Once again, 

\(^7\) To measure relational trust teachers were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed to the following: 1) It's OK in this school to discuss feelings, frustrations, and worries with other teachers; 2) Teachers in this school trust each other; 3) Teachers in this school respect other teachers who take the lead in school improvement; and 4) Teachers in this school respect those colleagues who are expert in their craft – the coefficient alpha was 0.78

\(^8\) To measure collective responsibility within schools teachers were asked to indicate the proportion of teachers who do the following: 1) Help maintain discipline in the entire school, not just their classrooms; 2) Take responsibility for helping one another do well; 3) Take responsibility for improving the overall quality of teaching in the school; 4) Feel responsible for helping students develop self-control; 5) Set high
in all four districts, overall, novice teachers reported lower levels of collective responsibility than their mentors/colleagues, though the Wilcoxon test indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between the means of novices and their mentors/colleagues. The novice teachers in Greenberg reported the lowest levels of collective responsibility, while their mentors/colleagues reported the highest levels. The different perceptions of collective responsibility may be an indication that there was little interaction between novice and veteran teachers within many schools in Greenberg.

Table 6. Collective Responsibility - 1-None, 2-Less than half, 3-About half, 4-Most, 5-All

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>ECT N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>M/C N</th>
<th>M/C Mean</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Greenberg</td>
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<td>3.45</td>
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<td>4.09</td>
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<td>Kaline</td>
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<td>3.68</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.76</td>
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<td>Whitaker</td>
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<td>3.53</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.79</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Combined</strong></td>
<td><strong>31</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.54</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.90</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Collective bargaining agreements and labor/management relations may be associated with teachers’ perceptions of alignment, relational trust, and collective responsibility. District hiring policies, provisions concerning seniority and layoffs/transfers, and induction practices may impact the relationships novice teachers establish with their colleagues. Though sample sizes are small, Table 7 indicates some possible moderate positive relationships between perceptions of labor relations and alignment, relational trust, and collective responsibility. Gamma is a measure of association between two ordinal variables (ranges between -1 and +1), and the interpretation and computation of gamma mirrors that of Spearman’s correlation coefficient for continuous variables. For this study, we considered any association of |0.40| to |0.60| as a moderate association.

Table 7. Correlation Between Alignment/Relational Trust/Collective Responsibility and Perceptions of Labor/Management Relations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable 1</th>
<th>Variable 2</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Gamma</th>
<th>ASE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alignment</td>
<td>Labor Relations</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational Trust</td>
<td>Labor Relations</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective Responsibility</td>
<td>Labor Relations</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

expectations for academic work; and 6) Feel responsible for ensuring that all students learn – the coefficient alpha was 0.91
It makes intuitive sense that teachers who perceive better labor/management relations will be more likely than other teachers to perceive greater alignment with their colleagues, higher levels of relational trust, and greater sense of collective responsibility. This may reflect the importance of labor/management relations in establishing collegial relationships among novice teachers and their colleagues.

**Novice teacher commitment.** One main outcome variable of interest in this study is teacher commitment. Therefore, novice teachers were asked specifically about their future plans and their desired future teaching assignment. In particular, they were asked about their level of agreement (1- Strongly Disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Agree, 4- Strongly Agree) with the following statements: a) I would prefer to continue teaching in this school next year; b) I could see myself teaching in this school in five years; c) I would prefer to continue teaching this grade level next year; d) I could see myself teaching this grade level in five years; e) I would prefer to continue teaching in this district next year; and f) I could see myself teaching in this district in five years. On average, the novices indicated that they would like to return to their positions the next year, though two of 11 new teachers in Greenberg indicated that they “strongly disagree” that they would like to teach in the same school next year, and another two indicated that they “disagree” that they would like to teach in the same school the next year. This may reflect the inability of the centralized hiring process in Greenberg to have properly aligned new teachers with schools in the district. Additionally, novice teachers in Greenberg reported the lowest average perception of labor/management relations in their schools, which may have been associated with their future career plans. Conversely, in Kaline (which is located in same metropolitan area as the Greenberg district) the vast majority of novice teachers indicated that they would prefer to remain in their schools the next year (mean = 3.90) and within their district the next year (mean = 4.0).

**Table 8. Future Teaching**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Daus</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Greenberg</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Kaline</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Whitaker</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teach in school next yr</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>3.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach in school 5 yrs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>3.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same grade level next yr</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>3.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same grade level 5 yrs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach in district next yr</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>3.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach in district 5 yrs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We were interested in exploring possible relationships between the commitment variables and other key variables of interest, so gammas were calculated using SAS. It is important to consider the low sample size when considering these associations, yet the results indicate the need for further exploration of the relationships with year 2 and year 3 MIECT data (i.e., data from 2007-08 and 2008-09). There were moderate positive associations between novice teachers’ perceptions of labor/management relations and their desire to teach in the same school next year, teach the same grade level next year, and teach the same grade level in five years. It makes intuitive sense that a teacher who perceives good labor/management relations will be more satisfied with their teaching assignment than if they perceived poor labor/management relations. They may have more access to resources and support due to good labor/management relationships.

There were also moderate positive associations between the alignment composite variable and novices’ desire to teach in the same school the next year and to teach in the district in five years. Again, this may indicate that the teachers with higher levels of alignment with their colleagues were more satisfied with their teaching assignments and preferred to remain in their schools and districts. Again, they may have had greater access to resources and support and may have been more comfortable teaching in schools in which they felt aligned with their colleagues.

There were moderate negative associations between novices’ desire to have their union spend effort on improving job security and their desire to teach in the same school the next year and to teach in the same district the next year. This may indicate that those teachers who felt less secure in their jobs were less willing to continue teaching in their schools or districts, or at least possibly felt that they were going to be laid off or transferred. Therefore, collective bargaining provisions that did not offer job protections for novice teachers may have impacted their levels of commitment because they felt insecure in their jobs.

Table 9. Correlations of Commitment Variables in Independent Variables (* only gammas >= |0.40| were included)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable 1</th>
<th>Variable 2</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Gamma</th>
<th>ASE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teach in school next yr</td>
<td>Alignment</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach in school next yr</td>
<td>Labor Relations</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach in school next yr</td>
<td>Job Security</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>-0.45</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same grade level next yr</td>
<td>Labor Relations</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same grade level 5 yrs</td>
<td>Labor Relations</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach in district next yr</td>
<td>Job Security</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>-0.53</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach in district next yr</td>
<td>Evaluations</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>-0.40</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach in district 5 yrs</td>
<td>Alignment</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach in district 5 yrs</td>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>-0.42</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Job manageability. We were also interested in exploring whether or not there were significant differences between novice teachers and their mentors/colleagues with regard to their perceptions of job manageability. We asked the teachers five questions in which they were to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement to each statement (1-Strongly Disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Agree, 4- Strongly Agree). A composite variable was created from the five statements.\(^9\) Interestingly, in three of the four districts the novices reported higher rates of job manageability than their colleagues, though a Wilcoxon test indicated no statistically significant difference between the means.

Table 10. Job manageability - 1-Strongly Disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Agree, 4- Strongly Agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>ECT N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>M/C N</th>
<th>M/C Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daus</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenberg</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaline</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitaker</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the Greenberg district, novices reported more concerns regarding job manageability than their veteran colleagues, and they also reported more concerns compared to the new teachers in the other districts. This may have been due to the lower levels of support that novices in Greenberg received, as well as their teaching assignments. As noted by the Greenberg HR director, although the district provided induction and mentoring to new teachers, she didn’t feel it properly meet their needs. Additionally, as stated earlier, the union president indicated that some schools were staffed primarily by novice teachers, which may have decreased the level of expertise and support to which new teachers had access. We calculated correlations to explore the relationship between perceptions of job manageability and other key variables of interest, and found moderate positive associations between perceptions of job manageability and perceptions of alignment, relational trust, and labor/management relations. This may be related to the resources novice teachers had access to through professional relationships; the better the relationships, the more resources available to the novice teacher which could make the job more manageable.

\(^9\) To measure job manageability teachers were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following: 1) I am teaching with adequate resources and materials to do my job properly; 2) Administrative duties/paperwork do not interfere with my teaching; 3) My workload is manageable; 4) I feel energetic and enthusiastic about my teaching; and 5) I have time and energy for friends and family – the coefficient alpha was 0.87
Table 11. Correlations of Job Manageability and Key Variables (* note only gammas >= |0.40| were reported)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable 1</th>
<th>Variable 2</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Gamma</th>
<th>ASE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Manageability</td>
<td>Alignment</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Manageability</td>
<td>Relational Trust</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Manageability</td>
<td>Labor Relations</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, the survey data shows some interesting findings which need further exploration with more data from subsequent MIECT data collection. The data suggest that perceptions of labor/management relations are associated with key variables of interest, such as perceptions of teacher alignment within schools, perceptions of relational trust, and perceptions of collective responsibility. In addition, perceptions of labor/management relations appear to be associated with certain commitment variables and job manageability. Labor/management relations are likely impacted by collective bargaining provisions and district policies which govern hiring decisions, new teacher induction, transfers, and layoffs/recall. These areas may create positional variation within schools, as shown by differences in responses of novice teachers and their mentors/colleagues, which impacts novice teachers’ social relationships and access to resources and support. More information from the 2007-2008 and the 2008-2009 data collection will allow for further exploration of these variations.

Implications

Findings from our analysis of collective bargaining agreements, interview data, and survey data reflect some of the findings from previous research but also provide some insight for future research. Research has shown that teachers who receive formal and informal initiation into the profession are more likely to develop norms encouraging professional growth and greater commitment to the profession (Rosenholtz, 1989, Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Teacher commitment has also been found to be associated with workplace conditions (Weiss, 1999), as well as with the degree of collaboration in a school (Rosenholtz, 1985). Further, the labor relations climate within a school may affect levels of relational trust and collective responsibility, which may impact novice teachers’ access to resources and support (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Similarly, we found a moderate positive association between novice teachers’ perception of alignment with colleagues and their desire to remain teaching in their school and district, as well as perceptions of job manageability. Additionally, we found that higher perceptions of labor/management relations were associated with higher levels of commitment, job manageability, alignment, relational trust, and collective responsibility.

This study further adds to the existing literature by exploring how collective bargaining agreements may impact novice teacher commitment through influencing hiring, induction support,
teacher evaluations, transfers, and layoffs/recalls. The review of collective bargaining agreements and interview data indicated that in three of the four districts, principals played a key role in determining the staff makeup in their schools. The centralized hiring process in the fourth district, Greenfield, may have led to lower levels of teacher alignment, relational trust, collective responsibility, and perceptions of labor/management relations because principals had less say in who was placed in their schools and new teachers may have known little about their schools, colleagues, or students before they reported for duty. It should be noted that novice teachers in Greenfield reported lower perceptions of labor/management relations than novices in the other three districts, possibly related to the hiring process. With these data, we can not draw that conclusion, but it seems plausible that hiring decisions were related to labor/management relations.

The review of contracts and interview data provided little information regarding new teacher induction in the district. Two union presidents and one HR director, though, indicated that the induction systems in their districts were not fulfilling the needs of the novice teachers. Both the union president in Daus and in Whitaker indicated that they wished for a greater union role in providing new teacher induction, but they indicated that financial constraints were often a hindrance. More must be learned about not only the district policies concerning induction, but also how the induction policy is actually implemented.

Similarly, more must be learned about how the teacher evaluation systems were implemented. There was little substantive variation in the collective bargaining agreements concerning teacher evaluation. Three of the four districts used evaluation systems similar to the Danielson Model, and the fourth district was piloting a similar evaluation system. It was clear that each of the districts had made a concerted effort to improve their evaluations systems in order to better identify teachers who needed additional support. It was still not clear, though, whether this had improved novice teacher commitment. Since the evaluations were primarily done by building level principals, labor/management relations may have been related to the ability of evaluations to provide support to novice teachers.

Seniority provisions in all four collective bargaining agreements may have led to lower novice teacher job security which may have impacted their commitment levels. The survey data indicated that novice teachers wanted their unions to put more effort into improving their job security, and that their sense of job security was negatively associated with certain commitment variables such as their desire to teach in the same school the next year. Additionally, if novice teachers faced higher rates of layoffs and reassignment, this may have negatively impacted their ability to cultivate personal and professional relationships that can provide needed support to early career teachers.

This study has several limitations, including a low response rate from novice teachers on the spring 2007 surveys and a relatively low sample of novice teachers and their mentors/colleagues. The
sample used in this study can not be considered representative of school populations within the four districts; therefore, no conclusions can be drawn from the survey data. The low response rate and sample size also limits the use of statistical analysis of the data. With a larger sample size for both novice teachers and mentors/colleagues, we could have performed some social network analysis and used hierarchical linear models (HLM) to look at variation across districts with regards to impacts of collective bargaining provisions and district policies on novice teacher commitment and other key variables. Additionally, if we had a larger sample size and more school-level data, we would be able to explore variations across schools which would allow us to better explore how the implementation of collective bargaining provisions and district policies vary across schools.

The next steps therefore are to use the 2007-2008 data to further explore the relationship between collective bargaining, labor/management relations, induction, and teacher commitment. Interviews will be conducted with district HR directors and district union representatives in all eleven districts in the sample, and each of the collective bargaining agreements will be analyzed. A larger district sample should produce more variation in collective bargaining agreements, especially between districts in Michigan and Indiana. Because districts from Indiana are included in the 2007-2008 data collection (thus increasing the overall sample size), differences in state labor law, which may impact collective bargaining and teacher tenure, will also be explored. Additionally, a five-step process for contacting teachers to participate in the study was implemented which aided in increasing response rates (Dillman, 2007). In addition, a larger and more representative novice teacher and veteran teacher sample will allow us to perform statistical analysis with more power, which will help us further explore relationships between collective bargaining, labor/management relations, new teacher induction, and novice teachers’ access to social capital through social network analysis and HLM.
Appendix

Diagram 1. Framework

- **Structural Variation**: curricular resources, teacher expertise, and induction support
- **Positional Variation**: political, social, and economic position

Collective Bargaining

Labor Relations Climate

Novice Teacher Social Capital

Novice Teacher Commitment
References


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1 As noted above, 58 first- and second-year teachers in the four districts completed surveys in fall 2006, but only 32 of these 58 teachers completed a second survey in spring 2007. We only include data from those novices who completed both surveys (n=32) because the spring 2007 surveys included the questions concerning labor/management relations and perceptions of teacher unions’ roles.